

## **GOVERNMENT AGENCY UPDATES (as of 5.6.2020)**

Given the constantly shifting landscape, we will continue to provide updates on government agency processing of asylum applications and hearings. Please note this information is subject to change:

### **Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)**

#### **Immigration Court**

All non-detained hearings scheduled through May 29, 2020 have been postponed.

The SF Immigration Court located at 100 Montgomery St. remains open for filings and to assist with step two of the EOIR registration process. Filings with the court may be made via email to the court's temporary email address at: [SanFrancisco.Immigration.Court@usdoj.gov](mailto:SanFrancisco.Immigration.Court@usdoj.gov). Instructions for filing by email can be found at: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/filing-email>.

#### **Board of Immigration Appeals**

EOIR has established two temporary email accounts for limited filings for **both detained and non-detained** cases pending before the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). The BIA will accept only Briefs, Motions to Accept a Late Filed Brief, Motions for Summary Affirmance, and, if new to the case, courtesy copies of the Form EOIR-27. Please also submit Form EOIR-27s electronically through EOIR's Courts & Appeals System. Failure to follow the guidelines listed [here](#) may result in the rejection of your submitted document filing. If your submission is rejected, you will be notified by mail. Please note EOIR will not provide technical support. If you have questions, please contact the EOIR Office of Policy, Communications and Legislative Affairs Division at [PAO.EOIR@usdoj.gov](mailto:PAO.EOIR@usdoj.gov).

#### **Email addresses for the BIA:**

Detained briefs filed at the BIA: [BIA.Detained.Briefs@usdoj.gov](mailto:BIA.Detained.Briefs@usdoj.gov)

Non-Detained briefs filed at the BIA: [BIA.Nondetained.Briefs@usdoj.gov](mailto:BIA.Nondetained.Briefs@usdoj.gov)

## **UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS)**

USCIS has extended its closure until at least June 4, 2020. During this time, individuals may still submit applications and petitions to USCIS.

#### **Field Office, InfoPass, and ASC Appointments:**

When USCIS again resumes normal operations, USCIS will automatically reschedule ASC appointments due to the temporary office closure. Individuals will receive a new appointment letter in the mail. Those who had

InfoPass or other appointments must reschedule through the USCIS [Contact Center](#) once field offices are open to the public again.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops at: [uscis.gov/coronavirus](https://uscis.gov/coronavirus).

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending the flexibilities it announced on March 30 to assist applicants and petitioners who are responding to certain:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Rescind and Notices of Intent to Terminate regional investment centers; and
- Filing date requirements for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion.

**Notice/Request/Decision Issuance Date:**

This flexibility applies to the above documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision is between March 1 and July 1, 2020, inclusive.

**Response Due Date:**

USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking action. USCIS will consider a Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision before it takes any action.

USCIS is adopting several measures to protect our workforce and community and to minimize the immigration consequences for those seeking immigration benefits during this time.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops and will continue to follow CDC guidance. Education and precautions are the strongest tools against COVID-19 infection. Please visit [uscis.gov/coronavirus](https://uscis.gov/coronavirus) for latest facts and other USCIS updates.

**Allow Reuse of Some Biometrics:**

USCIS also announced that it will reuse previously submitted biometrics in order to process valid Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, extension requests due to the temporary closure of Application Support Centers (ASC) to the public in response to the national pandemic. This announcement is consistent with existing USCIS authorities regarding the agency's ability to reuse previously submitted biometrics. Applicants who had an appointment scheduled with an ASC on or after the March 18, 2020, closure or who

filed an I-765 extension will have their application processed using previously submitted biometrics. This will remain in effect until ASCs resume normal operations.

### **Flexibility in Submitting Required Signatures**

- USCIS [announced](#) that it will accept all benefit forms and documents with reproduced original signatures.
- USCIS already accepts various petitions, applications and other documents bearing an electronically reproduced original signature. This means that a document may be scanned, faxed, photocopied, or similarly reproduced provided that the copy must be of an original document containing an original handwritten signature, unless otherwise specified. **For forms that require an original “wet” signature, per form instructions, USCIS will accept electronically reproduced original signatures for the duration of the national pandemic.** This temporary change only applies to signatures. All other form instructions should be followed when completing a form.
- Individuals or entities that submit documents bearing an electronically reproduced original signature must also retain copies of the original documents containing the “wet” signature. USCIS may, at any time, request the original documents, which if not produced, could negatively impact the adjudication of the immigration benefit.
- **Form G-28:** The instructions for this form explicitly permit the use of photocopied signatures. “For Form G-28, USCIS will consider a photocopied, faxed, or scanned copy of the original handwritten signature valid for filing purposes. The photocopy, fax, or scan must be of the original document containing the handwritten, ink signature.”
- **Form I-589:** The instructions for this form have no equivalent language permitting the use of photocopied/faxed/scanned signatures. *But see, [USCIS Policy Manual, Chapter 2, Signatures, Section B – Valid Signatures](#):*
  - “A signature is valid even if the original signature on the document is photocopied, scanned, faxed, or similarly reproduced. Regardless of how it is transmitted to USCIS, the copy must be of an original document containing an original handwritten signature, unless otherwise specified. The regulations do not require that the person signing submit an “original” or “wet ink” signature on a petition, application, or other request to USCIS.”

### **Asylum Offices:**

Asylum Offices will send interview cancellation notices and automatically reschedule asylum interviews. When the interview is rescheduled, asylum applicants will receive a new interview notice with the new time, date and location of the interview.

- During this ongoing public closure, the SF Asylum Office will have staff responding to phone and email inquiries. Representatives with case-specific questions or concerns should feel free to inquire directly with the asylum office.
  - The new SF Asylum Office phone lines are: (415) 865-3586 and (415) 865-3587.
    - For phone inquiries, leave a voicemail with your name, client's Alien Registration Number (A), and your callback phone number.
  
- For fax and email inquiries, please reference the following asylum office administrative contacts:
  - The public fax number is: 415-575-1393
  - For general case inquiries: [sanfranciscoasylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:sanfranciscoasylum@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - For unaccompanied minor (UAC) specific case inquiries: [minors-sf@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:minors-sf@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - For interview reschedule requests: [sfasylumreschedulerequests@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:sfasylumreschedulerequests@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - For APSO inquiries: [sfapsoinquiry@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:sfapsoinquiry@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - Asylum Office Director Emilia Bardini: [emilia.m.bardini@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:emilia.m.bardini@uscis.dhs.gov)
  - UAC Supervisor Vincent Ferri: [vincent.ferri@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:vincent.ferri@uscis.dhs.gov)

## **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

ICE has updated its website to announce that they have temporarily suspended in-person requirements for all ATD participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their website indicates that they will continue to do telephonic and electronic reporting. You can find this information, and additional FAQs [here](#).