

# What you need to know about Asylum

**What is Asylum?** Asylum is legal status that will allow you to live and work in the United States. You can apply for asylum if you are afraid to live in your country because you will be persecuted (severely mistreated). After a year in asylum status, you can apply for a green card (lawful permanent residence).

## How can I qualify for asylum status?

To qualify for asylum, you must prove these things:

- ▶ **You are afraid of living in your home country** because you were persecuted (severely mistreated) in the past or you might be persecuted in the future
- ▶ **You are afraid because of your:** (1) race, (2) religion, (3) national origin, (4) membership in a particular social group (for example, based on your gender or family), or (5) political opinion. You must show that one of those things is why you would be persecuted.
- ▶ **You must prove that the harm that you fear must be from** the government in your home country or a group or person that the government is unable or unwilling to stop from harming you (such as a family member or a gang).

## If I am afraid to live in my home country, are there other things for which I can apply?

**Yes. You can also apply for: withholding of removal and relief under the Convention Against Torture (CAT).**

- ▶ People who do not qualify for asylum might qualify for these.
- ▶ If you are granted either of these applications, you cannot become a permanent resident (green card holder) through this process.

## | How do I apply for asylum?

To apply for asylum, file a Form I-589, which you can download for free from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website ([www.uscis.gov/I-589](http://www.uscis.gov/I-589)). There is no fee to apply for asylum.

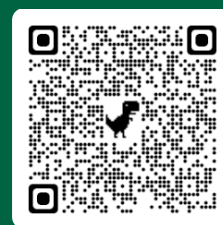
## | When do I need to apply?

- ▶ You need to apply for asylum **within 1 year of arriving in the U.S.**
- ▶ If you apply for asylum after living here for more than 1 year, you must show you meet an exception to the 1-year rule and that you filed as soon as possible. The 1-year rule does not apply to withholding or CAT.

## | What if I am not afraid to return to my home country? Should I still talk to an attorney?

If you are not afraid to return to your home country, or you have not suffered extreme harm in your home country in the past, you would not qualify for asylum, withholding, or CAT. However, it is important to speak with an attorney to see if you qualify for another type of immigration status.

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