



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Straight from the Source

Immigration News from USCIS

April/May 2014

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1. New N-400 Form Now Mandatory—As part of our [form improvements initiative](#), we have released a revised [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#). This form, which has a revision date of 9/13/13, is now the ONLY version we accept. Although the form changed, eligibility requirements and the fee stayed the same. Changes include:

- New questions to conform with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004, and the Child Soldier Prevention Act of 2008. These questions relate to good moral character and national security and will help us determine an applicant's eligibility.
- A 2D barcode at the bottom of every page. When you complete this form using a computer, the data you enter is captured in the bar code. We scan the bar code and all the data is automatically uploaded to our systems, improving efficiency and accuracy of processing. We also have a [Web page](#) for vendors so that third-party software products can incorporate this technology.
- Our instructions are more comprehensive and highlight general eligibility requirements and provide specific instructions on how to complete each part of the application.



The revised form is available at www.uscis.gov/N-400 and we have a helpful video [here](#). We also encourage customers and stakeholders to read our [N-400 filing tips](#) which will help ensure that people submit complete and accurate applications.

2. Haitian TPS and Re-Registration Period Extended—Haitian nationals who were granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and who want to keep that status for 18 more months must re-register with USCIS. We extended TPS for Haitian nationals from July 23, 2014, through Jan. 22, 2016. We also extended the [registration deadline](#) six weeks from May 2, 2014 to July 22, 2014. TPS is ONLY

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available to Haitian nationals who have lived in the United States continuously since Jan. 12, 2011. On March 3, 2014, we published a [notice in the Federal Register](#) announcing the automatic extension of work permits for 6 months, through Jan. 22, 2015, for eligible Haitian TPS beneficiaries. To re-register:

- TPS beneficiaries must submit Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, and Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- People who want to re-register do not need to pay the Form I-821 application fee again.
- All re-registrants 14 years old and older must pay a biometric fee or request a fee waiver.
- All re-registrants who want a work permit through Jan. 22, 2016, must submit the Form I-765 fee or a fee waiver request.
- Re-registrants who do not want a work permit must still submit a completed Form I-765 but do not need to pay the I-765 fee.

For details about Haiti TPS please click [here](#).

3. H-1B Premium Processing Up and Running—

On April 28, 2014, we began premium processing for H-1B petitions subject to the fiscal year 2015 cap, including H-1B petitions seeking an exemption from the fiscal year cap for people who have earned a U.S. master's degree or higher. We first announced that we would begin premium processing for H-1B cap cases no later than April 28 in a [news release on March 25](#). USCIS provides premium processing service for certain employment-based petitions and guarantees a 15-calendar-day processing time.



4. New Form I-910 Centralizes the Civil Surgeon Application Process—On March 11, 2014, we began implementing a new process to administer civil surgeon designation at the National Benefits Center. Centralizing the civil surgeon application process improves our intake and oversight processes and promotes consistency. Now, physicians seeking civil surgeon designation need to complete [Form I-910, Application for Civil Surgeon Designation](#), and pay a \$615 application fee. The new process does not affect current civil surgeons. Before, civil surgeon designation was a local and relatively informal process at the district or field office. The new process is detailed in Volume 8, Part C of the USCIS Policy Manual, which replaces the civil surgeon designation guidance found in Chapter 83.4 of the Adjudicator's Field Manual (AFM). On Jan. 28, 2014, we published the section of the USCIS Policy Manual with updated and comprehensive policy guidance regarding health-related inadmissibility grounds and waivers. For more information on civil surgeons, visit the [Prospective Civil Surgeons](#) web page. For more information on Form I-910, visit www.uscis.gov/i-910.

5. 63 Countries Eligible to Participate in H-2A and H-2B Programs—On January 17, 2014, we announced that Austria, Italy, Panama, and Thailand have been added to the list of countries whose nationals can participate in the [H-2A and H-2B Visa programs for the coming year](#). The H-2A and H-2B Visa programs allow U.S. employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural and nonagricultural jobs, respectively. Generally, we only approve H-2A and H-2B petitions for nationals of countries the DHS Secretary has designated as eligible. We may approve H-2A and H-2B petitions for nationals of countries **not** on the list if it is in the interest of the United States. Click [here](#) for a complete list of the participating countries. This notice does not affect the status of beneficiaries who currently are in the United States in H-2A or H-2B status unless they apply to change or extend their status. Each country's designation is valid for one year from January 18, 2014.

