



NEWS RELEASE

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INS Campaign Seeks Out Applicants for LIFE Legalization Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) today announced a public outreach campaign to encourage thousands of eligible individuals to file applications that could adjust their status in the United States to that of permanent residents.

“This public outreach campaign provides a golden opportunity for eligible individuals to apply for Life Legalization benefits,” Michael Garcia, INS Acting Commissioner, said of the nationwide program, which features television and radio spots in Spanish. “It reflects the agency’s commitment to assist individuals who want to come into compliance with U.S. immigration laws.”

The public outreach campaign aims to reach more than 200,000 long-term U.S. residents who are believed to be eligible to apply for legal status under a provision of the Legal Immigration and Family Equity (LIFE) Act. The deadline for filing such applications is June 4, 2003.

To reach its intended audience, the INS is taking to the airwaves with 30-second radio and television spots urging potential applicants to protect their futures (“Arregla tu Futuro”) by filing applications before the June 4 deadline. Similar messages appear on posters and fliers distributed in Hispanic communities. In addition, INS managers in the agency’s 33 district offices are taking the message to local news media, through interviews and public appearances.

The public outreach program is national in scope but concentrated in four metropolitan areas that the INS believes are home to about two-thirds of the eligible LIFE Legalization applicants who have yet to file. Those metropolitan areas are: Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and New York City.

To be eligible for this LIFE Act benefit (known as “LIFE Legalization”), an individual must have entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and resided in continuous unlawful status through May 4, 1988, including being physically present in the United States from November 6, 1986 until May 4, 1988. Among other requirements, they must also have filed a written claim for class membership in one of three class action lawsuits arising from the 1986 Legalization, or Amnesty, program for illegal immigrants. The three lawsuits are entitled *Catholic Social Services, Inc. (CSS) v. Meese*, the *League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) v. INS*, and *Zambrano v. INS*.

Individuals who meet the U.S. residency requirements and who, before October 1, 2000, filed a written claim for class membership in any of the lawsuits, are eligible to apply for adjustment of their legal status under the LIFE Act Legalization provision.

The LIFE Act provides eligible applicants with work authorization, and even a stay of removal or deportation proceedings or orders, while their adjustment applications are pending. It also protects from removal and provides employment authorization for certain spouses and minor children of eligible applicants for the period of time in which they are afforded Family Unity protection.

The INS estimates that the majority of potential applicants under this provision of the LIFE Act are Hispanic with the largest number being natives of Mexico. As of October 31, 2002, about 55,000 individuals have filed applications under this provision of the LIFE Act.

Additional information about the LIFE Legalization is available through the INS website (<http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/residency/LIFE.htm>), or through its toll-free National Customer Service Line, (1-800-375-5283). The necessary forms can be obtained at INS district offices or downloaded from the INS website. In addition, several major community-based organizations can assist applicants.

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