

Name:

Maria

Read Maria's story, and prepare to introduce her to your class.



Maria was an engineer in Colombia. She and her husband grew up together, but now he is an American citizen. He is a high school teacher in New York. He and Maria visit each other often. But Maria didn't want to move to the U.S. until she found a job there. Then she found out she was pregnant. She wanted to be with her husband when the baby was born. So she came to the U.S. on a tourist visa, and applied for a green card. A tourist visa lasts six months. The wait to get a green card for a family member is usually between one and three years. If Maria's tourist visa expires before she gets a green card, it will not be legal for her to stay in the U.S.

When Maria came to New York, it was summer. So her husband was not working. Maria needed good health care and nutrition for the baby. So she applied for government assistance. Maria worries this will hurt her chances of getting a green card.



Fact sheet: Family-based green cards

Read the facts on this fact sheet. Check off the facts that apply to Maria's situation.

- Close relatives of U.S. citizens, or U.S. green card holders, can apply for a green card.
- Eligible family members usually include husbands and wives, children, parents and siblings. Extended family members like grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins usually cannot apply for a family-based green card.
- Over a million people are on the wait list for family-based green cards.
- When people apply for a family-based green card, they have to do an interview in an office near where they live. So the waiting period is different in different parts of the country.
- New York has the longest waits in the country, typically over two years.
- About 90% of people who apply for family-based green cards are approved.
- In 2019, a law was passed making it more difficult for people who have received government assistance to get green cards.

Sources: "Trump Policy Favors Wealthier Immigrants for Green Cards," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2019.

"Public Charge Fact Sheet," uscis.gov, September 22, 2020.