

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**Center for Employment & Economic Supports**

**March 4, 2011**

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**TO:** Local District Commissioners, TA Directors, Food Stamp Directors, HEAP Coordinators, and Employment Coordinators

**FROM:** Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment & Economic Supports

**SUBJECT:** Redesigned I-551 Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Temporary Assistance: Paul Dichian 1-800-343-8859, ext. 4- 0886,  
Food Stamps: Frank Essien 1-800-343-8859, ext. 4-9340

The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) is to advise Local Department of Social Services (LDSSs) that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on May 11, 2010 began issuing a redesigned Permanent Resident Card commonly known as the "Green Card" to incorporate several major new security features that will prevent counterfeiting, obstruct tampering and facilitate quick and accurate authentication of the card. The redesign is part of the USCIS's on-going efforts to deter immigration fraud and better serve law enforcement, employers, immigrants and others, all of whom look to the green card as definitive proof of authorization to live and work in the United States.

An I-551 Permanent Resident Card or "Green Card" is proof of official authorization for a foreign national to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. It is also evidence of legal registration in accordance with U.S. immigration laws. LPRs that arrived on or after May 11, 2011 were issued the redesigned "Green Card." The old design "Green Card" remains as valid proof of Lawful Permanent Resident status until its expiration date. "Green Cards" are valid for ten years for lawful permanent residents. Under immigration law, a permanent resident must renew his or her card each time it expires.

#### New Security Features

The redesigned "Green Card" incorporates several security features on the front of the card including:

- Color shifting ink (gold to green)
- Embedded radio frequency identification ("RFID") technology
- Tactile laser personalization
- Info-gram (holographic image)
- Laser engraved fingerprint
- Unique background design

The back of the card will include the USCIS address to which any lost "Green Card" should be mailed. It will also provide the following additional security features:

- Micro-image, high resolution pictures of state flags

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- Micro-image, high resolution pictures of U.S. presidents
- Personalized embedded hologram (image of the card holder)
- Optical media storage of all digital files, including the card holder's biometrics

USCIS Number /Alien Number

Instead of referring to a lawful permanent resident's alien registration number (alien number or A number), the front of the redesigned "Green Card" will refer to the USCIS number. The USCIS number is the same as the alien registration number, but without the "A" prefix. The back of the redesigned "Green Card" will continue to reflect the individuals "A" number (i.e., A # 000-000-000).

The "A" number for an individual will not change, but it may be referred to as a "USCIS" number, "alien registration number" or "alien number interchangeably."

Existing Old Design Green Cards

All existing "Green Cards" that bear an expiration date remain as valid proof of Lawful Permanent Resident status until they expire. Holders of these cards will receive the redesigned version when seeking a renewal or replacement. Other existing "Green Cards" without an expiration date will continue to be valid proof of Lawful Permanent Resident Status.

The current cost of renewing or replacing a "Green Card" is \$370. LPRs unable to pay the fee for renewing or placing their "Green Card" can apply directly to USCIS for a fee waiver. The procedure for applying for a fee waiver is found at [www.uscis.gov/feewaiver](http://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver). Eligible LPRs may choose to explore becoming naturalized U.S. citizen. Information on eligibility for naturalization is found at [www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship).

Temporary Assistance and Food Stamp Eligibility

LPRs are qualified aliens, but must have five years in LPR status to be eligible for federal means-tested benefits. Specific information on LPRs benefit eligibility is found on the Alien Eligibility Desk Guide (LDSS-4579). Additional information of LPRs benefit eligibility is found in TA Source Book Chapter 24 Alien Eligibility, Sections, A & B and the Food Stamp Source Book Section 5, Initial Eligibility Determination, Citizenship and Alien Status (page 69).

Although the I-551 "Green Card" does expire, lawful permanent residence status does not. Therefore an expired I-551 "Green Card" is acceptable proof of qualified alien status for local districts to make a determination of eligibility for Temporary Assistance and Food Stamps.

New I-551 "Green Card" Image

An image of the new I-551 Green Card is available on OTDA intranet site (Center for Employment and Economic Supports/Desk Aids) and Centraport. To view it click on the link below:

<http://otda.state.nyenet/dta/DeskGuide/dgPermResCd.pdf>