



VERMONT SERVICE CENTER STAKEHOLDERS NEWSLETTER

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View from the Director's Desk

VSC 2011 Fall Stakeholders Conference - November 7th

The event began with Daniel Renaud, Director of the Vermont Service Center (VSC) addressing transformation, staffing, processing times and providing a review of the VSC accomplishments in FY 2011. He also spent some time discussing the ongoing quality initiatives at the VSC. Finally he spoke of the extensive outreach and training that Division VI, our VAWA division, has done over the course of the last 12 months. This outreach and training supported internal officer training on victim related issues and included outreach to community based organizations, advocates and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Tracey Parsons, VSC Assistant Center Director (ACD), gave a brief overview of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program which included updates and filing tips. Ms. Parsons provided information on the re-designation of the various Central American TPS programs that were announced recently. Finally Ms. Parsons outlined the steps that the Vermont Service Center has taken to prepare for this re-registration cycle and how the Center plans to make sure that all Employment Authorization Documents are issued prior to the end of the automatic extension periods.

Tatum Kane and Barb Remillard, both Supervisory Immigration Services Officers (SISO) at the VSC, facilitated a power point presentation related to Customer Service at the VSC. The presentation addressed customer service for all Divisions at the VSC to include customer service avenues for VAWA, NAFSA, and Premium Processing as well as general information on best practices in making an inquiry or requesting help on pending cases. There were questions from the audience asking for clarification on how to use the various customer service avenues and when it was appropriate to use them.

ACDs Lisa Laroe and Keith Canney then presented information on petitions for a nonimmigrant workers in the H, L, O & P classifications. This session covered the current processing times for the various classifications, discussed the impact the January 8, 2010, memo, "Determining Employee-Employer Relationship for Adjudication of H1B Petitions, Including Third-Party Site Placements" has had on adjudication and what the Center is seeing in regards to consular returns. The attendees had questions for the presenters, particularly in regards to L filings.

Carrie Ryan, Tatum Kane and Cindy Lafayette (all SISOs) gave a



PowerPoint presentation on the Consular Notification process and the role that the Service Center plays in facilitating the process. The presentation covered how the Center notifies the Department of State that an application or petition has been approved and how a petitioner can best submit a petition that will help the DOS in the issuance of a visa. Of specific importance is to ensure that all non-immigrant visa applications/petitions are submitted with a complete copy of the filing that can then be sent to the Department of State for entry into their data base. The attendees were interested in gaining insight into some best practices when dealing with the DOS.

Keynote Speaker, Rob Hogan, Associate Director for the Customer Service Directorate, spoke extensively on the current customer service program at USCIS. Mr. Hogan made it clear that he is interested in hearing what the stakeholders had to say and was in agreement with many as they requested some changes to the current program. Mr. Hogan was engaging and supportive of the efforts of the Service Center and the role we play in maintaining quality customer service to all stakeholders and customers in general.

Following Mr. Hogan's presentation, all groups were broken out into roundtable discussions which covered the following topics:

- I-129 H1B & Extension Filings
- I-129 L visas, O & P Filings
- VAWA Filings
- Family-Based Filings

There were 62 individual attendees from 42 cities and 48 different organizations.

Tips on Submitting G-28s to Support Cases at the VSC

There have been a number of inquiries raising issues in regards to the manner in which the address portion for the attorney of record should be completed on the Form G-28. After reviewing a number of G-28s, notices and related systems, it appears as though there are two issues. First, the G-28 is not filled out completely to include the necessary information to ensure delivery to the appropriate attorney and second, the system limits the amount of information provided on notices to four lines. Those lines are always: 1.) **Name of Applicant**, 2.) **C/O Specified Attorney**, 3.) **Street Address**, 4.) **City, State, Zip**.

In order to facilitate the data entry of the address in a manner that will result in an address appearing correctly on various documents, we are asking attorneys and/or accredited representatives to fill out the G-28 in the below manner. Example:

Last Name: Attorney Specified (J. Smith) **First Name:** Smith, LLP.
Firm: Smith, Doe & Simms or SDS if we need to abbreviate
Address: 10 Happy Avenue, Floor 25 New York, NY 1004-1980



Consular Processing Tips

Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker (Form I-129)

- ♦ File a duplicate copy of the petition and supporting documentation with every petition!
 - ♦ Include a cover letter. Notate: **KCC Copy, Please Forward to KCC after approval.**
- ♦ The duplicate is sent to the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC).
 - ♦ Priority is given to those beneficiaries who are needed in the US within 30 days
- ♦ The KCC scans the duplicate into the Petition Information Management System (PIMS).
- ♦ Once the information is in PIMS, the beneficiary can consular process at any consulate that processes I-129 Petitions.
- ♦ I-129 Beneficiaries should be proactive
 - ♦ Prior to arriving at the consulate, call ahead to schedule an appointment and ensure that the necessary information is located in PIMS.
 - ♦ If it is not, the consulate will need to contact KCC to upload the information and this can take 3 to 5 days for the information to appear.

