



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Fact Sheet: The Biden-Harris Administration Takes New Actions to Increase Border Enforcement and Accelerate Processing for Work Authorizations, While Continuing to Call on Congress to Act

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WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is announcing another series of actions to increase enforcement across the Southwest Border, accelerate processing of work authorizations, and the decision to redesignate and extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela. In consultation with interagency partners and with careful consideration for the conditions, and due to extraordinary and temporary conditions in Venezuela that prevent individuals from safely returning, the Secretary of Homeland Security decided to extend and redesignate TPS for Venezuela.

President Biden has called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform since his first day in office. As a result of Congress' failure to enact the reform, the Administration has been using the limited tools it has available to secure the border and build a safe, orderly, and humane immigration system while leading the largest expansion of lawful pathways for immigration in decades. We also urge passage of fully funded emergency appropriations, including the supplemental funding request for border security, as requested by the President this summer. The \$4 billion supplemental funding requested for DHS addresses immediate needs of the Department to safely and humanely manage the Southwest Border and to continue implementing our immigration laws through the expansion of lawful pathways and enforcing consequences for those who do not use them. DHS has also allocated more than \$770 million to 69 partner organizations in Fiscal Year 2023 to support communities receiving migrants, in both the Southwest Border region and the interior, through the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program – Humanitarian Awards (EFSP-H).

Combating smugglers. DHS continues to escalate the fight against those smuggling in persons and narcotics and the Administration is prosecuting an increasing number of smugglers, as well as noncitizens who are violating our laws.

- From April 2022 through September 12, 2023, CBP and HSI arrested nearly 17,000 suspected human smugglers and seized more than \$51 million in property and nearly \$13 million in currency. This has resulted in more than 2,000 indictments and more than 1,500 convictions in partnership with the U.S. attorneys.
- U.S. Border Patrol has referred 9,904 individuals for prosecution between May 12 and Sept. 14.
- The Department of Justice (DOJ) is vigorously prosecuting those who unlawfully bring in, harbor, or transport migrants, as well as many thousands of felony reentry cases. DOJ and DHS are working closely together to target additional prosecutorial resources towards these serious immigration offenses.

Deploying a military personnel surge to support border efforts. The Department of Defense is providing additional military personnel – on top of the 2,500 steady state National Guard personnel – to support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This surge support includes up to 800 new active-duty personnel to assist with logistics and other functions at the border to allow more Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents and officers to return to their core mission and responsibilities. These individuals complement the 24,000 CBP agents and officers along the Southwest Border we have sustained and over 2,600 additional non-uniformed personnel we have hired to assist in processing and facility operations. Since May 12, we have also extended the support of 500 law enforcement and general support volunteers from other DHS components to supplement CBP border security operations.

Expediting family removals nationwide. DHS has expanded the Family Expedited Removal Management (FERM) program nationwide so that families without a lawful basis to remain are quickly removed. Under this process, families are placed into expedited removal proceedings to occur within 30 days. This program was launched in May and has processed over 1,600 families and will continue to scale up significantly.

Adding DHS holding and processing capacity. DHS has expanded its capacity to hold an additional 3,250 people in its facilities, for a CBP holding capacity of nearly 23,000. This builds on expansions of several thousand across CBP and ICE facilities put in place before May to process, detain, and remove more noncitizens who do not have a lawful basis to remain in the United States. Since May 12, we have processed 110,000 individuals for expedited removal and completed an average of 4,000 credible fear cases each week, double the previous high.

Working with international partners to speed removals and returns. Since May 12, we have removed or returned over 253,000 individuals to 152

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countries. This compares to 180,000 removals and returns during the same period in 2019, which was the comparable pre-pandemic and pre-Title 42 period. This was enabled by a more than doubling of ICE international removal flights from the first to the second half of FY 2023 and new agreements with multiple countries to streamline returns. This includes: 36,000 family members encountered at the Southwest Border and over 17,000 non-Mexicans to Mexico – a critical deterrent, especially for hard-to-remove-to countries, and the first time Mexico has ever accepted substantial numbers of third-country repatriations. DHS has removed or returned more family members in the last 4 months than in any previous full fiscal year.

Improving Processing of Work Authorizations and Directly Communicating with Work Eligible Individuals. Only Congress can change the law to allow asylum seekers to get work authorization sooner than six months after filing their claim. Right now, six months is the law.

Beginning October 1, USCIS will accelerate processing for Employment Authorization Document (EAD) applications filed by parolees who scheduled an appointment through CBP One, who are, in contrast with asylum seekers, able to apply for work authorization immediately. USCIS will dedicate additional personnel and implement improvements to decrease the median processing time for these applications from 90 days to 30 days. USCIS will also work to decrease median processing times for EAD applications associated with the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan parole processes to 30 days.

Further, USCIS will increase the maximum validity period of initial and renewal EADs to 5 years for certain noncitizens, including those admitted as refugees or granted asylum; recipients of withholding of removal; and applicants for asylum, adjustment of status, or cancellation of removal. The increased validity period will reduce the frequency with which noncitizens must file for to renew their work authorization. This is anticipated to also reduce the associated workload and processing times, which will allow USCIS to concentrate efforts on initial work authorization caseload.

For those already eligible to work, we are taking steps to expedite employment authorization processing. Individuals who are paroled into the United States after making an appointment through the CBP One mobile app, the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans for up to two years, and those who have applied for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are eligible to apply for work authorization immediately. However, nationwide, only a small percentage of working-age individuals paroled after making an appointment through CBP One have applied for employment work authorizations. To raise awareness, the Biden Administration has been sending email and SMS notifications to certain parolees, including those who have been paroled into the United States after the use of the CBP One app, nationwide informing them of their eligibility to apply for employment authorization and is reinforcing that effort with personnel on the ground. To date, more than 1.4 million email and text notifications have been sent by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Ukrainian, and Russian. DHS is deploying 50 personnel to New York this month to educate recently arrived migrants on the immigration system and how to apply for employment authorization documents.

These newest actions complement many other steps taken by USCIS to improve processing times across form types and to ensure timely access to employment authorization, including: [temporary final rule in May 2022 \(https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/uscis-increases-automatic-extension-period-of-work-permits-for-certain-applicants\)](https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/uscis-increases-automatic-extension-period-of-work-permits-for-certain-applicants) that automatically extends EADs for certain renewal applicants and immediately restored the ability to work for tens of thousands of noncitizens whose EADs had expired through no fault of their own; and a [previous extension of EAD validity periods \(https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-updates-guidelines-on-maximum-validity-periods-for-new-employment-authorization-documents-for\)](https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-updates-guidelines-on-maximum-validity-periods-for-new-employment-authorization-documents-for) for asylees and refugees, noncitizens with withholding of deportation or removal, parolees, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitioners.

Temporary Protection for those Already in the US. Given the extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent certain Venezuelan nationals currently in the U.S. from returning safely to Venezuela, the Secretary of Homeland Security is extending and redesignating Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months for individuals that were residing in the United States on or before July 31, 2023. As a result, an additional approximately hundreds of thousands Venezuelan nationals across the country will be immediately eligible to apply for work authorization. TPS provides temporary protection from removal, as well as employment authorization for eligible Venezuelan nationals.

Topics

[BORDER SECURITY \(/TOPICS/BORDER-SECURITY\)](#) [CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES \(/TOPICS/CITIZENSHIP-AND-IMMIGRATION-SERVICES\)](#)
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