

**PRESENTED AT**  
**Fundamentals of Immigration and Nationality Law**

October 24, 2018  
Austin, Texas

**Immigration Terminology**

**Amanda Baran**  
**Sarah Woelk**

Amanda Baran  
Immigration Policy Consultant  
Arlington, VA  
abaran@gmail.com

Sarah Woelk  
Casa Marianella  
Austin, TX  
swoelk@casamarianella.org

## **A Selection of Important Immigration Law Terms and Acronyms**

<b>A-number</b>	A unique number assigned to a non-citizen by the U.S. immigration system. For example, a person who submits an application to <b>USCIS</b> gets an A-number as does a person who is arrested by <b>ICE</b> .
<b>AAO</b>	Stands for <i>Administrative Appeals Office</i> . The AAO is part of <b>USCIS</b> and can consider appeals from certain negative decisions by <b>USCIS</b> officers.
<b>Adjudicator's Field Manual</b>	This is a compilation of USCIS policies and procedures. Portions of it are available to the public at <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/AFM/HTML/AFM/0-0-0-1.html">https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/AFM/HTML/AFM/0-0-0-1.html</a> . Parts of it have migrated to the USCIS Policy Manual. <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual.html">https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual.html</a> Eventually the USCIS Policy Manual will replace the Adjudicator's Field Manual.
<b>Admissibility</b>	This refers to whether a person is eligible to enter the U.S. Some individuals who are already in the U.S. must be admissible in order to obtain certain immigration benefits. The grounds of inadmissibility are set out in section 212 of the <b>INA</b> (8 U.S.C. §1182). Waivers are available in some circumstances.
<b>Affidavit of support</b>	Certain applications must include an affidavit of support to demonstrate that the applicant will not become a <b>public charge</b> .
<b>AILA</b>	Stands for <i>American Immigration Lawyers Association</i> . As the name suggests, it is a national association of immigration lawyers.
<b>Adjustment of status</b>	Adjustment of status is the process by which a person who is already in the United States and who meets eligibility requirements can apply for permanent resident status (a green card) in the U.S. <i>Cf.</i> <b>Consular Processing</b> .
<b>AOS</b>	<i>See</i> <b>Adjustment of Status</b> .
<b>USCIS Application Support Center</b>	An Application Support Center ("ASC") is a USCIS office that provides finger printing services and takes photographs in connection with pending applications.

<b>Arriving alien</b>	The term refers to someone who has sought admission at the border. Some people who are already in the U.S. are considered arriving aliens, such as individuals who arrive at a <b>POE</b> seeking asylum.
<b>Asylee</b>	An asylee is a person who has been granted asylum. Asylum can be granted only to a person who is in the United States. <i>Cf.</i> <b>Refugee</b> .
<b>Asylum</b>	Asylum is a form of protection granted to a person in the U.S. who has shown a fear of persecution in his or her home country based on political opinion, race, religion, nationality or membership in a particular social group.
<b>BALCA</b>	Stands for <i>Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals</i> . BALCA, which is part of the <b>DOL</b> , mainly reviews denials of <b>PERM</b> labor certification cases.
<b>BIA</b>	Stands for <i>Board of Immigration Appeals</i> . The BIA is part of the <b>EOIR</b> . The BIA considers appeals of decisions by Immigration Judges. BIA decisions can be appealed directly to federal circuit courts.
<b>BIA Accredited Representative</b>	The <b>BIA</b> accredits qualified non-lawyers to represent aliens on behalf of recognized non-profit organizations. Some accredited representatives may represent individuals before <b>DHS</b> only. Others may represent individuals before both <b>DHS</b> and <b>EOIR</b> .
<b>Biometrics</b>	A person who files an application with <b>USCIS</b> will generally receive a notice of a biometrics appointment. At the appointment, <b>USCIS</b> will take fingerprints and photographs.
<b>Border Crossing Card</b>	A Border Crossing Card is a visa issued to Mexican citizens only. As a stand-alone document, it can be used to visit border areas for periods of less than 72 years. It can function as a regular tourist (B1/B2) visa if presented with a valid Mexican passport.
<b>Cancellation of Removal</b>	Cancellation of removal is a former of relief that may be available to people in removal proceedings. The requirements are different for permanent residents and non-permanent residents, but in either case eligibility depends on having lived in the United States for a certain number of years, among other things. A person who is granted cancellation of removal remains or becomes a permanent resident.

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](https://utcle.org/elibrary)

Title search: Immigration Terminology

Also available as part of the eCourse

[2018 Fundamentals of Immigration and Nationality Law eConference](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the  
2018 Fundamentals of Immigration and Nationality Law session  
"Immigration Agencies and Basic Immigration Terminology"