



NEW FEE EXEMPTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

How the new fee rule lessens financial barriers for survivors of abuse, trafficking, and other crimes

MAY 2024

On April 1, 2024, the government changed the fees for most immigration applications. Many fees went up, but most applications filed by survivors of abuse, trafficking, and other crimes **are now free**.

WHAT TYPES OF APPLICATIONS ARE NOW FREE?

All applications related to the following survivor-based benefits **are now free**:

- ▶ T visas (survivors of severe human trafficking, including labor and sex trafficking)
- ▶ U visas (survivors of certain crimes)
- ▶ Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Petitions (young people who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent)
- ▶ VAWA-based benefits (certain survivors of domestic abuse)
- ▶ Afghan & Iraqi Special Immigrants (certain Afghan & Iraqi immigrants who have worked for or with the US government)

Each step of this process is free, including through adjustment of status (green card), and related applications like waivers, work permits, and appeals.

You can find all application fees and exemptions on the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services' (USCIS) **Fee Schedule** webpage (<https://uscis.gov/g-1055>). The USCIS website also has answers to frequently asked questions, including information about

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the new fee exemptions, at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/frequently-asked-questions-on-the-uscis-fee-rule>.

ARE APPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS ALSO FREE?

Yes! If you apply to include a family member in any of the types of immigration relief listed above, the application for that family member is also free.

IF I ALREADY PAID FEES BEFORE APRIL 1, DO I GET MY MONEY BACK?

No. USCIS will not issue refunds for applications submitted before April 1, 2024, but you can still apply for free for any future survivor-based application. For example, if you applied for a T visa last year and paid any fees for applications associated with your T visa, USCIS will not refund that money. But if you later apply to include family members, those applications will be free under this new rule. When you apply for your green card based on your T visa, those applications will also be free.

IS APPLYING FOR CITIZENSHIP FREE UNDER THIS NEW RULE?

No. The fee exemptions only apply to survivor-based benefits through adjustment of status, meaning until you get your green card. For later applications, such as renewing your green card or applying for citizenship, you must still pay or apply for a fee waiver. For the naturalization application, there is a fee reduction available.

USCIS did make some changes to make it easier to qualify for a fee reduction or fee waiver, including:

- ✦ More citizenship applicants will be eligible to pay only half of the fee.
- ✦ For fee waiver requests, the government will now consider evidence that a person has been a victim of abuse, trafficking, or other crimes.
- ✦ For fee waiver requests, the government will now consider whether any children in the household received public benefits, not only the applicant themselves.



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WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE CHANGES?

If you are a survivor of abuse, trafficking, or another crime, you might qualify for an immigration benefit based on that experience. **Speak to a trusted immigration lawyer about your options.**

To find a trusted legal services provider in your area, head to ilrc.me/findhelp.

Are you a California Community College (CCC) or a California State University (CSU) student? If so, you qualify for **FREE** immigration legal services!

FIND OUT MORE

CCC: findyourally.com

CSU: findyourally.com/csu

Discover more community explainers, toolkits, & alerts about immigration law.

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