



## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

# USCIS is Strengthening Screening for Family Members Abroad Seeking to Join Refugees in the United States

[Versión en español](#)

On Feb. 1, USCIS and the Department of State implemented new procedures to ensure that all individuals admitted as refugees receive similar, thorough vetting – whether they are principal refugees, accompanying family members, or following-to-join refugees.

A following-to-join refugee is the spouse or child of a principal refugee who lives abroad and wishes to join the principal refugee in the United States.

These measures resulted from the 120-day review mandated by [section 6\(a\) of Executive Order 13780 \(PDF\)](#), which specifically directed the Department of Homeland Security to determine what additional procedures should be implemented to ensure that individuals seeking admission as refugees do not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States.

New security measures that apply to following-to-join refugees processed overseas include:

- Ensuring that following-to-join refugees receive the full baseline interagency screening and vetting checks that other refugees receive.
- Requesting that the following-to-join refugee submit his or her Form I-590, Registration for Classification as Refugee, in support of the principal refugee's [Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition](#), earlier in the adjudication process. USCIS or the Department of State will contact petitioners directly to request this information.
- Vetting certain nationals or stateless persons against classified databases.

For more information on USCIS and its programs, please visit [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)), and Facebook ([/uscis](#)).

Last Reviewed/Updated: 02/06/2018