IMPORTANT IMMIGRATION TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Alien
Any person not a citizen or national of the United States. “Foreign national” is a synonym and used outside of statutes when referring to noncitizens of the U.S.

Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94/I-94A)
form is also issued to foreign nationals with an immigration benefit granted from within the United States. The card indicates parole or the immigration status under which the foreign nationals were admitted, and, if applicable, how long they are authorized to stay in the United States—either with a specific date, or with a notation such as D/S (Duration of Status).

Asylee
A foreign national in the United States or at a port of entry who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

Beneficiary
A foreign national who is sponsored by a relative or a business, or has self-petitioned for an immigration benefit. A “principal beneficiary” is a foreign national who is named on an immigrant or nonimmigrant petition or application. A “derivative beneficiary” is an immediate family member of the principal beneficiary who may be eligible to receive the same immigration status as the principal beneficiary based on their family relationship.

CBP
An abbreviation for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security. The CBP inspectors determine the admission, length of stay and conditions of stay at a port of entry.

DACA
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program launched in 2012. This is a type of prosecutorial discretion that allows an individual to remain in the United States for a set period of time, unless the deferred action is terminated for some reason. Deferred action is determined on a case-by-case basis and only establishes lawful presence. It does not provide immigration status or benefits of any kind. DACA is one type of deferred action.

DHS: Abbreviation for Department of Homeland Security

Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766/EAD)
A general term used to describe a card USCIS issues on Form I-766, Employment Authorization Card, to foreign nationals who are authorized to work in the United States.

ICE
An abbreviation for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

Inadmissibility
Not being allowed to lawfully enter the United States or obtain a visa abroad based on acts or conduct that is listed as an inadmissibility ground in section 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Lawful permanent resident ("LPR")
Any person not a citizen of the United States who is living in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. Also known as "permanent resident alien," "resident alien permit holder," and "Green Card holder."

Nonimmigrant
A foreign national who is admitted to the United States for a specific temporary period of time. There are clear conditions on their stay. There are a large variety of nonimmigrant categories, and each exists for a specific purpose and has specific terms and conditions.

Parole
The discretionary decision that allows inadmissible foreign nationals to leave an inspection facility freely so that, although they are not admitted to the United States, they are permitted to be physically present in the United States. Parole is granted on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. Parole is not an "admission" or "entry." The paroled foreign national is treated as an applicant for admission. Parole falls under INA section 212(d)(5)(A).

Port of entry
Any location in the United States or its territories that is designated as a point of entry for foreign nationals and U.S. citizens. All district offices and service centers are also considered ports, because they become locations of entry for foreign nationals adjusting to immigrant status.

Prosecutorial discretion
The legal authority to choose whether or not to take action against an individual for committing an offense.

Refugee
Generally, any person outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on the person's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. For a legal definition of refugee, see section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Removal
The expulsion of an alien from the United States. This expulsion may be based on grounds of inadmissibility or deportability.

TPS
Abbreviation for Temporary Protected Status. The secretary of the Department of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately.

USCIS
An abbreviation for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. A federal agency in the Department of Homeland Security that oversees lawful immigration to the United States.

Visa
A U.S. visa allows the bearer to apply for entry to the U.S. in a certain classification, such as student (F), visitor (B) or temporary worker (H). A visa does not grant the bearer the right to enter the United States. The Department of State is responsible for visa adjudication at U.S. Embassies and Consulates outside of the U.S.

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary