

**SIJS Legal Services Providers,
continued:**

Lutheran Social Services of New York
Tel: 212-265-1826

New York Law School Safe Passage Project
SIJS Contacts: Lenni Benson, Esq.; Bethany Ow, Esq.
Tel: 212-431-2336
lenni.benson@nyls.edu; bethany.ow@nyls.edu

Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project
SIJS Contact: Lynn Neugebauer
Tel: 718-943-8634
lneugebauer@safehorizon.org

Sanctuary for Families (All Boroughs)
Immigration Intervention Project
SIJS Contact: Deborah Lee, Esq.
Tel: 718-250-4402
dlee@sffny.org

Urban Justice Center
Peter Cicchino Youth Project
(Serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or
questioning youth)
SIJS Contact: Megan Stuart, Esq.
Tel: 646-602-5643/877-LGBT-LAW
mstuart@urbanjustice.org



Office of Advocacy
Immigrant Services

150 William Street, 1st Floor
New York, NY 10038
www.nyc.gov

**Parent's and Children's Rights
Helpline
212-676-9421**

(Interpreters Available)

Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Gladys Carrión, Esq., Commissioner



**SPECIAL IMMIGRANT
JUVENILE STATUS**

**Green Cards for Youth
in Foster Care**



Some of the information provided in this pamphlet was adapted from The Door's pamphlet *SIJS Green Cards for Youth in Foster Care and Guardianship*.

This pamphlet contains legal information, but it should not be considered legal advice and is not a substitute for speaking with a lawyer.

The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is the City's child welfare agency dedicated to protecting children, strengthening families and providing child care and Head Start programs.

ACS's commitment to protecting children and strengthening families extends to all children and families in New York City regardless of their immigration status and language they may speak.

Children's Services and Immigrant Families

All families are eligible for services through Children's Services free of charge. It does not matter if you are a citizen, legal permanent resident, or do not have legal documents. Your Children's Services or agency caseworker may ask about your immigration status or that of your family to help get assistance for you or so that Children's Services can get federal reimbursement for the services provided to you. This information is not sought for reporting to immigration authorities or assisting in immigration investigations. Except under very limited circumstances (such as suspected criminal or terrorist activity) Children's Services and its partner foster care and preventive service agencies do not share information about you or your family members with immigration authorities.

WHAT IS Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)?

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status ("SIJS") is a special way for immigrant youth who cannot be reunited with one or both parents due to abuse, abandonment, neglect, or a similar reason, to become lawful permanent residents of the United States and obtain a green card. Young people do not need the help of their parents to obtain SIJS.

WHAT ARE THE SIJS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible, youth must:

1. Be in the U.S.;
2. Be unmarried ;
3. Be under 21 at time of filing;
4. Have court involvement (i.e. Family, Surrogate's or Supreme Court).

Additional Criteria:

5. Reunification with one or both parents is not viable due to abuse, abandonment, death, failure to plan, etc.;
6. Not in youth's best interest to return to country of origin.

Please note that the applicant's law enforcement contacts and crime-related issues are factors in getting Lawful Permanent Residence/a Green Card based on SIJS. Be sure to discuss these issues carefully with a SIJS legal services provider prior to making any applications.

FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

If you are in foster care and do not have legal immigration status, you should receive assistance from ACS and your agency. You should notify your case planner in the foster care agency about your immigration needs and you will be referred to a legal services provider who will evaluate your situation and assist you.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY FOR SIJS?

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status allows youth to become lawful permanent residents of the United States and obtain Green Cards.

WITH A GREEN CARD, YOU CAN:

- Live permanently in the U.S.;
- Work legally;
- Travel outside of the U.S.;
- Receive financial aid for college;
- Have access to some kinds of public benefits such as Public Assistance, Medicaid, and Public Housing.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR SIJS?

If you qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, a SIJS legal services provider will work with you throughout the application process. They will help you gather documents, obtain a court order to support your application, complete immigration forms, and accompany you to immigration appointments.

ARE THERE RISKS IN APPLYING FOR SIJS?

Possibly! There is minimal risk in going to Family Court to obtain a court order to support your application. However, if immigration denies your application for SIJS, you could be placed in removal/deportation proceedings. For this reason, make sure you speak to a SIJS legal services provider before submitting your application and do not submit one without proper legal assistance.

IF I DON'T QUALIFY FOR SIJS, CAN I STILL GET A GREEN CARD AND BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT?

Maybe. Even if you don't qualify for SIJS, you might still be able to obtain a green card through such methods as sponsorship by relatives or adoptive parents, asylum, or marriage. You may also qualify for VAWA or a U Visa if you are a victim of a crime such as domestic violence. Speak with a SIJS Legal Services Provider to discuss your options.

SIJS Legal Services Providers:

Atlas-DIY

SIJS Contact: Lauren A. Burke, Esq.
lauren.burke@atlasdiy.org

Catholic Charities Community Services

Immigration Services Department
SIJS Contact: Mario Russell, Esq.
mario.russell@archny.org

Catholic Migration Services

1258 65 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11219
Tel: 718-236-3000

The Door Legal Services

SIJS Contacts: Eve Stotland, Esq.; Elyssa Caplan, Esq.
Tel: 212-941-9090 Ext. 3283
estotland@door.org; ecaplan@door.org

Lawyers For Children

Immigration Rights Project

SIJS Contact: Myra Elgabry, Esq.
Tel: 212-966-6420, Ext. 638
melgabry@lawyersforchildren.org

The Legal Aid Society Immigration Law Unit

youthreferral@legal-aid.org