

## **Explainer: Updates to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)**

### **Termination of Deferred Action Policy**

On June 6, 2025 the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a [policy alert](#) announcing its decision to terminate the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) deferred action policy. What does this change mean for unaccompanied children?

### **What is Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)?**

SIJS is a form of legal relief available to some unaccompanied children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both parents, and for whom it is not in their best interest to return to their home country for that reason. After SIJS is approved, the child can eventually apply for lawful permanent residence (LPR, or a “green card”) and U.S. citizenship, providing a pathway to stay in the U.S. long-term. For more information on SIJS, [click here](#).

### **What is the SIJS deferred action policy?**

Established by USCIS in early 2022, the SIJS deferred action policy provided children with approved SIJS applications temporary protection from deportation and allowed them to apply for a work permit (employment authorization document, or EAD) while waiting for a green card to become available. The policy was implemented due to the years-long green card backlog for youth with approved SIJS.

### **What does the termination of the SIJS deferred action policy mean for children with approved SIJS? Will they be deported?**

As of June 2025, children with approved SIJS will no longer be eligible for a work permit while they wait to apply for their green card. Youth who already have a work permit through a previously approved SIJS application will be able to keep it, but they will not be able to renew their work permit once it expires.

SIJS deferred action previously provided temporary protection from deportation, allowing judges to administratively close children’s court cases with approved SIJS. With deferred action now terminated, attorneys will return to the previous practice of filing continuances in immigration court for cases with approved SIJS until it is time for the child to apply for their green card, rather than requesting administrative closure. Children in active immigration proceedings with an approved SIJS application are at low risk of deportation but may face removal if they commit certain crimes or fail to appear in immigration court.

**NOTE: Navigating the legal process and applying for SIJS or any type of legal relief is a complicated process. It is very important for families to consult with an attorney and obtain legal representation for the child’s immigration case.**

This resource was last updated on August 8, 2025.

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This handout is for information only and not intended to serve as legal advice.

If you are interested in more information, visit our

Unaccompanied Children Resource Center: [ucresourcecenter.org](https://ucresourcecenter.org).