

Temporary Protected Status: An Overview

Background and Overview

In U.S. immigration policy, it is a key principle not to return migrants back to a country where their life or freedom is at risk. Those fleeing persecution in the U.S. may be granted safe haven on an individual basis, as refugees or asylum seekers, or in groups of people for humanitarian reasons.

There are some instances when the Secretary of Homeland Security may grant **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** to citizens of a country for a period of 6 to 18 months at a time if there is armed conflict; a natural disaster; or if "extraordinary and temporary conditions" prevent them from returning home.

A person can only qualify for TPS if they were already in the U.S. at the time of designation. **There is no pathway to a green card or citizenship for TPS recipients.** Instead, TPS is a temporary protection and TPS holders can obtain employment authorization and are eligible to apply for special permission to travel and return to the United States. In the event that TPS ends or is denied, an individual may be subject to deportation.

Who is covered by TPS?

Countries currently designated for TPS are: Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.¹

There have been several TPS designations and redesignations (for previously designated countries) made by the Biden Administration. As of September 2023, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) indicates that there are approximately **697,530 TPS holders living in the U.S.**, an increase of 43,112 people from December 2022.^{2,3} Following the release of this data, DHS issued a new designation for Afghanistan under which an additional 15,000 people could gain protection.⁴ In addition, 438,494 TPS applications - a mix of renewals and initial applications - remained pending as of the end of 2023.⁵

How are TPS holders contributing to our communities?

Massachusetts is home to 23,675 TPS holders as of September 2023, making it the state with the 6th highest TPS population.² However, state by state estimates for all countries are not available.

The majority of TPS holders are not recent arrivals. Many have children who are now in high school or college in the U.S. and have little, if any, contact with their parents' country of origin. Salvadoran TPS holders, for example, have lived in the U.S. for over 23 years.

During the COVID pandemic, 5,600 TPS holders were essential workers in healthcare, food production, transportation, and critical services in Massachusetts.⁶ **Massachusetts TPS holders held over \$213 million in spending power in 2021, generating \$286.5 million in household income, paying \$25.4 million in state and local taxes, and paying \$48.0 million in federal taxes.**⁷

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) cont.



What do we do now?

MIRA strongly supports the continuation of the TPS program as a moral and humanitarian imperative. The U.S. has a proud tradition of providing safe harbor to people fleeing dangerous conditions, and TPS is an important mechanism to do this. The administration has taken important steps in making additional designations for TPS as well as announcing redesignations to extend protections to more recent arrivals.

We call on the Biden administration to extend TPS to Guatemalans and to issue new designations for Honduras, El Salvador and Haiti to include more recent arrivals. At the same time, we support legislation to enable TPS holders, especially if they have lived in the U.S. for many years, to apply for permanent residency. Thus, in the 118th Congress, we will strongly support legislation that would protect and offer a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants, including Dreamers and TPS holders. We need to keep urging Congress to permanently protect TPS holders.

TPS holders & potential beneficiaries

Country	Required arrival in the U.S. date ¹	Current expiration date ¹	Total TPS holders ²	Total estimated eligible population ²
Afghanistan	September 20, 2023	May 20, 2025	3,905	89,100
Burma	September 25, 2022	May 25, 2024	2,120	3,890
Cameroon	October 5, 2023	June 7, 2025	2,200	19,600
El Salvador	February 13, 2001	March 9, 2025	184,035	239,000
Ethiopia	December 12, 2022	June 12, 2024	1,880	26,730
Haiti	November 6, 2022	August 3, 2024	164,235	260,000
Honduras	December 30, 1998	July 5, 2025	55,360	76,000
Nepal	June 24, 2015	June 24, 2025	8,100	14,500
Nicaragua	December 30, 1998	July 5, 2025	2,930	4,000
Somalia	January 11, 2023	September 17, 2024	470	2,630
South Sudan	September 4, 2023	May 3, 2025	120	273
Sudan	August 16, 2023	April 19, 2025	1,015	3,950
Syria	July 28, 2022	September 30, 2025	3,880	8,200
Ukraine	August 16, 2023	April 19, 2025	26,215	226,300
Venezuela	July 31, 2023	September 10, 2025	239,175	795,000
Yemen	December 29, 2022	September 3, 2024	1,790	2,180

1. *Temporary Protected Status* | USCIS. (2024, February 8). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>
2. Congressional Research Service (2023, December 11). Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesecc/RS20844.pdf>
3. Buetow, Z. (2023, April). *Temporary Protected Status: Calendar Year 2022 Annual Report: Report to Congress*. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/TPS-CY21-Congressional-Report.pdf>
4. *Secretary Mayorkas announces extension and redesignation of Afghanistan for temporary protected status* | Homeland Security. (2023, September 21). U.S. Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/09/21/secretary-mayorkas-announces-extension-and-redesignation-afghanistan-temporary>
5. Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status Receipts, Approvals, Denials, and Pending by Country of Designation (Fiscal Year 2024, Q1) (March 21, 2024) https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/i821_radp_fy2024_q1.xlsx
6. Prchal Svajlenka, N., & Jawetz, T. (2021, November 7). *A demographic profile of TPS holders providing essential services during the coronavirus crisis*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/demographic-profile-tps-holders-providing-essential-services-coronavirus-crisis/>
7. *Take a look: How immigrants drive the economy in Massachusetts*. American Immigration Council. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/massachusetts/#>