Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Frequently Asked Questions

Learn more about the CIS Ombudsman's processes and topics related to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

If you are looking for:

- A current topic that may affect whether you can request case assistance from us: See our Web Alerts (/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) page
- Our stakeholder message: See our News & Updates (/all-news-updates/602) page
- Questions and answers from our webinars: See our Webinar Questions and Answers (/publication/webinar-QAs) page

Otherwise, we have FAQs in these categories:

CIS Ombudsman Processes

- About the CIS Ombudsman's Office (#AboutCISOmbudsmansOffice)
- How to Request Case Assistance (#HowtoRequestCaseAssistance)
- Expedites, Appeals, and Requests from USCIS (#ExpeditesAppealsRequestsfromUSCIS)
- How We Process Your Request (#HowWeProcessYourRequest)

By Topic

- Afghans Paroled into the United States (#AfghansParoledIntoUS)
- Biometrics Appointments (#Biometrics)
- Change of Address (#ChangeofAddress)
- Contacting USCIS (#ContactingUSCIS)
- Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) (#EADs)
- Employment-based Cases (#EBCases)
- File Transfer Issues (#FileTransferIssues)
- Filing with USCIS (#FilingWithUSCIS)
- Form I-134A for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) (#I134AforCHNV)
- Green Cards (Permanent Resident Cards) (#GreenCards)
- Reporting Poor Treatment (#ReportingPoorTreatment)
- Students (#Students)
- T, U, and VAWA Cases (#TUVAWA)

Close all Open all

CIS Ombudsman Processes

About the CIS Ombudsman's Office

1. Is the CIS Ombudsman's office part of USCIS?

No. Our office is independent and not part of USCIS. We are part of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) headquarters and report directly to the deputy secretary of DHS.

Because we are not part of USCIS, we cannot approve or deny an immigration form or change a decision made by USCIS. We also cannot provide legal advice. Go to our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page to learn what we can and cannot help with.

2. Does the CIS Ombudsman's office address issues involving CBP, ICE, TSA, or DHS components other than USCIS?

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

No. Under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, our office has the authority to address **only issues that involve USCIS**. See our Who We Are (/about-citizenship-and-immigration-services-ombudsman) page for more details. For information on complaints or reporting concerns regarding other DHS components, please see our Reporting Poor Treatment (#ReportingPoorTreatment) section below.

How to Request Case Assistance

1. What issues does the CIS Ombudsman help with?

The CIS Ombudsman is an office of last resort for case assistance, and we ask that you first attempt to resolve the issue with USCIS before submitting a request to our office.

Go to our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page to see how to seek help from USCIS. The page also includes the most up-to-date list of the types of issues we can and cannot help with. Please also read our Web Alerts (/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) page for recent updates that may affect you if you want to request case assistance from our office.

2. How do I submit a case assistance request?

Please go to our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for instructions, including how to seek help from USCIS first (/case-assistance#SeekHelpFromUSCISFirst). Please also read our Web Alerts (/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) page for recent updates that may affect you if you want to request case assistance from our office.

- **We strongly prefer that you submit your case assistance request online** because it allows us to process your request more efficiently. Please remember to respond to all questions and submit supporting documentation with your request. If you are an attorney or accredited representative submitting DHS Form 7001 on behalf of your client, you can sign on behalf of your client in section 9, sign section 10, and upload your Form G-28, *Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative,* in section 8.

- **Make sure to submit supporting documentation**, such as:
  - A signed Form G-28, if applicable.
  - If you are an applicant or self-petitioner for (or previously were granted) T, U, VAWA, asylee, or refugee status, you need to submit a copy of your "wet ink" (non-electronic) signature (photocopy or scanned copy is acceptable).
  - Consent from the petitioner (employer or family member) who is sponsoring you, stating that they authorize us to reach out to USCIS and communicate with you on the specific matter, if applicable.
  - Correspondence with USCIS (notices, decisions, or SRMT submissions and/or responses).
  - If you are requesting case assistance because you believe there is clear USCIS error (https://www.dhs.gov/cisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions#ClearUSCISError) (such as a denial for abandonment despite the timely submission of a response or request for rescheduling), submit an explanation of why you believe there is an error, copies of the denial or rejection notice, the original submission, the RFE notice and response (if applicable), and the receipt notice for the appeal and/or motion to reopen or reconsider with supporting documentation.
  - If you are requesting case assistance for a missing receipt notice, submit a copy of the package you submitted to USCIS and proof of delivery.
  - If you are requesting case assistance because you think USCIS incorrectly rejected your form, submit a copy of the form you submitted to USCIS, proof of delivery, and the rejection notice with addendum/attachment.

