

# New York State Defenders Association

## Immigrant Defense Project

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### Glossary of Key Terms

**Asylum** – protection granted by the government to refugees who seek safe haven in the U.S. because of persecution in their country of origin. The persecution must be based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

**Cancellation of Removal** – a one-time termination of deportation proceedings based on favorable factors in the case. An immigration judge may, in his or her discretion, decide not to deport someone and allow them to maintain their lawful permanent resident status in the U.S. (also known as a “legal immigrant”) based on factors such as family ties within the U.S., residence of long duration in this country, hardship to family if deportation occurs, service in the U.S. armed forces, history of employment, property or business ties, value and service to the community, proof of rehabilitation if a criminal record exists, and evidence attesting to the immigrant’s good character.

**Deportation** - the formal removal of a lawfully admitted immigrant from the United States.

**Immigration and Nationality Act** - The statute that, along with other immigration laws, treaties, and conventions of the United States, relates to the immigration, temporary admission, naturalization, and deportation of immigrants.

**Permanent Resident** – any immigrant admitted to work and reside in the United States permanently. Also known as “lawful permanent resident” or “legal immigrant” or “Green Card Holder.” Permanent residence is a required step before someone may become naturalized as a U.S. citizen.

**Refugee** - any person who is unable to return to his or her country of origin because of persecution or fear of persecution.

**Removal** - the expulsion of an immigrant from the United States. Also known as deportation.

**U.S. Citizen** – a person who is born in the U.S. or has derived citizenship through a parent who is a citizen or who has been naturalized.

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The Immigrant Defense Project provides training, counseling and publishes reference materials on immigration law for defense lawyers and others who represent or assist immigrants in criminal justice and immigration systems, as well as to immigrants themselves.

To arrange an interview with legal experts or affected immigrant families, please call Margot Friedman at 202-330-9295.