

Learning Gateways • Has America Always Welcomed Immigrants? Glossary of Terms

undocumented person (also sometimes called “unauthorized” or “illegal” alien): A person who lacks U.S. government authorization to enter or remain in the United States.

U.S. citizen: A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, and who enjoys full civic rights (for example, the right to vote in elections and to run for elective office)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): A bureau of the Department of Homeland Security responsible for the administration of immigration benefits and services, such as processing applications for residency and citizenship

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP): A bureau of the Department of Homeland Security responsible for patrolling the borders and monitoring the movement of goods and people into and out of the U.S.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): A bureau of the Department of Homeland Security responsible for handling deportations, investigating immigration law violations and enforcing customs laws within the interior of the U.S.

U.S. noncitizen national: A person who owes permanent allegiance to the United States, but who does not enjoy full civic rights. For example, citizens of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and other U.S. territories are nationals, but not citizens, of the U.S.

visa: A document issued by a government that establishes the bearer's eligibility to seek entry into that government's territory. A visa can be for a temporary period, such as for study or tourism (nonimmigrant visas), or for lawful permanent residence (immigrant visas). U.S. consulates abroad issue visas to foreign nationals, permitting them to travel to the United States and request admission at the border. U.S. citizens need visas to travel to foreign countries for certain purposes.

Xenophobia (from the Greek, pron. zee-no-FO-bee-ah: xeno: stranger; phobia: fear):
Fear of strangers and foreigners

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*Note: Glossary taken from ABA Commission on Immigration. See:
www.abanet.org/publicserv/immigration/glossary.shtm.l*