

Form G-56 – Asylum Merits Interview Notice

A FILE: [REDACTED]
Receipt Number [REDACTED]
DATE: 21-Jul-2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Please come to the office shown below at the time and place indicated in connection with an official matter.

LOCATION	New York (ZNY) Asylum Office 1065 Stewart Ave Suite 200, Bethpage, NY 11714
DATE & Time	[REDACTED]
REASON FOR APPOINTMENT	You, and any of your family members included on your positive credible fear determination, are scheduled for an interview with an asylum officer. The purpose of the interview is to obtain information on your eligibility for asylum, statutory withholding of removal, and protection under the Convention Against Torture. The asylum officer may also ask questions of you and your family members included on your positive credible fear determination to determine whether they have their own claim for asylum, statutory withholding of removal, or protection under the Convention Against Torture.

Please read this interview notice in its entirety, as it contains important information about your asylum interview. Failure to appear for your interview, absent exceptional circumstances, may result in the referral of your case to the immigration court, dismissal of your asylum application, and may affect your eligibility for employment authorization. USCIS asylum offices are open with additional precautions to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These precautions are listed below, at Section IV. COVID-19 Safety Precautions.

1. **You must appear for this interview unless** you, your dependent family members, other members of your household, or your attorney or accredited representative:
 - Have COVID-19 or any symptoms of COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including, but not limited to, a recently developed cough, fever, difficulty breathing, new loss of smell or taste, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, congestion, sore throat, or vomiting (this list does not include all symptoms);
 - Have been in close contact (within six feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with anyone known to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days (unless you are fully vaccinated or if you are a health care worker and consistently wear an N95 respirator and proper personal protective equipment (PPE) or equivalent when in contact with COVID-19 positive individuals);

- Have returned from domestic, international, or cruise ship travel in the past 10 days (unless you are fully vaccinated);
- Have been instructed by a health care provider, public health authority, or government entity to self-isolate or self-quarantine in the past 14 days (unless you have been cleared to end isolation or quarantine); or
- Refuse to wear a face covering or mask in accordance with USCIS policy.

Fully vaccinated means it has been at least two weeks since you received your second dose in a two-dose series, or at least two weeks since you received a single-dose vaccine.

You may request to reschedule your appointment due to exigent circumstances, including if you or your representative are ill. Contact your asylum office in writing as soon as possible if you must reschedule your interview. For asylum office contact information, visit the Asylum Office Locator page at egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asy.

ii. Who should come with you to your interview?

Only the following people may come with you to your interview:

- **Dependents:** All family members included in your asylum application as dependents must come to your interview.
- **Interpreter:** DO NOT bring an interpreter. If you do not speak English, USCIS will provide you with an interpreter. If you are unwilling to use the USCIS-provided interpreter or proceed in English at your interview, you will be removed from the asylum merits interview process and be placed in removal proceedings.
- **Attorney or accredited Representative:** Your attorney or accredited representative may come with you to the interview. USCIS asylum offices permit attorneys and accredited representatives to participate in the interview remotely via telephone. Please visit the Preparing for Your Asylum Interview page of the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum/preparing-for-your-asylum-interview for more information. For your attorney or representative to participate remotely, he or she must receive consent from you to participate remotely, complete the **REMOTE ATTORNEY OR REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPATION** election form, and submit this election form to the local asylum office at least ten (10) days prior to your scheduled interview. If your attorney or representative requests to modify his or her election of remote participation to in-person participation fewer than 10 days prior to the interview, then the asylum interview may be rescheduled and any rescheduled interview caused by this modification will result in an applicant-caused delay for purposes of employment authorization. Your attorney or accredited representative may find a link to this election form by visiting the Preparing for Your Asylum Interview page of the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum/preparing-for-your-asylum-interview or by contacting the local office directly.
- **Witnesses:** If you have a witness who will provide testimony in your case, that individual may come with you to your interview. However, we encourage your witness to provide sworn written testimony before your interview and not attend the interview. You may provide this written testimony to USCIS as additional evidence following the guidelines described in Section V below.
- **Applicants with a disability:** If you have a disability and have an individual who assists you, that individual may come with you.

