Press Office
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USCIS Update

USCIS Announces Direct Filing Instructions for Forms I-129 and I-539 Under the Bi-Specialization Initiative

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced new Direct Filing instructions for a variety of immigration forms that were transitioned into the Bi-Specialization initiative.

This Update addresses Direct Filing instructions for Forms I-129 (Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker) and I-539 (Application to Change/Extend Nonimmigrant Status). Direct filing will be implemented incrementally for all remaining petition and application forms transitioned into the Bi-Specialization initiative.

Under this new process, USCIS is requiring that customers "Direct File" their petitions and applications directly with the service center that will process the filings, based on the place of temporary employment or place of residence. Customers can expect that the center where they file will also be the center that generates the receipt notice and completes the adjudication. This is a streamlining of the Bi-Specialization process which previously required that applications and petitions be filed at one centralized location and subsequently distributed to another service center for issuance of a receipt notice and final case processing.

Effective **April 2, 2007**, all Forms I-129 and I-539 are to be filed directly with the California Service Center or the Vermont Service Center, whichever is applicable. Customers are responsible for filing the forms with the correct Service Center and should verify that they use the correct filing address by referring to the instructions on the relevant form. To reduce the burden on customers that may have prepared their filings ahead of issuance of this Update, USCIS clarifies that customers do not need to change Service Center addresses on letterhead or supporting documents.

USCIS is also releasing filing charts that delineate the proper filing location, and will post those charts on its Web site prior to April 2, 2007.

Employers requesting Premium Processing Services on Form I-129 must also file a Request for Premium Processing Services (Form I-907). Please visit the Premium Processing page on the USCIS Web site to ensure that the requested classification is eligible.

USCIS will accept Forms I-129 and I-539 filed in accordance with the old filing instructions during the first 15 days of implementation of Direct Filing (from April 2 – 16). However, if a Form I-129 or I-539 is filed on or after April 17, 2007, and is not submitted to the correct filing location, it will be rejected and returned to the petitioner/applicant with fee and instructions for proper filing.

Please visit www.uscis.gov frequently for filing updates or call the National Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283 for up-to-date information.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.