- **Please be mindful that filing a case assistance request with the CIS Ombudsman does not change your appeal and motion rights or extend any USCIS deadlines you may face.** If you received a request for evidence or other notice requesting information, you must respond to USCIS within the timeframe noted on the notice even if you disagree with the request, or you risk getting denied for failing to respond. If you received a denial notice and believe there is clear USCIS error, you should file an appeal or motion to reopen or reconsider by the due date listed on the denial notice or you will lose your right to appeal.

For tips on how to best request our help, please see our tip sheet for submitting a case assistance request (/publication/case-assistance-tip-sheet). If you are having problems completing Form 7001, you can call us at 1-855-882-8100 (tel:1-855-882-8100) or email cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

(mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) to ask for help.

3. Who is considered a petitioner or a beneficiary?

The petitioner is an employer or individual (such as a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident) who files a petition on behalf of a noncitizen. The beneficiary is the noncitizen for whom the petition is submitted. We cannot assist the beneficiary of a petition unless the petitioner's consent is provided with the DHS Form 7001.

4. Who is considered an applicant?

An applicant is the individual who signs and applies for an immigration benefit with USCIS. There are some circumstances where an applicant also needs a petitioner's consent, such as with multiple applications/petitions filed together where the underlying petition has not yet been approved. For example, if an underlying immigrant visa petition (such as a Form I-130, *Petition for Alien Relative*, or Form I-140, *Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers*) is not yet approved, the petitioner's consent is required to request information about the immigrant visa petition filed together with it (such as a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*).

5. Who needs to sign the case assistance request and provide consent?

We need to see consent from:

A. The applicant or petitioner

The individual who signed the form submitted to USCIS must have signed and dated DHS Form 7001 to provide proper consent for the case assistance request.

- Attorneys and accredited representatives can sign the online DHS Form 7001 on behalf of their clients. If you are an attorney or representative, you must:
    1. Have a Form G-28, *Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative*, on file with USCIS for the form for which you are seeking assistance.
    2. Sign section 9 (Consent for Applicant/Petitioner) of the form on behalf of your client.
    3. Complete section 10 (Consent for Attorney or Accredited Representative).
    4. Upload a copy of the Form G-28 on file with USCIS in section 8 (Supporting Documentation).
- If you are an applicant or self-petitioner for (or were previously granted) T, U, VAWA, asylee, or refugee status:
    - Your address must match the address in USCIS systems. We can only communicate with you via U.S. postal mail to comply with the law and keep your case confidential. If your address with USCIS is incorrect, go to USCIS' How to Change Your Address (https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) page to see how to update it.
    - If you do not have a legal representative, you must provide your "wet ink" (non-electronic) signature. You can do so by signing the consent part of the DHS Form 7001, scanning it, and uploading it as a supporting document with your online DHS Form 7001.
    - If any of these items is missing or inaccurate, we will close your case assistance request and will not be able to communicate with you until you correct the issue.

B. The petitioner (if you are the beneficiary of a form)

If you are requesting assistance on an application that depends on a pending immigrant petition (such as an employment-based Form I-140 or family-based Form I-130), please have the petitioner who signed the Form I-140 or I-130 also provide consent.

C. Attorneys or accredited representatives (if any)

A legal representative (if any) must submit a Form G-28, and it must match the one submitted to USCIS for the form for which you are seeking assistance.

6. My family members also need help with their immigration case. Can I include them all on the same case assistance request?

No. Each family member experiencing difficulties with USCIS **must** file a separate DHS Form 7001 and provide us their consent. We research each individual's case and reach out to the appropriate USCIS office with jurisdiction over each pending case. A parent may complete a DHS Form 7001 for a minor child.