III. What to Bring to Your Interview:

- A form of identification with your name, date and place of birth, and nationality, including:
 - o Any passports you may have;
 - o Other travel or identification documents; and
 - o Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record, if you received it when you arrived in the United States;
- The originals and 1 copy of any birth certificates, marriage certificates, or other documents to establish your relationship to your family members included in your asylum application;
- A copy of your record of credible fear determination and copies of any additional material that you previously submitted, in case the asylum office is missing any of this information;
- Any additional items you have available that document your claim and that you have not already shared or submitted. Supporting evidence may include, but is not limited to: newspaper articles, affidavits of witnesses or experts, medical and/or psychological records, doctors' statements, periodicals, journals, books, photographs, official documents, or personal statements or live testimony from witnesses or experts. If you have difficulty discussing harm you have suffered in the past, you may submit a health professional's report explaining this difficulty; and a certified translation of any document that is not in English;
 - o Any document in a language other than English must be accompanied by an English translation that the translator has certified is complete and correct.
 - o The translator must certify that they are competent to translate the language used in the document into English.

IV. COVID-19 Safety Precautions:

Please follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) safety guidelines for the state and county where your asylum office is located. To find the state and county where your asylum office is located, go to: <https://egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asy>.

In areas of high or substantial transmission according to the CDC's COVID-19 by County webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>, all federal employees, contractors, and visitors must wear a mask inside federal buildings. In DHS-controlled spaces, such as USCIS asylum offices, this guidance supersedes state, local, tribal, or territorial rules regarding face coverings.

- You may not enter the facility more than 15 minutes before your appointment.
- USCIS will provide hand sanitizer at entry points.
- There will be markings and physical barriers in the facility; you should pay close attention to these signs to ensure that you and other individuals accompanying you to your interview can follow social distancing guidelines.
- You may have to answer health screening questions before entering a facility.
- Bring your own black ink or blue ink pen to your interview.

Depending on local conditions, you may be interviewed in-person or through a video-facilitated interview. In an in-person interview, you will be in the same room with the interviewing officer separated by a plexiglass barrier. In a video-facilitated interview, you will be in one room and the interviewing officer in a different room.

Before you come to your interview read the most current guidance on "Asylum Appointments" by visiting the [USCIS Response to COVID-19](https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-to-covid-19) page of the USCIS website, located at <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-to-covid-19>.

V. How to Submit Additional Evidence

If you wish to amend or correct information on your Form I-870, record of Determination/Credible Fear Worksheet or provide additional written information to supplement information collected during the credible fear process, you must submit the information directly to the asylum office that will conduct your asylum merits interview at least 7 calendar days before your scheduled interview or by mail postmarked at least 10 calendar days before your scheduled interview. The asylum office may consider amendments or supplements submitted after the deadline or may allow an extension to submit additional evidence if the asylum office finds good cause in an exercise of discretion. The separate notice you will receive with the time, date, and location of your asylum merits interview will indicate where to submit amendments or additional information.

VI. Required Notice language:

USCIS may use your biometrics to check the criminal history records of the FBI, for identity verification, to determine eligibility, to create immigration documents (e.g., Green Card, Employment Authorization Document, etc.), or any purpose authorized by the Immigration and Nationality Act. You may obtain a copy of your own FBI record using the procedures outlined within 28 C.F.R., Section 16.32. For information, please visit <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks>. For Privacy Act information, please visit <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council/privacy-act-statement>

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THIS APPOINTMENT AND BRING THIS LETTER WITH YOU. If you are unable to do so due to exigent circumstances, state your reason, sign below and return this letter to this office at once. Contact your asylum office in writing by mail or e-mail as soon as possible to reschedule your interview. Asylum merits interviews are only rescheduled due to exigent circumstances. For asylum office contact information, visit the USCIS Service and Office Locator page at www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-a-uscis-office.

I am unable to keep this appointment because:	
Signature [Redacted]	Date 07/21/2022

Sincerely,
Frances Quintin
Signature for Irvin Gadson,
Acting Director
Houston (ZHN) Asylum Office
www.uscis.gov
CC: