

Immigration Facts 4: TPS

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) allows nationals of certain countries that are confronting armed conflict, environmental disaster or extraordinary and temporary conditions, to remain in the US and continue to work with protected status. A TPS designation is made by the Secretary of Homeland Security for 6, 12 or 18 months at a time and can be extended

WHY WAS TPS CREATED?

(American Immigration Council and “Salvadorans, Washington’s Builders, Face Expulsion Under Trump”, New York Times, September 2019)

Congress created the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 1990 as a temporary, humanitarian measure — initially for people from El Salvador living in the US at the time of the civil war during the 1980s — to allow the Salvadorians to remain here, in designated protected status, and continue to work. The program was extended to citizens of additional countries facing certain defined crises.

The intent is that the TPS designation will be lifted for a country when it is safe and/or viable for the TPS holders to return there.

WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY FOR TPS?

Must be a national of a country with a TPS designation;

Are continuously physically present in the US since the effective date of the designation;

Have continuously resided in the US since a date determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security;

Must apply for TPS status with the Department of Homeland Security during a specifically-designated window, pay a filing fee and pass an immigration screening;

Are not designated as inadmissible to the US or barred from asylum because of criminal or national security-related reasons.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND BARRIERS OF TPS HOLDERS?

They receive a temporary stay of deportation and temporary authorization to work in the US.

Beneficiaries are not eligible for any public assistance but do pay taxes.

TPS does not provide a path to lawful permanent residence (designated as a “green card”) or citizenship.

HOW MANY TPS FOREIGN NATIONALS ARE IN THE US?

The US currently provides TPS to more than 300,000 foreign nationals, with the vast majority coming from El Salvador. Most of the Salvadorians live in Washington, DC, Los Angeles and New York.

There are nearly 46,000 TPS holders in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC as of September 2019.

Most Honduran TPS holders live in New York, Miami and Houston metropolitan areas, and most Haitian TPS holders live in Miami, New York and Boston.

The average TPS holder from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti has lived in the US for 22 years.

TPS HOLDERS PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

(“A Demographic Profile of TPS Holders Providing Essential Services During the Coronavirus Crisis” April 2020, Center for American Progress)

In this time of Covid-19, some 131,000 TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti serve as essential workers, which means they do not have the option to shelter in place or work from home. They work in nursing homes and hospitals, they grow and process food, and they work in construction.

The Trump administration’s efforts to terminate TPS designations have been put on hold by federal courts around the country. As TPS holders continue making critical contributions to society, they do so knowing that a court ruling at any moment could begin to unravel the protections they and their families rely on, and they would be forced to leave the country.

TPS HOLDERS CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE ECONOMY AS WELL AS THEIR COMMUNITIES

(National Immigration Forum Fact Sheet on TPS)

According to data from April 2017, TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti contribute a combined \$4.5 billion in pre-tax wages or salary annually to the US GDP.

The total Social Security and Medicare contributions of these individuals is estimated at more than \$6.9 billion over a ten-year span.

33.6% of men and 29.9% of women survey respondents live in owner-occupied homes.

The average educational level of survey respondents at the time they arrived in the US was 7.6 years; 49.2% of them have furthered their education in the US.

29.7% of the survey respondents volunteered in civic organizations, committees, or community groups in the 12 months prior to the survey, showing high levels of social integration.

80.3% of survey respondents pay income taxes, including 79.3% of those who are self-employed. They have contributed to Social Security for an average of 15.4 years and 90% file taxes every year.

TPS COUNTRY DESIGNATIONS:

Since TPS began, there are 12 countries whose TPS designations have been terminated. In these cases, the US provided a safe haven for those hailing from

countries which experienced human suffering on a significant scale. The countries are listed below with the year of TPS expiration:

- Angola, 2003
- Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2001
- Burundi, 2009
- Guinea, 2017
- Guinea-Bissau, 2000
- Kosovo, 2000
- Kuwait, 1992
- Lebanon, 1993
- Liberia, 2017
- Montserrat, 2004
- Rwanda, 1997
- Sierra, Leone, 2017

At the present time, 10 countries are designated for TPS:

- El Salvador
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

The TPS designations for these countries are extended until early 2021 or beyond.

TPS has served a purpose in making the US a safe harbor for varying lengths of time and in some cases for decades. In those intervening years, the TPS holders created lives, businesses and families often without contact with their home country due to the civil state there. When TPS is rescinded, TPS holders are forced back to countries leaving behind their lives and often families to start again in countries which they might not have ever known as an adult.

COMPILED BY THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SANCTUARY MINISTRY

This ministry carries out the resolutions on immigration passed by the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

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CATHEDRAL CANON MISSIONER

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SANCTUARY MINISTRY MISSION STATEMENT:

We are a visible compassionate face and voice for immigrants and refugees who come to our country in search of safety for themselves and their families.

We are a loving spiritual sanctuary of support for those whose lives are threatened and upended because of their status in our country.

We are a people of faith who, through prayer and action, support isolated and powerless immigrants, letting them know that there are others who pray for them and have their interest at heart.

Contact: sanctuary@cathedralcongregation.org