



General information

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How do I financially sponsor someone who wants to immigrate?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Under U.S. law, every person who immigrates based on a relative petition must have a financial sponsor. If you choose to sponsor your relative's immigration by filing a **Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative**, you must agree to be the financial sponsor and file an affidavit of support when the time comes for actual immigration. If you do not meet the financial qualifications at that time, you still must file a **Form I-864, Affidavit of Support**, and accept responsibility, but you and your relative also must find other individuals who meet the requirements and are willing to make this commitment by filing affidavits of support.

What is the purpose of the affidavit of support?

The affidavit of support helps ensure that new immigrants will not need to rely on public benefits such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. If a person for whom you file an affidavit of support becomes a permanent resident and is later given certain public benefits, the agency that gave the benefits can require that you repay that money.

Who has to have an affidavit of support in order to immigrate?

Anyone applying to be a permanent resident through a family member must have a financial sponsor. A sponsor is also required for a family member coming to work for a relative, or for a company in which a relative owns 5 percent or more of the company.

The person filing the petition sponsoring the person's immigration must file an affidavit of support. If he or she does not, then their sponsorship is not complete, and the person will not be given permission to immigrate based on that petition.

What are the financial qualifications for an affidavit of support?

The law requires a sponsor to prove an income level at or above 125 percent of the Federal poverty level. (For active duty military personnel, the income requirement is 100 percent of the poverty level when sponsoring a husband, wife, or children.) If your income

does not meet the requirement, your assets such as checking and savings accounts, stocks, bonds, or property may be considered in determining your financial ability. Federal poverty levels are updated each year by the Department of Health and Human Services. You can check current minimums at their Web site at www.aspe.hhs.gov.

I filed the I-130 immigrant petition for my relative, but I do not meet the minimum income requirement. Can anyone else be a financial sponsor?

If you do not meet the financial qualifications, the income of certain other household members can be added to your income level if they sign a contract on **Form I-864A, Affidavit of Support Contract Between Sponsor and Household Member**, agreeing to make their income or assets available for the support of the relative applying for permanent residence.

If you still cannot meet the financial qualifications, another person must complete a separate affidavit of support to become a joint financial sponsor of the person's immigration. The joint sponsor must meet all sponsorship requirements separately, including the minimum income requirements or his or her household, and must be willing to assume, along with you, financial liability for the sponsored immigrant(s).

All sponsors must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, be at least 18 years old, and be living in the United States (including territories and possessions) when they file the affidavit of support.

When and how do I file the affidavit of support?

You do not need to file it with your I-130 petition. When the person reaches the front of the line to immigrate based on your I-130 petition, he or she will have to submit the affidavit of support with an application for an immigrant visa or permanent residence. Just follow the instructions for the affidavit and submit all the necessary supporting documents with the visa or residence application at that time.

Do I need to notify USCIS if I move?

If you financially sponsor someone, you are legally required to keep USCIS informed of your address until your financial responsibility ends. If you change your address, you will need to file a **Form I-865, Sponsor's Notice of Change of Address**, within 30 days after the date of your move. Please read the instructions on the form carefully.

What if a person I financially sponsor gets public benefits after becoming a permanent resident?

If a sponsor does not provide basic support to the immigrants they sponsor, the sponsored immigrants, or the Federal or State agency that gave the benefits to the family members, can seek reimbursement of the funds through legal action against the sponsor.

When does my financial responsibility end?

An affidavit of support is enforceable against the sponsor until the person they sponsored either:

- Becomes a U.S. citizen; or
- Is credited with 40 quarters of work in the United States (usually 10 years); or
- Leaves the United States permanently; or
- Dies.

Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Petition for Alien Relative	I-130
Affidavit of Support	I-864
Affidavit of Support Contract Between Sponsor and Household Member	I-864A
Sponsor's Notice of Change of Address	I-865

Other U.S. Government Services—Click or Call		
General Information	www.usa.gov	1-800-333-4636
New Immigrants	www.welcometoUSA.gov	
U.S. Dept. of State	www.state.gov	1-202-647-6575
U.S. Dept. of Health	www.aspe.hhs.gov	1-877-696-6775

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You can also visit www.uscis.gov to download forms, e-file some applications, check the status of an application, and more. It's a great place to start!

If you don't have Internet access at home or work, try your local library.

If you cannot find what you need, please call **Customer Service at: 1-800-375-5283**
Hearing Impaired TDD Customer Service:
1-800-767-1833

Disclaimer: *This guide provides basic information to help you become generally familiar with our rules and procedures. For more information, or the law and regulations, please visit our Web site. Immigration law can be complex, and it is impossible to describe every aspect of every process. You may wish to be represented by a licensed attorney or by a nonprofit agency accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals.*