



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

## **Immigrant & Refugee Services**

The primary goal of these services is to stabilize at-risk families and guide them through the process of attaining self-reliance and to become contributing members of their communities.

**General Immigration Services** - In 1980, Catholic Charities began its efforts to provide Immigration Services to assist society's most marginalized and vulnerable population – the poor, non-English speaking newcomers. The primary goal of the program is to help stabilize at-risk families and guide them through the processing of immigration applications and petitions. Services include:

- Assists persons and families to determine if they have the legal and financial resources to pursue citizenship and to apply for other immigration benefits, such as change of status to permanent resident, petition for relatives, employment authorization, travel documents, etc.;
- Prepares forms, reviews clients personal documents needed for filing, instructs clients about options of how and where to file, and stresses the need for maintaining copies of all documents filed along with filing dates and any correspondence with USCIS.
- Represents families/individuals before the office of Citizenship and Immigration Services, when applicable;
- Prepares client for citizenship testing through a referral to our English as a Second Language and Citizenship classes and/or community naturalization classes; and provides study tools for the Naturalization Civics and History test.
- Teaches clients how to do electronic follow up on the status of their own applications and continues to follow up with them as needed.

Types of petitions that the program commonly assists with include:

- Naturalization
- Petition for Relatives
- Change of Status
- Employment Authorization
- Affidavit of Support
- Others (such as removal of conditional permanent resident status, travel document, renewal or replacement of Permanent Resident card, replacement of Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document, and fiancé visas).

Services are targeted to individuals and families that at or below 150% of the governing Federal Poverty Guidelines and meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:

- Legal Permanent Resident – A foreign-born individual who has been admitted to reside permanently in the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident;
- Citizen of an island nation under the Compact of Free Association (COFA);
- Refugee – A person formerly living outside the United States who seeks protection on the grounds that he/she fears persecution in his/her homeland. This person must

prove that he/she has a “well-founded” fear of persecution on the basis of at least one of the five specifically enumerated and internationally-recognized grounds: race, religion, membership in a social class, political opinion, and national origin;  
OR

- Asylee – A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States who is found to be unable or unwilling to return to his/her country of nationality, or to seek protection from that country because of fear of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution of the fear thereof must be based on the alien’s race, religion, membership in a social class, political opinion, and national origin.

Because of the technical/legal nature of these services, services are delivered by staff that is partially accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), U.S. Department of Justice.

Services are available on Oahu and Big Island. Fees are based on a sliding scale.

**Refugee Reception and Placement Program** started in 1975 to provide resettlement services for refugees. Services must follow the policies and procedures of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS), Washington, D.C., with whom Catholic Charities Hawaii has a formal agreement to provide refugee resettlement services during the first 90 days after arrival. Services include: sponsor orientation, airport reception, assistance with school enrollment, health orientation and housing search.

Refugees are assigned to Catholic Charities Hawai‘i through the USCCB/MRS. CCH accepts only family reunification cases. These are cases in which the refugee has an “anchor” in the state. The anchor is normally a relative who will assist with the resettlement process.

**For more information, call:**  
**Oahu: 808-527-4711**  
**Big Island: 808-961-7030**

**Or go to the Catholic Charities Hawai‘i website:**  
<http://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org/>