

The “CHNV” Humanitarian Parole Program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans: An Overview



In January 2023, the Biden administration created a new program to provide “safe and orderly pathways to the United States” for up to 30,000 nationals of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.¹ The program, formally known as the Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV), allowed certain people from these four countries who had a sponsor in the U.S. and who passed a background check to come to the U.S. for a period of two years to live and work lawfully, using a legal mechanism known as “humanitarian parole.” This program was paired with additional restrictions at the U.S./Mexico border, to incentivize people from these countries to seek parole instead of attempting to enter the U.S. without authorization. Indeed, in the months after the program, while many more people applied for parole than the monthly cap could accommodate, irregular entries from these countries decreased substantially.

In January 2025, the newly inaugurated President Donald Trump issued an executive order instructing the federal government to end parole programs including the CHNV program.² The government immediately stopped approving new CHNV grants, and in March 2025, the government announced that all existing CHNV parole grants would be terminated early on April 24, 2025.³ While a judicial order temporarily paused the termination, the Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to move forward while a lawsuit over its actions was pending, and the administration announced on June 12, 2025 that beneficiaries would receive notices terminating their parole.⁴

This fact sheet explains:

- What is “Humanitarian Parole?”
- Why Did Biden Create the CHNV Humanitarian Parole Program?
- Who Was Eligible for the CHNV Humanitarian Parole Program?
- Why Was the CHNV Program Controversial?

What is “Humanitarian Parole?”

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) grants the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the discretion to temporarily allow certain non-U.S. citizens to enter or remain in the United States if they apply for admission but lack any legal basis for admission. Individuals who enter the United States under these conditions are granted “parole.”⁵ Humanitarian parole does not provide any permanent pathway to remain in the United States and DHS can unilaterally revoke or not renew parole should the agency decide that it is no longer warranted or if the beneficiary violates the conditions of the parole. A person in the United States on parole may apply for work authorization during the period of their authorized stay.

DHS may grant parole to someone if there are “urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons” for doing so. The INA does not define what constitutes an “urgent humanitarian” or “significant public benefit” reason. But U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

Services (USCIS) states that an “urgent humanitarian” reason might include protection against “targeted or individualized harm.” Individuals who are not eligible for admission into the United States but can demonstrate an “urgent humanitarian” reason for being allowed to enter or stay in the country may be granted “humanitarian parole.”⁶

In creating the CHNV Humanitarian Parole Program, the Biden administration invoked both grounds for parole, arguing that the program provides a “significant public benefit for the United States, by reducing unauthorized entries along our [southwest border], while also addressing the humanitarian reasons” causing people to flee those four countries.⁷

Why Did Biden Create the CHNV Humanitarian Parole Program?

In fall 2022, the U.S. faced an increase in arrivals of non-citizens from countries that did not readily accept wide-scale U.S. deportation flights, including Venezuela. This made it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to subject them to the Title 42 “public health” policy, which allowed the U.S. to expel people without allowing them to request asylum in the United States; instead, they were released into the U.S. with scheduled court hearings. The Biden administration adopted a strategy of “carrot and stick” toward these people: creating new legal pathways to incentivize them to enter the U.S. with prior authorization, while making it easier to remove those who arrived without authorization from the U.S.

In September, the Biden administration announced that it would allow 24,000 Venezuelans each month to arrive in the U.S. on parole grants, in exchange for the government of Mexico permitting DHS to expel 24,000 Venezuelans to Mexico monthly under Title 42 without being allowed to seek asylum.⁸

In January 2023, both the parole program and the expulsions were expanded to nationals of Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua, with the number of slots for both parole grants and expulsions raised to 30,000 per month.⁹ With the expiration of the Title 42 “public health” order in May 2023, U.S. border policy shifted from one of rapid expulsion to one of formal deportation—which allowed for requests for asylum, but also carried permanent legal consequences for those deported who wished to reenter the U.S. legally in future. Accordingly, the deal with Mexico shifted, with Mexico agreeing to accept deportees from the CHNV countries.¹⁰

Migrants were ineligible for the parole program if they crossed without authorization into Panama (following the most common route to enter into the United States), Mexico, or the United States after the relevant parole program was announced: October 19, 2022 for Venezuelan nationals, and January 9, 2023 for Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans. As of April 2023, Cubans and Haitians were also ineligible if they were interdicted at sea while attempting to cross the Caribbean to the U.S. without authorization.¹¹

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Who Was Eligible for the CHNV Humanitarian Parole Program?

Eligible

To qualify for parole under the CHNV program, applicants were required to:¹²

- Be a national of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, or Venezuela, or the immediate relative of a national of one of those countries who was applying for the program.
- Have a supporter in the United States who had filed a Declaration of Financial Support (Form I-134A) on behalf of the applicant and was approved by USCIS.
- Be able to pay their own way into a U.S. airport.
- Have been vaccinated for measles, polio, and COVID-19.
- Have passed all biographical and security background checks.

Not Eligible

Applicants were ineligible if they:¹³

- Failed to pass national security and public safety vetting or did not merit a favorable exercise of discretion by DHS.
- Had been ordered removed from the United States within the past five years or were subject to another bar to entry based on a prior removal order.
- Unlawfully crossed the United States, Mexico, or Panama border after October 19, 2022 (for Venezuelans), or January 9, 2023 (for Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans), or were interdicted at sea after April 27, 2023 (for Cubans and Haitians).
- Were considered an “unaccompanied child” under United States law.

In the first several months of the program, [USCIS](#) received 1.5 million applications¹⁴—enough to fill the monthly CHNV allocation for more than four years. In response to the overwhelming demand, USCIS began to fill half the monthly slots by randomly selecting pending applications via lottery, while the other half were selected based on the date they were received.¹⁵

Why Was the CHNV Program Controversial?

