



Policy Brief:

Applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

The Door

This poster will explain who is eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and how to apply.

About the advocate

The Door's mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment. They provide services like primary and behavioral health, education and career, legal and immigration, and supportive housing to adolescents free of charge.

The issue

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status is a form of immigration relief for youth under 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent and for whom it's not in their best interest to return to their country of origin. Many immigrants do not understand the difference between SIJS and asylum and get confused between the two processes.

Because SIJS combines state and federal law, youth and their caretakers, many of whom have limited English and literacy skills, need to understand how to navigate the complex family court system and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

In addition, people are confused about the processes within the different court systems and are fearful of testifying and appearing before a judge, one of the SIJS requirements, in case it triggers ICE involvement.



MAKING POLICY PUBLIC

The impact

Educating young immigrants and their families about Special Immigrant Juvenile Status will help more eligible young people obtain legal status in the United States.

A visual guide will inform youth and their caretakers about the steps of the SIJS process and proactively address its risks, rewards, and concerns in order to help families decide whether they want to pursue this process.

The guide would provide timely and relevant information for youth seeking legal status and help community leaders identify other youth who may be SIJS eligible.

The distribution network

The poster will be distributed to youth at The Door's Legal Services Center and at the juvenile docket at the New York Immigration Court. It will also be distributed through their network of community partners, which include other legal services providers, schools, and faith-based groups.



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