

REGISTRY FACTSHEET

What is “registry”?

Registry is an immigration law that provides a way for immigrants to obtain green cards. Green cards allow immigrants to live and work in the U.S., as long as they do not break any criminal or immigration laws.

What qualifies an immigrant for registry?

Immigrants who have continuously lived in the U.S. anytime before January 1, 1972 and have no **other way to become a lawful permanent resident (green card holder)** can apply. The person has to prove that he has lived in the U.S. prior to January 1, 1972, with almost no absences from the U.S. Documents such as leases, mortgages, employment records, school records, utility bills, driver’s license records, medical records, income tax records, and affidavits from friends and family can prove this.

The immigrant has to have good moral character. Certain acts keep a person from having good moral character, like being an alcoholic or drug addict. Lying on immigration papers, being convicted of certain felonies or being sentenced to at least 180 days in jail can also stop someone from having good moral character.

In addition, the applicant must not have been involved in any of the following activities:

- smuggling immigrants into the U.S.;
- participating in Nazi persecutions or genocide;
- engaging in terrorist activities;
- failing to leave U.S. after granted voluntary departure;
- being previously deported;
- failing to comply with immigration court hearings or orders.

The immigrant who qualifies for registry becomes a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or green card holder, after the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services approves their application.

What are the benefits of registry?

Registry gives a person legal status, specifically, LPR. Green card holders can live and work in the U.S., as long as they do not get into serious criminal trouble or break immigration laws. People with green cards can apply to become U.S. citizens.

Who can help me apply for registry?

Contact an attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals Accredited Representative (BIARR). A BIAAR is not a lawyer, but someone the United States Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS) has approved to do immigration papers. Do not use notarios or immigration consultants. They do not know the law and cannot help you. Many times, they only take your money and do not do anything to assist you.

These places are trusted to help people do their immigration papers.

Digna Ochoa Center for Immigration Legal Assistance
Columbia
(803) 929-1940

Catholic Charities
Mt. Pleasant
(843) 388-0089

Low Country Immigration Services
Hilton Head
(843) 682-4419

This is not all of the information that you need to know about registry. Speak to an attorney.

If you do not have a lawyer, the South Carolina Bar Lawyer Referral Service can give you the name of a lawyer who is willing to meet with you and advise you at a lower rate. For the name of a lawyer in your area; call the Lawyer Referral Service (800) 868-2284 statewide or (803) 799-7100 in Columbia.

This brochure was published by the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center is dedicated to advocacy for low-income people in South Carolina to effect systemic change by acting in and through the courts, legislature, administrative agencies, community and the media, and helping others do the same through education, training and co counseling.

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