Guidance for Attorneys Dealing with the National Visa Center" provided by Charles Oppenheim, Chief, Immigrant Visa Control, U.S. Department of State at the AILA EB-5 Summit in Las Vegas, Friday, August 28, 2015

Send all e-mail correspondence to NVCAattorney@state.gov.

- Do not send the same e-mail to multiple addresses. Clogging up the e-mail boxes delays our response.

- For us to provide information, you must be listed on the case as Agent of Record.

- Refer to only one case per e-mail.

- Use the case number or receipt number as the subject line.

- Include in the body of the e-mail the name of the petitioner; name and date of birth of beneficiary; and name/office requesting information.

- Please allow 30 days after receipt of an I-797 from USCIS before contacting NVC about a case to ensure USCIS has had enough time to mail the case and NVC can enter it into our database.

- The NVC will research cases and communicate with overseas embassies and USCIS when necessary. As the “middle man” NVC hopes you will remember that they also have to wait for an answer in order to reply to your inquiry. The NVC cannot:
  - Approve an expedite or transfer request
  - Reinstate a case
  - Explain the reasons for a visa denial

In the above instances, NVC forwards your request to a consular officer overseas and waits for their decision. NVC is also unable to provide information on case status once a petition is returned to USCIS.

- Please remind clients that they should:
  - Visit NVC’s website to review our Frequently Asked Questions at http://NVC.state.gov
  - NOT send original civil documents to NVC. They should send photocopies of items such as a birth certificate. However, applicants must bring the originals to their visa interview.
  - Mail all of their financial and supporting documents to NVC in one envelope, and include the NVC-provided document cover sheet.
Visit the U.S. Embassy’s website after receiving their interview appointment notification from NVC to review instructions for scheduling a medical appointment. PRIOR to all visa interviews, applicants must have completed a medical examination with an Embassy-approved physician in the country where they are interviewing.

- How can NVC help process my case more quickly?
  - NVC is always looking for ways to improve. Over the last several months NVC has made many procedural changes to how they review documents and forms, has increased their staff, and began some pilot programs aimed at providing better and faster customer service to applicants. Some of the biggest changes they have made include:

  How can NVC help process my case faster?
  - NVC no longer accepts or requires original civil documents.
  - NVC reviews all documents and forms simultaneously, including the DS-260, Application for an Immigrant Visa, to avoid sending a “false checklist” that would ask an applicant to send a document that has already been mailed.
  - Now NVC will only send one instructional letter when processing begins; applicants are responsible for moving themselves along through the processing steps.
  - NVC made changes to the I-864, Affidavit of Support review to move cases to qualification faster.
  - NVC is piloting an I-864 “Assessment Letter” program in Ciudad Juarez, where NVC includes their suggestions for how the applicant can correct their documents prior to interview with a consular officer.
  - NVC is piloting an electronic immigrant visa process with six posts, where applicants will upload their documents to an online program.
  - NVC installed a new phone system that includes a 25% increase in the number of available phone lines for their public inquiry line.

Source: Bureau of Consular Affairs