



How to Apply for Temporary Protected Status



This fact sheet talks about a short-term immigration status called temporary protected status (TPS). This fact sheet tells you:

- Who can apply for temporary protected status;
- What you can do if you get temporary protected status;
- The steps to apply for temporary protected status.

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Who Can Get TPS

What is temporary protected status?

It is a short-term immigration status. You can apply for it if the U.S. government thinks it is dangerous for people from your country to return home. The danger might be from a natural disaster, war, or civil unrest. The U.S. government keeps a list of all the countries where people are eligible for temporary protected status. The list is available on the USCIS website at: uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status The countries on this list change.

If you want temporary protected status, you must apply for it. You do not automatically get it because your home country is on the list. People with temporary protected status can live and work legally in the U.S. until the U.S. government thinks it is safe to go home.

Temporary protected status does NOT give a person permanent immigration status. But you might be able to renew your temporary protected status if your home country stays on the list. Talk to an immigration lawyer if you want to stay longer in the United States.

Am I eligible for temporary protected status?

There are 4 things you need to apply for temporary protected status. You must:

- 1. Be from a country that the U.S. has put on the list for temporary protected status.**
That means that the U.S. government decided it is not safe for people to return home to that country. When you apply, you will need documents to prove your nationality. If you have dual nationality, talk to an immigration lawyer before applying for temporary protected status.
- 2. Physically live in the United States when your home country is put on the list.** This is called having “physical presence.” You also must have kept a residence in the U.S. for the time period listed. This is called having “continuous presence.” If you traveled outside of the U.S. around or during the eligibility dates, talk to an immigration lawyer before applying for temporary protected status.
- 3. Apply by the application deadline.** There is a short period of time when the U.S. government will accept applications for temporary protected status. They announce the application deadline on the USCIS website at: uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status You must apply before the deadline. If you miss the deadline, talk to an immigration lawyer.

4. **Have a clean criminal record.** You cannot have more than two misdemeanor convictions. Minor theft or driving without insurance are misdemeanors. If you have been convicted, you might not be eligible for temporary protected status. Talk to an immigration lawyer before admitting to a crime, agreeing to a deal with the police or an attorney, or paying a citation. If you have been convicted of any crime, talk to an immigration lawyer before applying for temporary protected status.

If I get temporary protected status, how long does it last?

It depends. You are only eligible for temporary protected status while your home country is on the list. A country can stay on the list for a short or long time. If there was a natural disaster in a country, it might be on the list for 3 months. If there is a long war in a country, it might be on the list for years. You have to renew your status every time your home country is re-added to the list.



Example: Sofia left Ukraine because of war.

Ukraine was put on the temporary protected status (TPS) list from April 2022 until October 2023 because of war. Sofia was born in Ukraine. She left and came to Minnesota in January 2023. Sofia applied for TPS. She was granted TPS until October 2023. In October 2023, the U.S. government extended Ukraine's place on the list until April 2025. Sofia had to re-apply for TPS and work authorization to keep her status.

Which countries are on the temporary protected status list?

The list changes. To learn if your home country is on the list:

1. Go to the USCIS website: uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status
2. Click on "Countries Currently Designated for TPS" to see the list.

If you have temporary protected status, check the website daily to see if the U.S. government is extending your home country's time on the list. Start checking 3 months before your temporary protected status expires.

When is the deadline to apply for temporary protected status?

This application deadline is different for each country. **If you miss the deadline, talk to an immigration lawyer.** To find the application deadline:

1. Go to the USCIS website: uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status
2. Click on “Countries Currently Designated for TPS” to see the list.
3. Choose your country. The “Registration Period” is the deadline if you are applying for the first time. The “Re-Registration Period” is the deadline if you are renewing your TPS.

The table in this fact sheet tells you what the different dates on the website mean.

Category	What It Means
TPS Designated Through:	The date TPS ends for people from this country. This applies to people applying for the first time <u>and</u> people renewing their TPS.
Re-Registration Period:	Date you must apply to renew your TPS. Not every country will have this date. This is for people who already have TPS.
Registration Period:	Date you must apply for TPS if you are applying for the first time.
Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Auto-Extended Through:	If you currently have work authorization, this is the date it is valid until. You have to renew your work authorization when you renew your TPS. But you can keep working while your application is pending. This is for people who already have TPS.
Continuous Residence in United States Since:	You must have been living in the United States since this date to apply. You cannot have moved to another country and come back. This applies to people applying for the first time <u>and</u> people renewing their TPS.
Continuous Physical Presence in United States Since:	You can only have traveled outside the United States for “brief, casual, and innocent” trips since this date. This applies to people applying for the first time <u>and</u> people renewing their TPS. If you have traveled outside the U.S. since this date, talk to an immigration lawyer before applying for temporary protected status.
TPS Designation Date:	The date the U.S. government first added this country to the TPS list. This applies to people applying for the first time <u>and</u> people renewing their TPS.
Current TPS Designation Date:	The date the U.S. government re-certified this country to the TPS list. Not every country will have this date. This applies to people applying for the first time <u>and</u> people renewing their TPS.

