

Migrants & Refugees

For decades, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has upheld guidance that requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to avoid immigration enforcement actions in certain areas, formerly known as sensitive locations. In 2021, the President issued a new memo that expanded the definitions of those areas to include schools (such as preschools, K-12 institutions, and higher education), healthcare facilities (including hospitals, doctors' offices, and community clinics), places of worship, locations where children gather (like playgrounds and bus stops), and social service establishments such as domestic violence shelters and food pantries. It also covers disaster emergency response sites, weddings, funerals, religious ceremonies, parades, demonstrations, and rallies. The memo specifies that officers should avoid enforcement actions near these protected areas, which includes adjacent locations such as sidewalks, entrances, and parking lots. Lastly, the memorandum limits the circumstances under which immigration enforcement actions can occur in courthouses.

On January 20, 2025, the new administration rescinded the previous era's policy that protected certain areas—such as churches, schools, and hospitals—from immigration enforcement, replacing it with an undisclosed directive that grants ICE agents unrestricted power over these spaces under the guise of "common sense." Protecting sensitive locations from immigration enforcement is essential to ensuring that all community members can access basic services and support without fear.

The Administration has not clarified whether all three memos have been rescinded or if it will issue a new one, although it has explicitly stated that ICE could enforce actions in schools and churches.

The Fourth Amendment protects private areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy. In this context, places open to the public, such as lobbies, waiting areas, and parking lots, are classified as public, while interior spaces and those marked "private" with a sign are deemed private. For immigration enforcement to search or enter a private area within a formerly protected zone, the Fourth Amendment requires a valid judicial warrant signed by a federal judge unless the staff in those areas consent to the search. Staff and administrators at formerly protected areas should be aware of key rights and best practices applicable to all these spaces and location-specific guidelines.

TPS: Temporary Protected Status

TPS is a temporary immigration status granted to nationals of certain countries who cannot return home safely due to conditions or circumstances that prevent their country from adequately managing their return. Those whose TPS protections lapse and who lack another immigration status will lose their ability to work legally in the U.S. and become vulnerable to detention and deportation by ICE.



Religious Worker Visa:

The R-1 Religious Worker Visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows religious organizations in the U.S. to sponsor qualified foreign religious workers for temporary employment in religious roles. Workers from legitimate religions are eligible to apply for the R-1 Visa, which authorizes its holders to enter, work legally, and reside in the U.S. for more than two years; however, they can request a visa extension before that period ends.

On March 15, 2025, the President extended the EB-4 non-minister special immigrant religious worker program until September 30, 2025.

DACA – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DACA temporarily delays the deportation of individuals without documentation who arrived in the U.S. as children. Renewal is not automatic.

On January 17, 2025, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit issued a decision regarding the DACA Final Rule. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will continue to accept and process DACA renewal requests and accompanying applications for employment authorization.

Refugee Resettlement

Refugee resettlement involves transferring refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence.

With a flurry of executive orders signed by President Trump, purportedly to stop an “invasion” at U.S. borders, regular migration pathways- especially for those fleeing conflict and abuse- have effectively been closed. These orders indefinitely suspend U.S. refugee resettlement.