

Service Center Operations
National Stakeholder Event - Customer Service
May 31, 2011

Our Mission

- Ensure that information and benefits are provided to our customers in a timely, accurate, consistent, courteous and professional manner.
- Manage USCIS Service Operations in the field, including approximately 2387 government and 1500 contract employees at the four Service Centers – St. Albans, VT (VSC), Lincoln, NE (NSC), Dallas, TX (TSC) and Laguna Niguel, CA (CSC).
- Manage the adjudication of over 4 million applications and petitions per year.
- Create an environment of excellence that facilitates attainment of USCIS goals through training and development of employees.



USCIS Customer Service

We are committed to making sure that the right benefit goes to the right person at the right time. To this end, we:

- Are dedicated to providing timely assistance to our customers, with the highest level of professionalism and dedication
- Are committed to providing customer satisfaction that meets or exceeds our customers' expectations
- Treat every customer with respect and understanding
- Work closely with our officers to determine how process changes would effect our customers
- Use customer feedback to define and address trends of concern and develop new and enhanced processes.



How to Find US(CIS)? Avenue One

1) Via the Internet:

The USCIS website supports all those seeking information regarding immigration processes, immigration forms and electronic customer service inquiries and requests.

With this system you can:

- File your own Change of Address (CoA)
- Check the status of your case by visiting Case Status Online (CSOL)
- Check our Processing Times



The link, for your convenience, is: http://www.uscis.gov



How to Find US(CIS)? Avenue Two

2) Via the Phone:

You can call our National Customer Service phone centers to:

- Obtain general information about immigration benefits and filing procedures
- Obtain forms
- Ask for a service request to address a specific issue with your case.
 - The call center will send your service request to the center where your case pending.
- seek information regarding immigration processes, requesting immigration forms and initiating customer service requests.

The 1-800 number is USCIS's preferred method for requesting that your case be expedited.

You can expect to receive a response within:

- 5 days for expedite requests OR;
- 15 days for all other requests.

The phone number, for your convenience, is: <u>1-800-375-5283</u>



How to Find US(CIS)? Avenue Three

3) Via US Postal Service:

If USCIS requests additional information or documents, they may be submitted by mail. Please use the address on the notice sent to the applicant/petitioner.

USCIS will entertain a limited number of customer service requests by mail, but the response time can be extensive due to the volume.

When corresponding directly with a Service Center, please address your inquiry using the address found on the USCIS website.

<u>Please note:</u> Although not recommended, you may request expedited processing via written correspondence.



Now that you've found US(CIS)...

we would like to remind you that using multiple avenues at the same time, for the same inquiry, may cause confusion and delays.

Please use *only one* form of communication when contacting USCIS.



Following up on a service request

Each Service Center has established a dedicated e-mail account to assist customers with issues that were not resolved through contacting the National Customer Service Center or the USCIS website.

E-mail inquiries should only be made when more than <u>15 days</u> have passed since you contacted the NCSC and the issue has not been resolved or explained. E-mail inquiries:

should be sent to the Service Center that has jurisdiction over your case

California (WAC): csc-ncsc-followup@dhs.gov

Nebraska (NSC): ncscfollowup.nsc@dhs.gov

Texas (SRC): tsc.ncscfollowup@dhs.gov

Vermont (EAC): <u>vsc.ncscfollowup@dhs.gov</u>

 must be from the applicant, petitioner, attorney of record or AILA Liaison for the attorney of record

Please note: Service Centers cannot provide information related to VAWA, T, U or S visa status via e-mail.

If a response is not received **within <u>21 days</u>** of contacting the appropriate Service Center, please email <u>SCOPSSCATA@dhs.gov</u> for additional information.



Processing times?

Processing times are reflective of the Agency's commitment to manage cases within a specified timeframe. This is done by establishing processing goals.

- Processing times may or may not indicate the current pending dates that an office is working. If the office is processing a particular type of application in less time than our processing goal, you will see the processing times expressed in months (for example, if the office is processing naturalization applications in less than our 5 month goal, the processing time will state "Five Months"). However, if that office is taking longer than our processing goal to handle the form type in question, you will see the filing date (e.g., "April 10, 2003") of the last case we processed on the date the website chart was last updated. The charts are updated on or about the 15th day of each month.
- Outside Normal Processing Time (ONPT) is when a case falls 30 days beyond the processing time as posted on USCIS.gov.
- A case outside normal processing time should be brought to our attention by contacting the National Customer Service Call Center and requesting an expedite.



Privacy/Confidentiality Issues

A signed privacy release is necessary for the following form types:

- I-360 (Self petitioning battered spouse petitions)
- I-751 where (E, F, or G is marked on the petition)
- I-914 (T-Visa)
- I-918 (U Visa)
- I-765 (C14, C-31, A19, A20, C27, C-9 cases that are related to these filings)
- I-192 (that are related to VAWA Cases)

Any inquiry where the request is from a third party, such as attorney, beneficiary, employer (if there is a pending application), or friend, requires a signed Privacy Act release or a letter signed by the applicant/petitioner.

