

Understanding the Alien Registration Act



The **Alien Registration Act of 1940** was passed during a period of heightened fears over fascism, communism, and potential subversive threats in the lead-up to World War II. In response to national security concerns, Congress required all foreign nationals in the United States who would remain for **30 days or longer to register, be fingerprinted, and carry proof of registration at all times.**

Although this law has existed for decades, it has not been regularly enforced. However, beginning **April 11, 2025**, the federal government has implemented a new process requiring **certain foreign nationals who did not receive proof of registration at entry, including those who entered without inspection or were not issued a Form I-94, to register** formally with the government.

The current administration has revived these 20th-century registration requirements in an effort to expand the tracking of noncitizens within the United States through updated biometric and electronic registration systems. Here is what you need to know.

Who Must Register?

Many immigrants, including some who may lack formal legal status, are already considered registered (see “Who Is Considered Already Registered,” below).

Anyone else who enters the United States and plans to stay **for 30 days or longer** must register **within 30 days of entry**. This includes:

- Canadians who enter at a land border and are not issued a Form I-94.
- Individuals who entered without inspection and have not yet registered.
- **Children who turn 14 years old** while in the United States — they must register within **30 days** of their 14th birthday.
- Minors who turn 14 while outside the U.S. must register within 30 days of re-entry.

Note: Parents or legal guardians are responsible for registering minor children who were not registered upon visa application and who will remain in the U.S. for 30 days or more.



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Who Is Considered Already Registered?

The following individuals are already considered registered:

- **Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card holders)**
- **Nonimmigrants** who were issued a **Form I-94** or **I-94W** (paper or electronic), even if their period of admission has expired
- Individuals who, at their last admission, were issued **immigrant or nonimmigrant visas** (unless under 14 years old)
- Individuals issued an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**
- Applicants for lawful permanent residence or legalization who filed any of the following forms and provided fingerprints (**unless fingerprinting was waived**):
 - **Form I-485** (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status)
 - **Form I-687** (Application for Status as a Temporary Resident)
 - **Form I-698** (Application to Adjust Status from Temporary to Permanent Resident)
 - **Form I-700** (Application for Temporary Residence under SAW)
- Individuals issued a Border Crossing Card (BCC)
- Individuals placed in removal proceedings and issued **Form I-862** (Notice to Appear) or **Form I-863** (Referral to Immigration Judge) are also considered registered.

Individuals Who Are Exempt from Registration

The following individuals are **exempt** from the alien registration requirement:

- **Visa holders** who were already registered and fingerprinted during the **visa application process**
- Holders of **A visas** (diplomatic or government officials and their family members)
- Holders of **G visas** (representatives of international organizations and their family members)
- Individuals present in the U.S. for **less than 30 days**
- **Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs)** who turn 14 years old **while outside** the United States – they must register **within 30 days of returning** to the U.S.
- **American Indians born in Canada** with **at least 50% American Indian blood**, present in the U.S. under 8 U.S.C. § 1359





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What Documents Count as Proof of Registration?

Several types of official documents are recognized as **proof of alien registration**, including:

- The **Proof of Alien Registration document** issued after completion of Form G-325R (see below).
- **Form I-94** (Arrival-Departure Record), issued to:
 - Nonimmigrants admitted with a visa.
 - Individuals paroled into the U.S. under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA.
 - Individuals granted permission to voluntarily depart.
- **Form I-95** – Crewmen's Landing Permit for crew arriving by vessel or aircraft.
- **Forms I-181 and I-184** – establishing lawful permanent residence or crewman identification.
- **Forms I-185 and I-186** – Border Crossing Cards for Canadian and Mexican citizens.
- **Forms I-221 and I-221S** – Orders to Show Cause in deportation proceedings.
- **Form I-485** – Application for Permanent Resident Status (pending or approved).
- **Form I-551** – Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).
- **Form I-590** – Registration as a Refugee-Escapee.
- **Forms I-687, I-691, I-698, and I-700** – Applications and approvals for temporary or permanent resident status.
- **Form I-766** – Employment Authorization Document (EAD).
- **Form I-817** – Application under the Family Unity Program.
- **Form I-862** – Notice to Appear in removal proceedings.
- **Form I-863** – Notice of Referral to an Immigration Judge.

Tip: Always carry a valid and current proof document if you are 18 years or older, especially during travel or official encounters.

Registration Deadlines

- Individuals must register **within 30 days of entry** into the United States.
- Noncitizen children must register **within 30 days of turning 14** years old.
- There is no set season for registration – deadlines are based solely on your **entry date** or **birthday**.





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How and Where to Register

USCIS has created a new form, **G-325R, Biometrics Information (Registration)**.

You must register **online** through the USCIS website by following these steps:

1. Create an online USCIS account at my.uscis.gov.
2. Complete and submit Form G-325R online.
3. Attend a biometrics appointment at a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC), where you will:
 - a. Provide fingerprints and photos.
 - b. Sign a statement under oath affirming the information you provided.
4. Await completion of background checks.
5. Receive a Proof of Alien Registration document, available in your USCIS online account.

Keeping Your Registration Documents Safe

- You must carry proof of registration if you are 18 years of age or older.
- You may consider in some cases to carry copies of your registration documents to prevent loss or damage to the originals that are not easily replaced.
- Even if your I-94 is electronic, print a physical copy and carry it with you. CBP officers may not accept a digital version during inspections.

Change of Address Requirement

If you move, you must:

- **Notify USCIS of your new address within 10 days** of moving.
- Update your address through your **USCIS online account** or by electronically filing **Form AR-11**.





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Penalties for Noncompliance

Offense	Fine	Imprisonment	Additional Consequences
Willful failure to register	Up to \$5,000	Up to 6 months	Removal possible
Failure to report address change	Up to \$5,000	Up to 30 days	Removal if not excusable
Failure to carry registration proof	Up to \$5,000	Up to 30 days	N/A
Fraudulent registration	Varies	Criminal prosecution	Removal guaranteed

Know Your Rights

Regardless of your immigration status, you have basic rights under the U.S. Constitution:

- You have the **right to remain silent**.
- You have the **right to consult with an attorney** before answering questions or signing any documents.
- You are not required to answer questions about your immigration status without legal counsel present.

Important Notice

This guidance is intended for **general informational purposes only** and does **not constitute legal advice**.

You should not act or rely on any information contained in this flyer without first consulting a **licensed, competent immigration attorney** who can assess your specific situation.

For more detailed information regarding the Alien Registration Act please review [USCIS Guidance](#).

Contact any member of Constangy's [Immigration Team](#) for further guidance.

