



AMERICAN  
IMMIGRATION  
LAWYERS  
ASSOCIATION

March 20, 2020

Kenneth Cuccinelli  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Department of Homeland Security  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20529

Re: Impact of California 'Stay at Home' Order on USCIS California Service Center Operations

Dear Mr. Cuccinelli:

On behalf of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), we are writing to respectfully request information regarding the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) California Service Center (CSC) operations. AILA acknowledges the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on our nation, including the federal government, U.S. businesses, universities, schools, communities, and the public at large. To date, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that within the United States, more than 15,000 people have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and at least 200 people have died. Within the state of California, more than 600 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed and at least 16 deaths. On March 4, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency. Subsequently, on March 19, Governor Newsom ordered California's nearly 40 million residents to stay at home except for essential activities.

In acknowledgement of the recent statewide mandate ordering all individuals in California to remain at home, AILA is writing to respectfully request that USCIS provide information to stakeholders as soon as possible regarding whether or not the CSC will remain open and operational during this public health crisis and any measures that CSC is taking that will impact its operations. In particular, AILA respectfully requests that USCIS provide information to stakeholders as soon as possible regarding the following logistical and operational issues impacting the CSC:

- In the event that the CSC shuts down its operations, will it continue to accept petitions and applications submitted to the CSC by mail or courier service?
  - If not, will USCIS permit stakeholders to submit their petitions and applications to other USCIS Service Centers and Lockbox locations that remain open?
- In the event that the CSC shuts down or is required to limit its operations, will applications and petitions continue to be received and adjudicated?
  - If yes, how will notices, such as receipt notices, approval notices, and Requests for Evidence (RFEs) be delivered to stakeholders? Is the CSC considering alternative measures, such as email, to deliver these notifications?
- In light of the FY 2021 H-1B cap filing season opening on April 1, how will the CSC accept, process, and adjudicate Form I-129 cap-subject petitions?
- Will the CSC continue to entertain requests for expedited processing for cases pending at the CSC during this period, provided that the request meets USCIS' expedite criteria?

**AILA National Office**

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- AILA acknowledges USCIS's March 20 announcement regarding premium processing operations. Will the CSC Premium Processing Unit continue to operate to adjudicate Form I-129 applications that were filed on or before March 20?

We recognize that the COVID-19 outbreak has significantly impacted not only the public, but also the federal government's ability to continue to operate "business as usual". We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience. As the situation evolves, we appreciate continued engagement on how USCIS can continue to best serve its stakeholders in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19, while enabling individuals to maintain their lawful status. If you require any additional information and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sharvari (Shev) Dalal-Dheini, Director of Government Relations at (202) 507-7621 or by email at [sdalal-dheini@aila.org](mailto:sdalal-dheini@aila.org).

Sincerely,

THE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

cc: Joseph Edlow, Deputy Director for Policy, USCIS  
Kathy Nuebel Kovarick, Chief of Staff, USCIS  
Tracy Renaud, Associate Director, Service Center Operations Directorate  
Kathy Baran, Director, California Service Center  
Kathryn Rexrode, Associate Director, External Affairs Directorate, USCIS  
Michael Dougherty, Ombudsman, Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Ombudsman  
Stacy Shore, Acting Deputy Ombudsman, Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Ombudsman  
Elissa McGovern, Chief of Policy, Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Ombudsman