

Immigration Service Urges Legal Residents to Replace Expired 'Green Cards'

The Washington Post

March 21, 1996, Thursday, Final Edition

Copyright 1996 The Washington Post

Section: A SECTION; Pg. A34

Length: 454 words

Byline: Lena H. Sun, Washington Post Staff Writer

Body

The U.S. **Immigration** and Naturalization **Service** announced yesterday that an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 permanent residency **cards** -- commonly known as "**green cards**" -- issued to **legal residents** before 1979 are no longer valid.

The **expiration** of the **cards**, effective yesterday, does not change the **legal** status of the **card** holders. No one will lose permanent **resident** status -- which allows **legal residents** to live and work in the United States indefinitely -- if they have not yet applied for the new, more secure **card**, agency officials said. Nor will holders of old **cards** be penalized.

But agency officials said that holders of old **cards** must **replace** them with new **cards** to maintain acceptable evidence of their **immigration** status and to avoid inconvenience in getting jobs, entitlement benefits and reentry into the United States.

Someone with an **expired green card** who tries to enter the United States starting today may be taken aside at the airport by U.S. officials and given instructions about applying for a replacement **card**, officials said.

Residents with old **cards** should apply as soon as possible for a replacement at their local INS offices, officials said.

Agency officials said they did not know how many **legal**, permanent **residents** in the Washington area need to apply for new **cards**. But the INS Arlington office, which serves Northern Virginia and District **residents**, and the INS Baltimore office, which covers Maryland, have reported increases in applications for **green cards** since the agency started publicizing the **card** replacement program three years ago.

It can take three to 10 months for applicants to receive their new **cards**, agency officials said. The **card** replacement program is funded by a \$ 75 applicant fee.

While their applications for new **cards** or U.S. citizenship are pending, **residents** can bring their passports with proof of filing for a **green card** or citizenship to their local INS offices to receive a special stamp to maintain proof of their permanent residency status.

The INS started its **card** replacement program in November 1993 to stem widespread document fraud, particularly of the old **green cards**.

At the time, officials said there were an estimated 1.5 million **legal** permanent **residents** in the country who needed to **replace** their **cards**.

Immigration Service Urges Legal Residents to Replace Expired 'Green Cards'

Since then, all but 200,000 to 300,000 have replaced their cards, have applications pending or have chosen to become U.S. citizens.

The new cards, which are pink, bear the holder's photograph and fingerprint. They are "far more secure" than the old cards, which were "hand-typed, and the photos were pasted on, then laminated," said INS Deputy Commissioner Chris Sale. "You could produce one in your house."

Graphic

Photo, The new "pink cards" for U.S. permanent residents bear the holder's photo and fingerprint. The old "green card," right, was considered easier to forge.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: PASSPORTS & VISAS (90%); IMMIGRATION (90%); CITIZENSHIP (90%); EVIDENCE (88%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); IMMIGRATION LAW (78%)

Company: immigration and naturalization service IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (91%)

Organization: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (91%); immigration and naturalization service IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (94%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (91%)

Geographic: BALTIMORE, MD, USA (79%); VIRGINIA, USA (79%); MARYLAND, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (96%)

Load-Date: March 21, 1996