

Know Your Rights: Trump's Registration Requirement for Immigrants

On February 25, 2025, the Trump administration announced it would require some undocumented immigrants to register with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). On March 7, it shared a new rule explaining how the system will work. This new rule will start on April 11. The announcement raises many concerns, especially because similar registration processes have been used in the past to target vulnerable groups.

Signing up to register could be very dangerous for undocumented immigrants. It could lead to detention, deportation, and possibly criminal prosecution. Government officials have said clearly that they plan to use the information they get from registration to find and arrest people, deport them, or pressure them to leave the United States on their own.

This document provides information for community members about the registration process. This is not legal advice, and we encourage undocumented community members to consult with a trusted immigration attorney to understand the risks registration might present for them.

What is noncitizen registration?

The Trump administration is using a World War II-era law to try to make immigrant families give their personal information, including their addresses, to immigration officials. This process is called registration. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has said that [the goal](#) of registration is to find and deport undocumented immigrants who register, or pressure them to leave the U.S. on their own. DHS has also [threatened](#) that people who don't register could face criminal charges and has suggested that families leave the United States on their own to avoid being deported or prosecuted.

Who is the government telling to register their information?

The government's new rule says that adults and children over 14 years old who entered the U.S. without permission and haven't had contact with immigration authorities must now register. If you've ever applied for an immigration status or benefit or been in deportation proceedings, you might already be considered to have registered – see more information below. The government is also telling parents or legal guardians of children under 14 years old who entered without permission and have never had any contact with immigration authorities to register their children. Finally, the government is telling all non-citizens who it says are required to register to tell the government within ten days of any change of address.

Who is considered to have already registered?

The government considers many groups of people, including some people without lawful status, to have already registered with the government. According to the new rule the

government published, the following groups of people are considered to have already registered, although it's best to talk to an experienced immigration lawyer to understand your specific situation.

- ▶ Green card holders (lawful permanent residents)
- ▶ People who were granted parole, including advance parole (even if that parole has expired)
- ▶ People who came to the U.S. on a nonimmigrant or immigrant visa (even if it has expired)
- ▶ People who are already in immigration court (removal) proceedings
- ▶ People granted employment authorization on any basis (even if it has expired)
- ▶ Refugees
- ▶ People who applied for lawful permanent residence (even if the application was denied)
- ▶ People who have border crossing cards or entered the U.S. as a “crewman”

Is the government instructing people with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or people applying for asylum to register?

If a DACA recipient, a TPS recipient, or a person seeking or granted asylum has applied for and received an Employment Authorization Document (even if it is expired) they are considered registered under this policy. The government does not consider an application for DACA, TPS, or asylum, or a grant of DACA, TPS, or asylum to meet the registration requirement in and of itself. However, the rule explicitly lists an Employment Authorization Document as a document that shows evidence of registration. People with DACA or TPS who have not been granted an Employment Authorization Document but who have been granted advance parole may also count as already registered. The Rule instructs people who applied for and/or received DACA, TPS, or asylum *but did not receive an Employment Authorization Document* to complete the new registration process.

What is the actual process of registration?

The new registration rule explains how the process of registration will work for people who decide to register. The first step is to create an [online account](#) with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The second step is to fill out and submit a new form through that account called Form G-325R, which asks for personal information (more details on this below). After the form is submitted, USCIS will send the person registering an appointment notice to get fingerprinted at a USCIS service center. At the appointment, officials will collect fingerprints, photos, and a signature. The government will then run background checks, including a criminal history check. Once that's done, the government creates a “Proof of Alien Registration” document, which will then be available in the person's USCIS online account.

What is the process for children?

The rule instructs young people aged 14 and older to complete the same registration process as described above for adults. For children approaching the age of 14, the Rule says those who meet the registration requirements must submit their own registration form and be fingerprinted within 30 days of reaching their 14th birthday. For children under the age of 14 who meet the registration requirements, the Rule instructs their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to register for them, including by creating an online account with USCIS for them. For children under 14, there is no fingerprinting requirement and the “Proof of Alien Registration” document will be made available in the child’s USCIS account after the G-325R is submitted.

Is there a deadline for complying with registration?

The new rule doesn’t give a specific deadline for registration. However, it says that children who are instructed to register must do so and get fingerprinted within 30 days of their 14th birthday. The rule also says that people who are instructed to register must also report changes of address to the government within 10 days of changing their address.

What information goes into registration?

Registration means filling out and submitting through an online USCIS account the new Form G325-R. This Form asks for detailed personal information about the person completing the form and their family, including:

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Mailing and physical address and address history in the U.S. for the past five years
- ▶ Date of birth and country of birth
- ▶ Country of citizenship or nationality
- ▶ Immigration history, including date of arrival in the U.S.
- ▶ “Activities” the person has done in the U.S. and activities they plan to do in the future, and how long the person expects to stay in the U.S.
- ▶ Biographic information including gender, ethnicity, race, height, weight, and eye and hair color
- ▶ Detailed criminal arrest and conviction history
- ▶ Detailed biographic information regarding the person’s spouse, father, and mother, including name, date of birth, and country of birth

Is there a fee for the new form G-325R?

