

## KEY MESSAGES

- In the U.S., you can face consequences if you break the law, even if you did not know about the law you broke. For this reason, it is very important to not only understand some norms about the laws but also to talk to a qualified criminal lawyer about your situation if you are ever arrested.
- There are immigration consequences for committing certain crimes. The consequences for some criminal offenses may be deportation (return) to your home country. For example, convictions for drug crimes (even violations, or simple possession of a drug like marijuana), theft, or conduct causing physical harm to others (such as fist-fighting or physical discipline of children) may result in arrest and lead to removal from the U.S. This is not a complete list, but provides some examples.
- Criminal convictions may prevent you from being able to travel internationally and return lawfully to the U.S.
- If you are ever arrested, you should talk to an immigration attorney before submitting ANY applications to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or traveling abroad.
- When you apply for lawful permanent resident status and/or for U.S. citizenship, you will need to report any and all criminal arrests or citations, no matter what the outcome, even if your case(s) were dismissed. USCIS performs a mandatory background check that will show your entire criminal record, including any prior contact with the police, even if the police were wrong to arrest you. If you do not include information about your criminal arrest history, you could be accused of fraud and/or misrepresentation and possibly be subject to deportation under U.S. immigration law.
- If you have prior arrests or criminal convictions, it's important to consult an immigration lawyer before submitting any immigration applications.
- If you have questions, such as where to find an immigration attorney, be sure to ask the staff at your resettlement office who can direct you to proper resources and people to answer your questions.