



# IMMIGRATION NEWSLETTER

March 2022



Welcome to the first newsletter from the Office of Immigration Practice! The goal of this newsletter is to provide information to DCF staff about current immigration issues and how they affect the families we serve.

The Office of Immigration Practice is part of the Legal Division. The biggest challenges our office faces are:

- **Data:** LINK often lacks citizenship and national origin data, which makes it difficult to assess trends and outcomes
- **Fear:** It can be understandably difficult for immigrants to disclose information, which can close off opportunities for U or T Visas and asylum
- **Misinformation:** Frequent changes in federal law can make it hard to stay current and lead to the spread of misinformation.

In this issue, we provide clarification on current data and terms, as well as the latest laws and policies. We look forward to partnering with you to better serve our immigrant families!

## Contact the Office of Immigration Practice for...

- Case Consultation, coaching, mentoring of AO and Legal staff working with undocumented immigrant and refugee families
- Assessment and guidance to develop and implement operational strategies regarding immigrants and refugees
- Facilitation of getting legal documents from Puerto Rico or contact with consulates and State Department
- Curricula development, training, and policy guidance on immigration issues
- Certification of U and T Visas
- Any situations involving the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Unaccompanied Alien Children Program, the CT Office of Refugee Resettlement, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- Management of ISS-USA contract

## Important Immigration Terms

- **Refugee:** a person who is unable or unwilling to return to their home country because of a “well-founded fear of persecution” due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin.
- **Asylum:** Protection granted to foreign nationals already in the United States or at the border who meet the definition of a “refugee.”
- **Legal Permanent Residents ("Green Card" Holders):** non-citizens who are lawfully authorized to live permanently within the United States. LPRs may accept an offer of employment without special restrictions, own property, receive financial assistance at public colleges and universities, and join the Armed Forces.
- **Naturalization:** The process by which one becomes a U.S. citizen.
- **Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) Status:** A status which allows undocumented, committed children and youth to file for legal permanent residency and citizenship when they have been in the U.S. long enough.
- **Visas:** A travel document that allows one to travel to the U.S. There are dozens of different kinds. **U Visas** and **T Visas** are set aside for victims of certain crimes who have assisted law enforcement/governments with investigations. U Visas tend to involve mental or physical abuse and T Visas involve human trafficking. These visas can apply to individuals already in the U.S. and receiving one can help them obtain legal status.
- **VAWA:** The Violence Against Women Act also provides immigration relief to victims of abusive partners in certain situations.

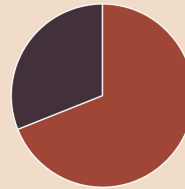
# Immigration Data

Estimates range from  
**113,000-120,000**  
undocumented  
individuals living in CT,  
per 2020 US Census Data

**1 in 7** people in CT is  
an immigrant.



**69%** of undocumented  
CT residents are from  
Latin America



**23%** of all immigrants  
in the U.S. are not  
documented



**22%** of CT residents  
speak a language other  
than English at home



After **Spanish**, the most  
common non-English  
languages in CT are  
**Portuguese, Chinese  
(incl. Mandarin and  
Cantonese), Italian,  
and Polish**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine will likely result in an increase in refugees. Connecticut also saw many refugees from Afghanistan after the U.S. withdrawal. Supports for refugees are available:

**Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI):** [Website](#)

**Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS):** [Website](#)



# Legal Developments

## **Title 42: A federal law regulating immigration at the border of the United States**

Title 42, a public health statute used to prevent spread of disease, has been invoked to return migrants (including asylum seekers) to their home countries at the US border. Several officials at the CDC have said there is no scientific basis for using this law to prevent the spread of COVID. Customs and Border Patrol data for FFY 2021 states that 1.7 million people were expelled from the border. Currently, two court decisions have halted Title 42 for certain populations and the CDC has until March 30th to review the policy and either keep, amend, or terminate it.

## **Migrant Protection Protocols ("Remain in Mexico")**

This policy requires migrants to await asylum and other humanitarian relief on the Mexican side of the southern US border. The Biden Administration tried to discontinue this policy, but a US District Court has required it to restart and the appeal to the US Supreme Court was denied. It is currently in effect and the US will provide aid and vaccines to migrants in Mexico awaiting asylum application decisions.

## **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**

DACA is program that allows certain people who came to the United States as children and who meet several guidelines to request deferred action for two years. It makes them eligible for work authorization and prevents them from being removed from the U.S. Due to a District Court ruling, the DACA program is being recreated. Currently, people previously admitted to the DACA program can apply to renew their protections, but there can be no new applications nor decisions made on pending applications until the program is finalized.

## **Separation of Families**

In 2018, about 5,500 children were separated from their parents at the US-Mexican border under the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy. Although this policy has ended, a lawsuit alleges that 445 children have yet to be reunited with their parents.

## **Vienna Convention Clarification**

Some countries require DCF to notify a consulate or embassy when the Department takes legal action against one of their citizens, while others do not mandate it. If a client is a citizen of a non-mandatory notification country, the best practice is to advise the client that their consulate may be able to assist them. For more details, please see the US State Department Guide (page 5) and reach out to the Office of Immigration Practice for case specific guidance.

## **Public Act No. 21-176 (Formerly HB-6687)**

As of January 2023, children 8 years old and younger will qualify for Medicaid (HUSKY), regardless of immigration status. There will be a legislative study that examines possibly expanding Medicaid to other undocumented individuals. Pregnant and immediately post-partum women are already able to participate in HUSKY regardless of immigration status.

### **Contact the Office of Immigration Practice:**

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[CT.gov/DCF/Immigration/Home](https://www.ct.gov/DCF/Immigration/Home)