Petition for Alien Fiancé (e) (Form I-129F)

- ♦ All approved I129F petitions are forwarded to the National Visa Center (NVC) for consular processing.
- ♦ Approved petitions are valid for 4 months from the date of approval.
- ♦ The NVC enters the information into the Consolidated Consular Database (CCD), assigns a DOS Case number and identifies the appropriate consulate or embassy for processing.
- ♦ If the visa is denied or the validity dates expire the petition is returned to CIS, via NVC, for housing, termination or reconsideration.

Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130)

- ♦ All cases forwarded to the NVC are manifested and tracked to ensure proper routing.
- ♦ The NVC enters the information into the CCD, assigns a DOS Case number and identifies the appropriate consulate or embassy for processing.
 - ♦ Cases are staged at the NVC until the visa number is available.
- ♦ Once the visa number is available, the petition is sent to the consulate or embassy for processing.
- ♦ If granted, the beneficiary enters the US with a visa packet, provided temporary evidence of lawful permanent residence and awaits receipt of the I551 card (green card).
- ♦ If denied, the petition is returned to the CIS, via NVC, for possible revocation

Contact the Vermont Service Center:
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479

National Customer Service Center (NCSC): 1-800-375-5283

VAWA Filing Tips

- ♦ Do not file for work authorization as a C31 until the underlying I-360 has been approved.
- ♦ Do not file for work authorization as a C14 until you have been granted deferred action.
- ♦ When submitting an I-765, include two passport style photos of the applicant.
- ♦ Children over 14 must sign their own petitions or applications.
- ♦ Do not send I693s as Correspondence - If you submit an I-485 without an I-693 medical form, please wait until you receive an RFE before sending it to the VSC.
- ♦ Please submit a proper fee waiver requests with each filing.
- ♦ Do NOT file an I-765 A19 when you file an I-918 - an EAD will be automatically generated if the I-918 is approved.
- ♦ If you are sending a copy of another petition or application (ex. 1914 or I918) as support, mark the form as "SUPPORT ONLY".

VAWA inquiries at the VSC

- ♦ VSC processes:
 - ♦ Address changes or other application/petition corrections
 - ♦ Deferred Action and Prima facie Determination Extensions
 - ♦ Supplemental material to support a petition and/or application
 - ♦ Status inquires for Ts and Us
- ♦ In order to receive a return call or email, the individual must have a Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative (Form G-28) filed on the specific case or have legitimate law enforcement purpose as the foundation for the inquiry.
- ♦ Inquiries received on the VAWA hotline and email accounts, will be returned unless the inquirer is prohibited from receiving information regarding the specific case. Section 384 prohibits the disclosure of information to certain parties.
- ♦ When calling about an I914A or I918A derivative filing, provide the name and A-number for the principal family member.
- ♦ Inquiries can be made by:
 - ♦ Calling the VAWA hotline (802-527-4888) - a phone mailbox where callers can leave detailed messages.
 - ♦ Emailing:
 - ♦ I-360— HotlineFollowUpI360.vsc@dhs.gov
 - ♦ I-918/I-914— HotlineFollowUpI918I914.vsc@dhs.gov
- ♦ Utilize only one form of inquiry.
- ♦ You must contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to learn that agency's policies regarding the signing of certifications.

Please note: Self-petitioners who do not have a representative must contact the VSC in writing and be sure to sign their inquiry.

VAWA Expedite Requests

All expedite requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and are granted at the discretion of the Director. The burden is on the applicant or petitioner to demonstrate that one or more of the expedite criteria have been met. The criteria are as follows:

- ♦ Severe financial loss to company or individual
- ♦ Extreme emergent situation
- ♦ Humanitarian situation
- ♦ Department of Defense or National Interest Situation (Note: Request must come from official United States Government entity and state that delay will be detrimental to our Government)
- ♦ USCIS error
- ♦ Compelling interest of USCIS