



# Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) is one of the most common forms of legal relief for immigrant youth.

Youth who qualify for SIJS may obtain legal status and be allowed to remain in the United States long-term.



## There are two criteria that determine if a child is eligible for SIJS:



1. The youth has been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents in their home country or in the United States, and
2. It is not in the best interest of the youth to return to their home country or to be reunited with their parent(s).

## SIJS consists of two parts:



1. In the first part, the family must go to the family court for the sponsor/caregiver to obtain legal custody of the youth, or to obtain a special order from the judge declaring the youth dependent on the juvenile court. Most states require that this step be completed before the youth turns 18.
2. In the second part, an SIJS application must be filed with USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services). After the application is approved, the youth can apply to be a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) when a visa is available.

### It's important to consider that...

A youth who obtains SIJS will not be able to petition for their parents to obtain legal status in the United States at any point in the future, even if only one of their parents abused, neglected, or abandoned the youth.

**Applying for SIJS is a complicated process. It is very important to consult your case with an attorney to assist you as soon as possible, as there are many steps in the process and it is essential to act quickly.**

**This handout is for informational purposes only and not intended to serve as legal advice.**