Straight from the Source

Immigration News from USCIS
November 2012

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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1. Temporary Immigration Relief for Victims of Hurricane Sandy—People affected by Hurricane Sandy may be eligible for temporary immigration relief:

- A change or extension of nonimmigrant status, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has ended;
- Extension or re-parole of people who were granted parole before;
- Expedited adjudication of off-campus employment authorization applications for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications; and
- Assistance to Lawful Permanent Residents stranded overseas without immigration documents.

Where appropriate, we may exercise discretion for:

- people who could not come to their interview; and
- people who have not been able to respond to Requests For Evidence (RFEs) or Notices of Intent to Deny (NOID). For all RFEs and NOIDs that have a deadline of October 26 through November 26, 2012, we're giving an extra 30 days. During this time, we will not issue denials based on a customer's not appearing for an interview or failing to submit requested paperwork.

2. New Tools to Help Foreign Entrepreneurs Grow Businesses in U.S.—As part of the Entrepreneurs in Residence (EIR) initiative, we've launched an online resource center, Entrepreneur Pathways. The new resource center gives entrepreneurs who want to start a

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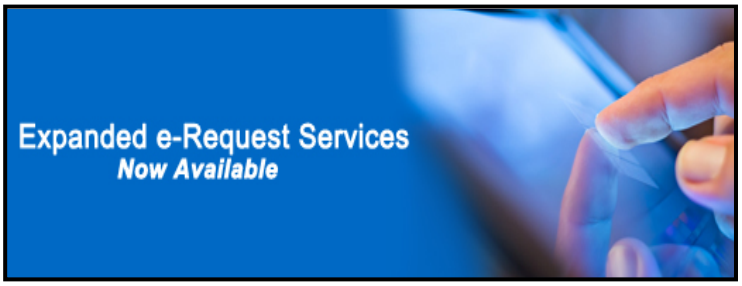
business in the United States an intuitive way to navigate the immigration process. Launched earlier this year, the EIR initiative draws on industry expertise to strengthen USCIS policies and practices critical to American economic growth. For details, click here.

3. Expanded e-Request Services—We recently expanded the services on our online **e-request system.** Customers may now:



- Create a service request for any form type to inquire about a case that is outside of normal processing times OR tell us about an administrative error we may have made;
- For Forms I-90 and N-400 only, customers can ask about a fingerprint appointment notice or other notice they expected to receive;
- The service is now accessible by individuals with disabilities (section 508 compliant).

To submit an e-Request, visit our e-Request home page and have your receipt number ready.

4. New Limit for CNMI-Only Transitional Workers—In FY 2012, the numerical limit for transitional workers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) was 22,416, and employers CNMI filed petitions for more than 12,000 transitional workers (also called CW-1 workers). For FY2013, we've set the limit for transitional workers at 15,000 to meet the CNMI's existing labor market needs and provide for growth, while reducing the numerical limitation as required by law. Petitions requesting a work start date between Oct. 1, 2012, and Sept. 30, 2013 will be counted towards the 15,000 limit. For details, see the full press release and Federal Register notice.

5. Temporary Protected Status for Haiti Extended—We have extended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti until July 22, 2014. Current Haitian TPS beneficiaries who want to extend their TPS status **must re-register** by Nov. 30, 2012. The 18-month extension allows TPS re-registrants to apply for a new work permit. We also extended special exceptions for F-1 nonimmigrant Haitian students, which also run through July 22, 2014. More information about TPS for Haiti is available at www.uscis.gov/tps.

6. New Form I-140—We recently published a new Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker. We changed the format to improve intake processing and added Adobe fillable features to make it easier to fill out. We encourage you to download the form from our website and complete it on a computer to take advantage of the new features. Editions dated Jan. 06, 2010, and later will be accepted until Dec. 30, 2012. After this date, we will only accept the Oct. 1, 2012, edition. For details, click here.

7. U.S. and Taiwan Discuss Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) Process—In September, a joint Department of State and USCIS team traveled to Taiwan to discuss the possibility of implementing a Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) process for adoptions between Taiwan and the United States. The PAIR process would allow USCIS to review a child's eligibility to immigrate to the United States **before** a final adoption or custody order transfers rights to adopting U.S. parents. A PAIR review could prevent situations where U.S. families cannot bring their adopted child to the United States and would minimize long separations while a child's immigration eligibility is being evaluated. For details on the PAIR proposal being considered for Taiwan, click here.

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8. We're Opening Citizenship Corners in LA Public Libraries—USCIS Director Mayorkas and Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa launched a new initiative to provide the Los Angeles Public Library's 73 locations with citizenship resources and training for staff. Some highlights of this new initiative include:

- Training for library personnel on the naturalization process and available USCIS resources;
- Having special citizenship materials and designating space in each library as 'citizenship corners;'
- Offering a list of non-profit groups providing naturalization assistance in the community; and
- Providing access to library community rooms for citizenship and English language classes.