6. Citizenship Grant Opportunity—We are accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, which provides up to \$10 million in funding for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country. This is a competitive grant opportunity for public or non-profit organizations that promotes immigrant civic integration and prepares permanent residents for citizenship. **Applications are due by May 16.**



Through the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, we hope to expand the availability of high-quality citizenship preparation services by providing grants to organizations that offer both citizenship instruction and naturalization application services to permanent residents. We expect to announce up to 40 grant recipients in September. Since 2009, we have awarded about \$33 million through 182 grants to immigrant-serving organizations. To apply, visit www.grants.gov. We encourage applicants to visit www.grants.gov as early as possible to obtain the registration information needed to complete the application process. For more information, visit www.uscis.gov/grants, email the Office of Citizenship at citizenshipgrantprogram@uscis.dhs.gov, or check out the [notes](#) from an April 8, 2014, engagement on this topic.

7. ABT Revised Settlement Agreement Approved—On Nov. 4, 2013, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington granted final approval of the revised ABT Settlement Agreement, ending class action litigation that began in December 2011. The settlement agreement provides that certain people who intend to file an asylum application, or who have already filed an asylum application, can have their eligibility for work authorization determined using new procedures. The agreement was revised in September 2013 to clarify two points:

- After an asylum case is remanded to an immigration judge, for employment eligibility purposes the applicant will be credited with time going forward, excluding delays requested/caused by the applicant.
- Remand Claim relief would be implemented under the six-month timeframe provided for most other provisions of the agreement. Due to the government shutdown, the six-month timeframe was extended by several weeks, and implementation began Dec. 3, 2013.

For more information on the ABT Settlement Agreement, check out the [USCIS Laws home page](#).

8. Filipino Nationals Impacted by Typhoon May Be Eligible for Immigration Relief—Filipino nationals who have been impacted by Typhoon Haiyan may be eligible for [immigration relief](#). Some of the options include:



- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status for someone currently in the United States, even if they request the extension after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Extension of certain grants of parole made by USCIS;
- Extension of certain grants of advance parole, and expedited processing of advance parole;
- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus work authorization for F-1 students;
- Expedited processing of immigrant petitions for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs);
- For information on USCIS humanitarian programs, visit www.uscis.gov/humanitarian or call 1-800-375-5283.
- For information about disaster-related email scams, visit <http://www.us-cert.gov> "Alerts and Tips."

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9. Workload Transfers—We periodically will transfer casework from one service center to another to balance workloads and make optimum use of our resources. We recently did this for two form types:

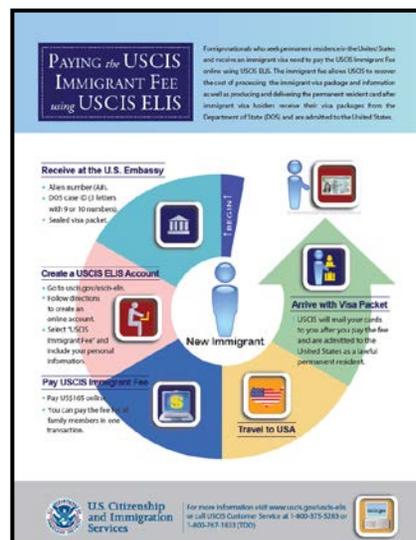
- Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, filed by an employer to extend the stay of someone to perform services as an H-1B specialty occupation worker, and
- I-130 petitions filed by U.S. citizens for their immediate relatives

When we transfer a case, we send a notice to the petitioner and/or legal representative with a transfer date and where the case is being processed. The receipt number stays the same and this transfer will not delay the case. If you receive a request for evidence or any other notice from us about a transferred case, read the notice carefully to ensure that you respond to the Service Center that sent you the notice. When inquiring about your case status, give us your receipt number and tell us that your case was transferred.