Can I work if I have temporary protected status?

Yes, IF you apply for work authorization. You do not automatically get permission to work if you have temporary protected status. You must apply for work authorization at the same time you apply for temporary protected status. There are instructions for applying for work authorization in the “Steps to Apply” part of this fact sheet. If you need to renew your temporary protected status, you have to renew your work authorization at the same time. You can keep working while your application is being reviewed.

Should I talk to an immigration lawyer?

You can apply for temporary protected status without talking to a lawyer. It is a good idea to talk to a lawyer before you apply if:

- You have dual nationality. Example: You are a Somali national and were born in Ethiopia.
- You miss the application deadline.
- You have been convicted of any crime.
- You have been asked to plead guilty to a crime or pay a citation.
- You have traveled outside of the U.S. around or during the eligibility dates.
- You want to live and work in the United States permanently.
- You have questions about your eligibility for Temporary Protected Status.

Where can I find a lawyer to help me?

Search for free lawyers and legal clinics on LawHelpMN.org. Free lawyers are in high demand. You are not guaranteed a free lawyer just because you ask for one. You can also talk to a private lawyer if you can afford to pay about \$200 for a meeting.

Steps to Apply

How do I apply for temporary protected status?

There are 4 steps to apply for work authorization.



Fill out Form I-821.

Go to uscis.gov/i-821 or scan the QR code to get the form. Type your answers or write them in black ink. Write your answers in English.



Gather documents to send with your application.

You must send documents that prove you are eligible for temporary protected status. **The most common reason applications are denied is because people do not send proof.** Send 7 things with your temporary protected status application:



- **Completed Form I-821.**
- **Copy of 1 document that proves your identity.** The document must have been issued by the United States or other country's government. If the document is not in English, you must get it translated. Examples of acceptable documents include:
 - Passport showing your picture, name, and date of birth;
 - Birth certificate with photo ID;
 - Visa issued by a foreign consulate;
 - Previous employment authorization document if you are renewing your application; **OR**
 - National ID document with your photo.



- **Copy of 1 document that proves you are from a country on the temporary protected status list.**
Examples of acceptable documents include:
 - Passport showing your picture, name, and date of birth; **OR**
 - Birth certificate with photo ID.
- **Copies of 1 to 3 documents that show you live in the United States.** You can send 1 document if that is all you have. It is better to send 3. Examples of acceptable documents include:
 - Lease agreement;
 - Mortgage documents;
 - Medical records;
 - School records for you or your kids (your name must be on the records);
 - Employment records;
 - Letters from neighbors, religious community, volunteer work;
 - Receipts from purchases you made in the U.S.;
 - Records of money transfers;
 - Phone records;
 - Mail you've received at a U.S. address; **OR**
 - Photos, if they are date stamped and taken in the United States.
- **Completed Form I-765 (IF you want to apply for work authorization.)** People with temporary protected status are allowed to work, but they must apply for work authorization. Fill out Form I-765. It is at: uscis.gov/i-765. You must send Form I-765 with your temporary protected status application. Do NOT send it separately. LawHelpMN has a fact sheet that talks about how to apply for work authorization. Scan the QR code or go to: lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/how-get-permission-work-minnesota





- **Two identical 2" x 2" passport photos (IF you are applying for work authorization).** You can take passport photos at stores like CVS, Wal-Mart, or Walgreens.
- **Fee OR a fee waiver application.** Send a money order or check. A money order is the best way to pay.
 - **If you are applying for temporary protected status for the first time:** There is a \$50 fee to apply and a \$30 biometrics fee. IF you are also applying for work authorization, there is an additional \$520 fee.
 - **If you are applying to renew your temporary protected status:** There is a \$30 biometrics fee. IF you are also applying for work authorization, there is an additional \$520 fee.
 - **If you cannot afford the fee, apply for a fee waiver.** LawHelpMN's website has a fact sheet on how to apply for a fee waiver. Go to: lawhelpmn.org/self-help-library/fact-sheet/immigration-fee-waivers-uscis

STEP 3

Make a copy of your application.

Make a copy of your Form I-821 and the documents you send with your application. Keep the copy for your records.

STEP 4



Send your application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- Mail the application to the address that matches your country. Go to:
<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>
Click on “Countries Currently Designated for TPS.”
Choose your country to find the mailing address.
- Purchase tracking when you mail your application. Make sure to get proof or a receipt when it is delivered.