To see the Letter of Agreement between USCIS and the City of Los Angeles, click here. If you'd like to create a citizenship corner in your library, please write to janna.evans@dhs.gov.

9. $5 Million in Grants Awarded for Citizenship Preparation Programs—During Constitution Week, we announced the award of almost $5 million in grants to promote immigrant integration and U.S. citizenship. Thirty-one organizations from 21 states and the District of Columbia will receive federal funding to support citizenship preparation services for permanent residents through September 2014. Since the program began in October 2009, our citizenship grant program has helped more than 38,000 permanent residents prepare for citizenship. The citizenship grant program is part of a multifaceted approach to citizenship preparation which includes the Citizenship Resource Center, available at www.uscis.gov/citizenship.

10. Transferring Work from Service Centers to Field Offices—To balance our workload and maximize productivity, we are transferring some workload from our four service centers (Vermont, Nebraska, Texas and California) to Field Offices and the National Benefits Center (NBC). The chart below summarizes these changes, which take effect on November 1, 2012:

Form Type	Effective Date	Previous Location	New Location
I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card	Aug. 15, 2012	Nebraska Service Center (NSC)	National Benefits Center (NBC)
Stand-Alone Immediate Relative (IR) I-130, Petition for Alien Relative	Aug. 15, 2012	all USCIS service centers	Local Field Office that has jurisdiction
Interview-Waivable Family-Based I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status	Aug. 1, 2012	California Service Center (CSC)	National Benefits Center

We are using a "date-forward" approach. Any work we received before November 1 will be handled by the old location. Work we receive on or after November 1 will be completed by the new location. Customers should be aware that they may receive transfer notices, requests for evidence (RFE), notices of decision, and other correspondence from a different USCIS office than where they filed. The filing location for these forms **will not** change. For more information click here.

11. New Filing Option for Canadian TN Nonimmigrants—On Oct. 1, 2012, we began accepting Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker filed on behalf of Canadian citizens who are outside the United States and seeking classification as a TN nonimmigrant. This new option complements the old process of filing Form I-129 in connection with a request to extend a TN nonimmigrant's stay or to

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change a nonimmigrant's status to TN. Canadian citizens may still apply to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for TN classification in conjunction with an application for TN admission to the U.S. Please see our Web pages concerning Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-129, TN North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Professionals, and Frequently Asked Questions for TN's.

12. U.S. and Russia Announce Bilateral Adoption Agreement—A new *Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation Regarding Cooperation in Adoption of Children* to enhance safeguards and protections of the adoption process officially took effect Nov. 1, 2012. Not all provisions of the Agreement will take effect immediately. We anticipate that transitioning to the new procedures will take 6 to 9 months. Most cases already in process as of Nov. 1 will continue under the old procedures. However, we will monitor all cases to ensure they are in compliance. USCIS and the Department of State will conduct outreach in the coming months to ensure that new guidance and information is available. The full text of the Agreement and Frequently Asked Questions can be found at http://adoption.state.gov. Please visit www.uscis.gov/adoption and www.adoption.state.gov for updates.

13. Policy Memos Issued—USCIS issued and posted the following policy memos at: www.uscis.gov>laws>policy memoranda

- **November 7, 2012**—Jurisdiction of Amended Home Studies and the Application of Home Study Age Restrictions for Prospective Adoptive Child(ren) in Intercountry Adoption Cases
- **October 2, 2012**—Designation of Military Physicians as Civil Surgeons for Members and Veterans of the Armed Forces and Eligible Dependents

15. Upcoming National Engagements—Please bookmark our engagement calendar for future reference: www.uscis.gov/publicengagement. Click on the links below for details:

- **December 5**—National Spanish-language Engagement - A Conversation with USCIS from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm (Eastern time). Spanish language only, any topic, but no case specifics.
- **December 6**—Asylum Division Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting at 2:00 pm Eastern in the White Oak Conference Room at 20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC. In-person participation only.
- **December 6**—Immigration Relief for Victims of Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and other Serious Crimes. We're offering web-ex training to stakeholders from 2:00 pm –4:00 pm (Eastern).
- **December 11**—Our Terrorism-Related Inadmissibility Grounds (TRIG) Working Group will hold its quarterly stakeholder meeting at 1:30 pm (Eastern) in Washington, DC.
- **December 11**—We invite you to a stakeholder teleconference to discuss Guidance on the Use of Interpreters in USCIS Domestic Interviews from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Eastern).
- **December 12**—We invite you to an engagement with the USCIS Entrepreneurs in Residence (EIR) team where they will share their experiences working together the past year.

Straight from the Source is produced monthly 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 submit comments, or to be added to the distribution list, please e-mail janna.evans@dhs.gov.

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