10. Special Immigrant Visa Program for Iraqi Nationals Renewed—Congress has passed a bill extending the Special Immigrant Visa Program for Iraqi nationals. This program covers Iraqi nationals who—from March 20, 2003 to Sept. 30, 2013—were employed by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq for at least one year. The extension allows us to approve visa or adjustment of status applications in any Iraqi SIV case (under section 1244) that were pending with USCIS or the Department of State (DOS) when the program expired on Sept. 30, 2013. We can also approve an additional 2,000 cases as long as the initial applications to the DOS Chief of Mission in Iraq was made by Dec. 31, 2013. The authority to grant derivative SIV status to spouses and children of principal Iraqi SIVs did not expire on Sept. 30, 2013, and is not numerically capped. For the latest information on the SIV program, please click [here](#), call customer service at 1-800-375-5283, or visit the DOS SIV [website](#).

11. Tips on Paying the Immigrant Fee—Foreign nationals who receive an immigrant visa from the Department of State need to pay the USCIS Immigrant Fee online. We began collecting this fee using our Electronic Immigration System (ELIS) in May 2013. Since then, we've developed several tools to help applicants navigate ELIS to pay this fee:

- We have a customer guide entitled "How Do I Pay the USCIS Immigrant Fee" in the following languages: [English](#), [Chinese \(Mandarin\)](#), [French](#), [Hindi](#), [Korean](#), [Portuguese](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Urdu](#), and [Vietnamese](#)
- We developed an [infographic](#) (shown to the right) in English
- We have [helpful tips on paying the immigrant fee](#)
- Lastly, for people who create an ELIS account and get stuck, we created a "Need Help" link within ELIS where they can send an email to USCIS staff who will respond to their questions.



12. Policy Memos Issued—USCIS issued and posted the following policy memos at: [www.uscis.gov>laws>policy memoranda](#)

- **February 4, 2014**—[Agency Information Collection Activities: Application for T Nonimmigrant Status, Form I-914, Application for Immediate Family Member of T-1 Recipient, Supplement A, Declaration of Law Enforcement Officer for Victim of Trafficking in Persons, Supplement B](#)
- **January 24, 2014**—[Field Guidance Pertaining to Applicants for Provisional Unlawful Presence Waivers](#)

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- **November 21, 2013**—[Guidance to USCIS Offices on Handling Certain Family-Based Automatic Conversion and Priority Date Retention Requests Pending a Supreme Court Ruling on *Mayorkas v. Cuellar de Osorio*](#) **November 18, 2013**—[Precedent and Non-Precedent Decisions of the Administrative Appeals Office \(AAO\)](#)
- **November 15, 2013**—[Parole of Spouses, Children and Parents of Active Duty Members of the U.S. Armed Forces and the Effect of Parole on Inadmissibility under Immigration and Nationality Act](#)
- **November 14, 2013**—[Adjudication of Adjustment of Status Applications for Individuals Admitted to the United States Under the Visa Waiver Program](#)
- **October 30, 2013**—[17-Month Extension of Post-Completion Optional Practical Training \(OPT\) for F-1 Students Enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) Degree Programs Policy Memoranda](#)



13. Notes from Prior Engagements—We manage a comprehensive calendar of public engagements at www.uscis.gov/outreach. We also post the notes from these engagements. Click on the links below for the notes of our engagements for the last 3 months:

- **April 23, 2014**—The USCIS Asylum Division held its quarterly [stakeholder meeting](#).
- **April 15, 2014**—The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Verification and Documentation Liaison Committee met with our [Verification Division and ICE Homeland Security Investigations](#).
- **April 10, 2014**—We hosted an [engagement](#) with AILA representatives.
- **April 10, 2014**—USCIS Field Operations Directorate hosted an [engagement](#) with AILA representatives. We addressed questions about same sex marriage, customer identity verification, and interview rescheduling and delays among several other topics.
- **April 9, 2014**—USCIS International Operations Division hosted an [engagement](#) with AILA representatives. International Operations addressed questions related to its operations, I-601 waivers, biometrics, international adoptions and I-130 filings among several other topics.
- **April 8, 2014**—We held a [stakeholder engagement](#) to discuss the fiscal year 2014 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program.
- **April 3, 2014**—We offered a [webinar presentation](#) to review our online customer service tools.
- **February 20, 2014**—We held a teleconference [engagement](#) to review changes to the Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

Straight from the Source is produced by the USCIS Western Region Community Relations Program to provide a helpful “wrap-up” of key developments for USCIS stakeholders and customers. Please share this with colleagues and clients. To provide feedback or to be added to the distribution list, please e-mail janna.m.evans@uscis.dhs.gov.