Like the Biden administration’s other efforts to offer legal migration pathways as an alternative to unauthorized migration, the CHNV program was attacked by many conservatives as a “backdoor” for migrants who, in their view, should not have been legally allowed to enter the United States. In 2024, then-Vice Presidential candidate J.D. Vance repeatedly referred to Haitians to whom the U.S. government granted lawful entry under CHNV as “illegal immigrants,” justifying it by claiming that then-Vice President Kamala Harris had “waved a wand” and declared them legal.

A coalition of 20 states led by Texas sued the Biden administration over the CHNV program but was unsuccessful in stopping the program from moving forward.¹⁶

In August 2024, the Biden administration suddenly announced it had paused processing of CHNV applications over concerns about fraud.¹⁷ After a few weeks, processing resumed, with no information offered to the public about what the issue had been or how it was resolved.¹⁸ However, even after application processing resumed, far fewer applications were granted than the 30,000 per month theoretically available—with fewer than 10,000 parolees entering the U.S. in August 2024, and only 50 entering the U.S. in November of that year (the last month for which statistics are available).¹⁹

What Happened to CHNV Parolees After Their Arrival in the United States?

Parole under the CHNV program, and the work permit attached to it, was valid only for two years. However, once in the United States, beneficiaries were eligible to seek other forms of legal status or protections that they otherwise qualified for, including:

- Asylum, as long as they applied with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services within one year of entry;
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS), for Venezuelans who entered before September 2023 and Haitians who entered before May 2024; and
- Adjustment to permanent residency under the Cuban Adjustment Act, for Cubans after one year in the U.S.

Parolees who were not eligible for any of these or other benefits, and who did not leave after two years, lost their work authorization and were considered unauthorized immigrants.

At the time of the Trump administration’s revocation of CHNV parole in March 2025, an estimated 195,000 people had current parole grants under CHNV, but were not eligible for adjustment under the Cuban Adjustment Act or TPS.²⁰ This number does not include any CHNV parole grants issued in December 2024 or January 2025. It also does not consider parolees who may have applied for asylum after arriving in the U.S. or applied for or received another immigration benefit.

What Did the Trump Administration Do to the CHNV Program?

In January 2025, DHS stopped issuing new parole grants under the CHNV program, but did not act immediately to strip parole from existing beneficiaries. However, internal guidance instructed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to consider whether to revoke parole from immigrants they had arrested, in order to place them in removal proceedings.²¹

In March 2025, DHS published a notice in the Federal Register announcing that all existing parole grants under the CHNV program would be revoked on April 24, 2025 and work permits issued to CHNV parolees based on their parole would also be invalidated at this time.²² U.S. law requires an individual notification of the revocation of parole, and CHNV parolees began receiving notices in early April declaring that their parole was about to be revoked and instructing them to leave the United States.²³

A group of beneficiaries and sponsors of CHNV and other humanitarian parole programs have sued the federal government in an effort to stop DHS from moving forward with mass revocations of parole. At the time of publication, the lawsuit is currently ongoing in federal district court in Massachusetts.²⁴

Before the original April 24 termination date, the judge in the Massachusetts case issued a temporary stay of the terminations. However, the Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to review the judge's order, and on May 30 the Supreme Court ruled that the terminations could move forward while the court case was pending.²⁵ On June 12, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it was issuing formal notices of termination to CHNV beneficiaries. Upon receipt of those notices, beneficiaries would officially lose their CHNV protections, and those without other legal status or protections in the United States would become unauthorized.²⁶

In March 2025, DHS published a notice in the Federal Register announcing that all existing parole grants under the CHNV program would be revoked on April 24, 2025.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 White House, “Securing Our Borders,” January 20, 2025, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/securing-our-borders/.](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/securing-our-borders/)
- 3 The termination of CHNV parole grants is currently being litigated in the case *Svitlana Doe v. Noem* (1:25-cv-10495, (D. Mass.)). As of this writing (May 2025) the termination has been temporarily (but indefinitely) stayed by an order in the District of Massachusetts, and a petition to cancel the stay is pending before the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the case in the District of Massachusetts over the underlying legality of the Trump administration’s actions is ongoing.
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- 5 American Immigration Council, “The Use of Parole Under Immigration Law,” July 18, 2022, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/use-parole-under-immigration-law>.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 See, e.g., DHS Notice: Implementation of a Parole Process for Nicaraguans, 88 Fed. Reg. 1255 (published January 9 2023), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/09/2023-00254/implementation-of-a-parole-process-for-nicaraguans>.
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- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 DHS Notice: Implementation of a Change to the Parole Process for Haitians, 88 Fed. Reg. 26327 (published April 28, 2023), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/28/2023-09014/implementation-of-a-change-to-the-parole-process-for-haitians>. See also DHS Notice: Implementation of a Change to the Parole Process for Cubans, 88 Fed. Reg. 26329 (published April 28, 2023), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/28/2023-09013/implementation-of-a-change-to-the-parole-process-for-cubans>.
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- 15 American Immigration Council, “The Use of Parole Under Immigration Law,” July 18, 2022, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/use-parole-under-immigration-law>.
- 16 *Texas v. DHS*, 6:23-cv-00007 (S. D. Tex.). See record at <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/66754800/state-of-texas-v-us-department-of-homeland-security/>.
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- 18 Julia Ainsley, “Biden administration to restart immigration program that was paused over fraud concerns,” NBC News, August 29, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/investigations/biden-admin-restart-chnv-immigration-program-paused-fraud-concern-rcna168838>.
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ENDNOTES

- 20** American Immigration Council analysis of data published by the Office of Homeland Security Statistics, available at <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/immigration-enforcement/monthly-tables#table-data-heading>.
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