Please refer to: Immigration and Nationality Act [INA] [8 USC] and 8 CFR



Application Support Center (ASC)

- When filing a Form I-485, Form I-765 (C9), Form I-765 (TPS) or Form I-751 an appointment letter requesting the applicant/petitioner present themselves for biometrics processing will be sent.
- The notice will provide information on the appointment date and time, as well as the address of the appropriate ASC location.
- In the event a scheduled appointment cannot be kept, the applicant/petitioner may request to be rescheduled using the contact information provided on the notice.

Please note: Active military personnel do not require appointments and are able to go at any time.

Please be advised that a government issued photo ID and receipt notice of the application/petition are required at the time of your appointment.



QUESTIONS?





Sister Centers - Bi-Specialization

Service Centers are teamed up to process similar workloads. For example, the California Service Center and the Vermont Service Center process the following form types:

- Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker (Form I-129)
- Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F)
- Application to Change or Extend Nonimmigrant Status (Form I-539)
- Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130)
- Petition to Remove the Conditions on Residence (Form I-751)



Bi-Specialization, cont'd

The Nebraska Service Center and the Texas Service Center share the following workloads:

- Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker (Form I-140)
- Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status for Employment-based applicants (Form I-485)
- Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival/Departure Document (Form I-102)
- Application for Advance Parole (Form I-131), or Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) filed in connection with another underlying benefit request, e.g., I-485
- Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (Form N-565)
- Refugee/Asylee Relative Petitions (Form I-730)
- Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status for Asylum-based applicants (Form I-485)



Cases Adjudicated only at CSC

USCIS has centralized the adjudication of certain case types at one center. The following case types are adjudicated at the California Service Center:

- EB-5 (Application for Regional Center Under the Immigrant Investor Pilot Program (Form I-924); Supplement to Form I-924 (Form I-924A); Immigrant Petition by Alien Entrepreneur (Form I-526); Petition by Entrepreneur to Remove Conditions (Form I-829))
- H-2A Agricultural Workers (Form I-129)
- H-1B Specialty Occupation Worker Petitions Where the Petitioner is Cap Exempt (Form I-129)
- R-1 Religious Workers (Form I-129)
- SD/SR Religious Workers (Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant (Form I-360))
- E-1 Treaty Traders and E-2 Treaty Investors, and their eligible employees (Form I-129)
- Family-based adjustment of status cases that do not require an interview (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (Form I-485))
- Posthumous naturalization (Application for Posthumous Citizenship (Form N-644)).



Cases Adjudicated only at VSC

The following case types are adjudicated only at the Vermont Service Center:

- T/U visa classifications, which include:
 - Petition for U Nonimmigrant Status (Form I-918)
 - Petition for Qualifying Family Member of U-1 Recipient (Form I-918, Supplement A)
 - Application for T Nonimmigrant Status (Form I-914)
 - Application for Immediate Family Member of T-1 Recipient (Form I-914 Supplement A)
 - Petition for a Family Member of a U-1 (Form I-929)
- Petition for Amerasian, Widow (er) or Special Immigrant (Form I-360) (including VAWA-related)
- Temporary Protected Status for all Central American and African countries, which currently includes El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Somalia and Sudan (Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821) and associated applications, including Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) and Application for Travel Document (Form I-131))
- P-1 Major League Sports (Form I-129)
- H-1B1 Free Trade Agreement Nonimmigrants from Chile or Singapore Change of Status/Extension of Stay Petitions (Form I-129)
- H-1C Registered Nurses (Form I-129) (NOTE: Sunset for this classification was on December 20, 2009);
- E-3 Free Trade Agreement Nonimmigrant Professionals from Australia Change of Status/Extension of Stay Petitions (Form I-129)
- TN Free Trade Agreement Nonimmigrants from Canada or Mexico Change of Status/Extension of Stay Petitions (Form I-129)



Cases Adjudicated only at NSC

The following case types are adjudicated only at the Nebraska Service Center:

- Petition for Special Immigrant for Afghan and Iraqi Translators and U.S. Affiliates (Form I-360)
- Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status for Refugees (Form I-485)
- Application for Naturalization for Military/Military Spouses (Form N-400)
- Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 for Military cases (Form N-600K)
- Application for a Refugee Travel Document or Reentry Permit (Form I-131)
- Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Form I-90)



Cases Adjudicated only at TSC

The following case types are adjudicated only at the Texas Service Center:

Application for Family Unity Benefits (Form I-817)



USCIS Lockbox Processes

Mission

Intake Operations and Enhancement effectively, efficiently, and accurately processes paper and electronic applications and fees for immigration-related benefits to enable USCIS to secure America's promise.

What happens when an application is sent to the wrong filing location?

The Lockbox <u>forwards</u> applications that arrive at the wrong Lockbox facility to the correct one. If the application is not processed for intake by a Lockbox facility, the Lockbox returns the application to the customer.

