

PRESENTED AT
Fundamentals of Immigration and Nationality Law
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Immigration Terminology

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A Selection of Important Immigration Law Terms and Acronyms

A-number	A unique number assigned to a non-citizen by the U.S. immigration system. For example, people who submit certain applications to USCIS get an A-number as does a person who is arrested by ICE .
AAO	Stands for <i>Administrative Appeals Office</i> . The AAO is part of USCIS and can consider appeals from certain negative decisions by USCIS officers.
Acquisition of Citizenship	This term refers to the manner by which certain children born outside of the United States automatically acquire citizenship through their parents
Adjudicator's Field Manual	This is a compilation of USCIS policies and procedures. It has now been replaced by the USCIS Policy Manual . https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual . Parts of the Adjudicator's Field Manual have been copied into the Policy Manual.
Adjustment of status	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> Consular Processing .
Admissibility	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 INA (8 U.S.C. §1182). Waivers are available in some circumstances.
Affidavit of support	Certain applications must include an affidavit of support to demonstrate that the applicant will not become a public charge . The I-864 affidavit of support is required for almost all family-based immigrant visa applications. The I-134 affidavit of support is required or recommended to support certain nonimmigrant visa applications, including the K fiancé/ée visa applications.
AILA	Stands for <i>American Immigration Lawyers Association</i> . As the name suggests, it is a national association of immigration lawyers.

Application Support Center	An Application Support Center (“ASC”) is a USCIS office that provides fingerprinting services and takes photographs in connection with pending applications. Such centers are located in many countries for biometric processing connected with nonimmigrant and immigrant visa applications at US Consulates.
Arriving alien	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 POE seeking asylum.
Asylee	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> Refugee .
Asylum	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.
BALCA	Stands for <i>Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals</i> . BALCA, which is part of the DOL , mainly reviews denials of PERM labor certification cases.
BIA	Stands for <i>Board of Immigration Appeals</i> . The BIA is part of the EOIR , which is part of the US Department of Justice. The BIA considers appeals of decisions by Immigration Judges and the denials of certain immigrant visa petitions. BIA decisions can be appealed directly to federal circuit courts.
BIA Accredited Representative	The BIA accredits qualified non-lawyers to represent aliens on behalf of recognized non-profit organizations. Some accredited representatives may represent individuals before DHS only. Others may represent individuals before both DHS and EOIR .
Biometrics	A person who files an application with USCIS will generally receive a notice of a biometrics appointment. At the appointment, USCIS will take fingerprints and photographs. The US Department of State also schedules biometrics appointments outside of the US.

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