No, there is currently no fee for the registration process. The government says in the new rule that it is considering in the future charging a \$30 fee for the fingerprinting process but has not done so yet.

What happens if I register my information?

What could happen will depend on your individual situation. Both complying with registration and failing to comply may have negative, life lasting consequences. The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security has publicly stated that the goal of the registration process is to force people to leave the United States.

If you are undocumented and have not had contact with immigration authorities before, registering could have immigration and criminal consequences.

- ▶ *Immigration consequences:* The government could – and has stated that it likely would – try to arrest and deport you using the information you provide when you register. Depending on your individual situation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) might send you a letter telling you to report to an ICE office. When you report, ICE might detain you or put you in deportation proceedings. If you can't show you have been in the U.S. for longer than two years, ICE could put you in “expedited removal,” a fast-track deportation process that allows ICE to deport people quickly without any chance to go before a judge.
- ▶ *Criminal consequences:* Coming forward to register may also make you vulnerable to the government charging you with a migration-related criminal offense. If you have been in the U.S. for less than five years and entered without inspection, you might be vulnerable to being charged with the federal crime of illegal entry. If you were deported from the U.S. before and later returned by crossing the border without authorization, the government might be able to charge you with the federal crime of illegal reentry.

What happens if I do not register my information?

The government has also threatened consequences for people who are instructed to register but don't, including criminal and immigration penalties.

- ▶ *Criminal consequences:* The government has threatened to bring criminal charges against people who are instructed to register but do not do so, and the Trump administration has told its federal prosecutors to make these charges a priority. This could mean that any contact with law enforcement, including ICE or local police, could lead to criminal charges for failing to register in addition to immigration detention and possible deportation. Specifically, the government is threatening to prosecute people with a few different charges connected to the registration requirement, all federal misdemeanor offenses:
 1. failure to register, which can be punished with a fine up to \$5,000 or up to six months imprisonment;
 2. failure to carry proof of registration, which can be punished with a fine up to \$5,000 or up to 30 days imprisonment; and

3. failure to notify the government within 10 days of a change of address, which can be punished with a fine of up to \$200 or up to 30 days imprisonment.

There is also a separate criminal offense and deportation ground for registering using false statements.

- ▶ *Immigration consequences:* Most immigration benefits or visas are “discretionary,” meaning the government can use someone’s past negative action to deny them the immigration benefit or visa. If you do not register and later apply for an immigration benefit or visa, the government might deny that benefit or visa for failing to register.

If I already registered or register in the future, do I need to carry certain papers?

Yes. Failing to carry a noncitizen registration document is a federal misdemeanor crime. The government is threatening to prosecute anyone who is a non-citizen who is stopped or arrested and does not have proof of registration. People who have proof of registration (see below) may want to carry this proof with them for this reason. Everyone living in the U.S. still has basic rights under the U.S. Constitution, including undocumented immigrants. You have the right to remain silent and may refuse to speak to immigration officers. You have the right to speak to a lawyer if arrested. Read this [document](#) for more information about your rights if stopped by immigration.

What documents count as proof of registration?

The new “Proof of Alien Registration” document will count as proof that someone has registered under the process. Many non-citizens in the United States already have a document that shows proof of registration, however. The rule includes two slightly different lists of “registration forms” and forms that are “evidence of registration.” It is likely that both sets of documents will count as proof of registration.

- ▶ “Registration forms” include:
 - I-94 Arrival-Departure Record
 - I-485 Application for Status as a Permanent Resident and Form I-698 Application to Adjust Status from Temporary to Permanent Resident
 - I-590 Registration for Classification as a Refugee
- ▶ “Evidence of registration” listed in the regulations includes:
 - I-94 Arrival-Departure Record
 - I-551 Permanent Resident Card (“Green Card”)
 - I-766 Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
 - I-862 Notice to Appear and I-863 Notice of Referral to Immigration Judge
 - I-185 Border Crossing Card and I-186 Border Crossing Card for citizens of Canada and Mexico

How has noncitizen registration been used in the past?

The Trump administration is using a 1940 law, the Alien Registration Act, which required all non-U.S. citizens – not just those without authorized immigration status – to register with the

federal government at their local post office. That process offered people the chance to get legal status in the United States but also set the stage for the government to detain many thousands of people of Japanese descent during World War II.

The U.S. government also used registration to target community members from Muslim majority countries after September 11th, with a program known as the “National Security Entry-Exit Registration System” (NSEERS). NSEERS targeted noncitizen men and youth from 24 Muslim-majority countries and North Korea for registration and tracking. The government forced 83,000 people to register and put 13,000 of them in deportation proceedings, supercharging racial profiling and tearing families apart.

Should I talk to a lawyer?

Yes. Community members with questions about registration and how it might impact them should consult trusted immigration lawyers and monitor trusted sources of information. A lawyer can advise you on your rights and any potential legal risks.

Immigration law is extremely complex. For example, U.S. immigration law says that someone who has stayed in the U.S. for more than a year in undocumented status (“unlawful presence”) is barred from reentering the U.S. for 10 years. This makes it complicated to figure out if people can return after voluntarily departing, as the administration is encouraging people to do. Speak with a lawyer to understand your rights and options.

More information on the history and evolution of noncitizen registration can be found in [NILC's FAQ](#).