

Temporary Protected Status: An Overview

Background and Overview

In U.S. immigration policy, it is a key principle not to return migrants back to a country where their life or freedom is at risk. Those fleeing persecution in the U.S. may be granted safe haven on an individual basis, as refugees or asylum seekers, or in groups of people for humanitarian reasons.

There are some instances when the Secretary of Homeland Security may grant **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** to citizens of a country for a period of 6 to 18 months at a time if there is armed conflict; a natural disaster; or if "extraordinary and temporary conditions" prevent them from returning home.

A person can only qualify for TPS if they were already in the U.S. at the time of designation. **There is no pathway to a green card or citizenship for TPS recipients.** Instead, TPS is a temporary protection and TPS holders can obtain employment authorization and are eligible to apply for special permission to travel and return to the United States. In the event that TPS ends or is denied, an individual may be subject to deportation.

Who is covered by TPS?

At the end of the Biden Administration, 17 countries had a TPS designation: Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen. As of **March 31, 2025 there were approximately 1,297,635 TPS holders living in the United States.**¹ This number reflects a significant growth in the TPS population as a result of new designations as well as the re-designation of Venezuela and Haiti, among others, which extended protection to more newly arrived individuals. In addition, as of June 30, 2025 there were 1,014,324 TPS applications pending - a mix of renewals and initial applications.²

In 2025, the Trump Administration terminated or announced the termination of TPS protections for 8 of the 17 countries leading to **more than 1,000,000 people being stripped of status**, and the protection from deportation and work authorization that come with TPS.

Who are TPS holders in Massachusetts?

At the end of March 2025, Massachusetts was home to 44,825 TPS holders, making it the state with the 8th highest TPS population.³ Many TPS holders are not recent arrivals, have children who are now in high school or college in the U.S. and have little, if any, contact with their parents' country of origin. Salvadoran TPS holders, for example, have lived in the U.S. for nearly 25 years. **The largest TPS populations in Massachusetts as of March 2025 are TPS holders from Haiti (30,940), El Salvador (6,885), Venezuela (3,140), and Ukraine (1,715).**⁴

How do TPS holders contribute to Massachusetts' economy?

During the COVID pandemic, 5,600 TPS holders were essential workers in healthcare, food production, transportation, and critical services in Massachusetts.⁵ Since then, the states' TPS population has grown significantly. In 2023, TPS holders held more than \$463 million in spending power, paying \$134 million in state, local, and federal taxes.⁶



What do we do now?

MIRA strongly supports the continuation of the TPS program as a moral and humanitarian imperative. The U.S. has a proud tradition of providing safe harbor to people fleeing dangerous conditions, and TPS is an important mechanism to do this. We are disappointed by this admin taking TPS away from so many countries without good reason and continue to monitor all the lawsuits around this.

TPS Designations and Holders

Country	Required arrival in the U.S. date for most recent designation	Current status or expiration date	Total TPS holders
Afghanistan	Sep. 20, 2023	Terminated (7/14/25)	8,105
Burma	Mar. 21, 2024	Nov. 25, 2025	3,670
Cameroon	Oct. 5, 2023	Terminated (8/4/25)	4,920
El Salvador	Feb.13, 2001	Sept. 9, 2026	170,125
Ethiopia	Apr. 11, 2024	Dec. 12, 2025	4,540
Haiti	Jun. 3, 2024	Terminated (2/3/26)	330,735
Honduras	Dec. 30, 1998	Terminated (9/8/25)	51,225
Lebanon	Oct. 16, 2024	May 27, 2026	140
Nepal	Jun. 24, 2015	Terminated (8/5/2025)	7,160
Nicaragua	Dec. 30, 1998	Terminated (9/8/25)	2,910
Somalia	Jul. 12, 2024	Mar. 17, 2026	705
South Sudan	Sep. 4, 2023	Terminated (1/5/26)	210
Sudan	Aug. 16, 2023	Oct. 19, 2026	1,790
Syria	Jan. 25, 2024	Terminated (11/21/25)	3,860
Ukraine	Aug. 16, 2023	Oct. 19, 2026	101,150
Venezuela	Mar. 8, 2021 Jul. 31, 2023	Terminated (11/7/25) Terminated (10/3/25)	252,825 352,190
Yemen	Jul. 2, 2024	Mar. 3, 2026	1,380

1 Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure, Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RS20844> (August 28, 2025).

2 Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status Receipts, Approvals, Denials, and Pending by Country of Designation (Fiscal Year 2025, Q3), available at https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/i821_rdp_fy2025_q3.xlsx (Oct. 8, 2025)

3 Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure, Congressional Research Service, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RS20844> (August 28, 2025).

4 Data obtained from researches at the Congressional Research Service.

5 A demographic profile of TPS holders providing essential services during the coronavirus crisis. Center for American Progress. (2021, November 7). <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/demographic-profile-tps-holders-providing-essential-services-coronavirus-crisis/>

6 Immigrants in Massachusetts, American Immigration Council, available at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/massachusetts/#>