Lockboxsupport@dhs.gov can answer questions regarding applications and petitions which are pending at the Lockbox, and those which have been rejected. Once a case has been accepted for processing, the Lockbox has no further information on the adjudication status. After an application or petition has been accepted by the Lockbox, questions about the status of the case should be directed to USCIS Customer Service at (800) 375-5283 or visit our website, http://www.uscis.gov.



Fee Waiver Guidance

USCIS developed Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, in an effort to facilitate the fee waiver request process. USCIS will continue to consider applicant-generated fee waiver requests (i.e., those not submitted on Form I-912) that comply with 8 CFR 103.7(c). Form I-912 instructions give information on the methodology that USCIS uses to make a decision on a fee waiver request, whether the request is submitted on Form I-912 or via an applicant-generated written statement requesting a fee waiver. The instructions provide applicants with guidance on properly completing Form I-912 and submitting supporting documentation.

The review of any fee waiver request will follow a series of steps to determine whether the applicant's income level or financial condition makes him or her eligible for the fee waiver.

Please see <u>Fee Waiver Guidance</u> at <u>http://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver</u> for additional information.



QUESTIONS?





Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative (Form G-28)

- The Form G-28 may be filed for any application or petition filed with this office, and each application/petition must have its own Form G-28 filed.
- The form must be signed. It is recommended that the signatures be in blue and original.
- A new G-28 may be submitted for previously filed petitions/applications.
- Withdrawal A letter requesting the withdrawal of a G-28 may come from the attorney of record or the petitioner/applicant.

G-28 Related Correspondence

- US CIS/TSCPO Box 850891Mesquite, TX 75185-0891
- US CIS/CSC PO Box 10690 Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1069
- US CIS/VSC PO Box 600 Saint Albans, VT 05479
- Nebraska Service Center PO Box 82521 Lincoln, NE 68501-2521
- National Benefits Center PO Box 648000 Lee's Summit, MO 64002



Consular Returns, Immigrant

- If DOS denies the immigrant visa application for any reason, the beneficiary is informed and the petition is returned to the National Visa Center (NVC).
- The NVC will return the petition to the Service Center for review with an explanation as to why the visa was not issued. The Service Center will issue a notice informing the petitioner that the case has been returned for further review.
- The petition is placed on an adjudicative review shelf in the date order that it was returned from the American Consulate, not by the date the petition was originally received at the Service Center.
- Upon review:
 - it may be determined that the case will returned to the DOS as USCIS can find no reason to revoke the approval;
 - USCIS may issue an intent to revoke the approval and request additional evidence to overcome the grounds for revocation.



Consular Returns, Nonimmigrant

- If DOS denies the nonimmigrant visa application the beneficiary is informed. If there is an underlying nonimmigrant visa petition that petition is returned to the Kentucky Consular Processing Center (KCC).
- The KCC will return the petition to the Service Center for review with an explanation as to why the visa was not issued. The Service Center will issue a notice informing the petitioner that the case has been returned for further review.
- The petition is placed on an adjudicative review shelf in the date order that it was returned from the KCC, not by the date the petition was originally received at the Service Center.
- Upon review:
 - it may be determined that the case will returned to the DOS as USCIS can find no reason to revoke the approval;
 - USCIS may issue an intent to revoke the approval and request additional evidence to overcome the grounds for revocation.



Secure Mail Process for LPR & EAD cards

- USCIS has fully implemented the Secure Mail Initiative (SMI), which uses U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Priority Mail with Delivery Confirmation to deliver certain immigration documents in a safe, secure and timely manner.
- Made possible by a partnership between USCIS and the USPS, the SMI enables USCIS to confirm delivery of permanent resident cards and documents pertaining to travel and employment authorization.
- SMI provides USCIS customers many benefits, including:
 - The ability to track the status of their documents with USPS tracking information
 - Quicker delivery—on average, documents sent through USPS Priority Mail should arrive two to four business days sooner than with first-class mail
- Applicant or petitioner can contact the NCSC at 1-800-375-5283 and request USPS tracking and delivery information



USCIS Filing Guidelines To Help Us Serve You Better

Make sure that your application or petition is properly filed and on time. Your application or petition is properly filed if it is signed by the appropriate persons (signature must be original and in blue ink) and executed and the required fee is paid (or filed with a properly documented fee waiver request).

1. Are you sending your case to the correct location?

- Each petition or application may be filed at a different USCIS location. To determine the correct filing location, please follow the filing instructions on the form.
- 2. Are you using the most current version of the form?
 - Whenever possible, download a copy from our website. The current fee schedule is available on USCIS gov forms page.
- 3. Are you paying the correct fees?
 - The current fee schedule is available on our website.
 - Fees may include: initial filing fee, any associated fraud fees, fees for premium processing, if desired, biometric fees and other fees as appropriate.
 - Checks should be made payable to USCIS and signed and dated appropriately.
- 4. Have you submitted all the required evidence?
 - Check the regulations and the filing instructions on the form to make sure you have included all the documents needed to establish your eligibility for the benefit sought. Make sure you have included translations of all documents not in English.



QUESTIONS?