If you also have a family member who needs case assistance, check the box in Section 5 of the DHS Form 7001 to let us know. After you and your family member(s) have each submitted a separate DHS Form 7001, you will each receive a confirmation email with your CIS Ombudsman request number (unless you requested that we communicate with you only by mail). Please then send an email with all related CIS Ombudsman request numbers to cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) to make sure we link the case assistance requests together. This will enable us to work the cases together.

7. I filed multiple petitions and need help. Can I include them all on the same case assistance request?

If you submitted a Form I-129, *Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-129), that included multiple beneficiaries (such as for H-2A or H-2B visa classifications), you may list up to 25 of these beneficiaries on the same case assistance request (DHS Form 7001). Please include only the beneficiaries that you need our assistance with.

However, if you need our assistance with more than one receipt number, please submit a separate DHS Form 7001 for each. For example:

- If you submit a case assistance request for a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, that you filed together with Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization*, and Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document*, we will only inquire on either the Form I-485 or the Forms I-765/I-131 (combo cards or otherwise) with USCIS. If you need assistance with all of these forms, please submit two case assistance requests: one for the Form I-485 and a second for the Forms I-765 and I-131. Then send us an email with all related CIS Ombudsman request numbers to cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) so we may link the case assistance requests together. This will enable us to work the cases together.
- If you are a U.S. citizen and you concurrently filed Form I-130, *Petition for Alien Relative*, with your immediate relative's Form I-485, you can submit one DHS Form 7001; however, we must receive signed consent from both individuals (the petitioner and the beneficiary who is applying for a Green Card).

8. I have multiple applications pending with USCIS. If I list these receipt numbers on my DHS Form 7001, can you inquire with USCIS on all of them?

Our inquiries to USCIS are generally for one receipt number—with a few exceptions. The three situations where you can list multiple forms on the same DHS Form 7001 are:

- If you filed Form I-130, *Petition for Alien Relative* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-130) and Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-485) together with USCIS, and they are still pending, or
- If you filed Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765) and Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-131) together with USCIS, and they are still pending, or
- If you filed Form I-751, *Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-751) and Form N-400, *Application for Naturalization* (https://www.uscis.gov/n-400) together with USCIS, and they are still pending.

Otherwise, if you would like our assistance with more than one pending application or petition, please complete a separate DHS Form 7001 and include the USCIS contact dates and SRMT confirmation numbers or USCIS responses for the specific receipt number.

9. What should I do if my supporting documents are too large to upload when submitting the DHS Form 7001 online?

If you experience problems uploading all your documents to the online DHS Form 7001 (for example, if your files exceed the file size limit), you can still file online. Follow these steps:

1. Complete your DHS Form 7001 online (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001#no-back) and upload any files that you can in section 8 (Supporting Documentation).
2. Once you submit your form, you will see your CIS Ombudsman Request Number on the confirmation page. Within 24 hours of submitting your form online, you should also receive a confirmation email from cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) with your CIS Ombudsman Request Number (unless you requested that we communicate with you only by mail).
3. Go to the Upload Requested Documents (after submitting your request (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001?tab=document)) tab on our online DHS Form 7001 page.
4. Enter your CIS Ombudsman Request Number and then upload your documents.
5. If you still have difficulties submitting your documents using the "Upload Requested Documents (after submitting your request)" tab, you may reply to the confirmation email from cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) and attach any additional documents. If you can also share a screenshot of the error message you see, that would help us troubleshoot the technical issue.

We will confirm that we received your emailed documents and will attach them to your case assistance request in our system.

If you requested that we communicate with you only by mail (or we are required to do so), you may still email your supporting documents to us at cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov). To help us identify your case, please make sure to include your name and information, such as your A-Number or USCIS receipt number.

10. I am experiencing difficulties with the online DHS Form 7001 (such as the form is not saving or I cannot submit the form). Who do I contact?

If you experience difficulties with the online DHS Form 7001, you may:

- Email us at cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) if the issue is not urgent, or
- Call us at 202-357-8100 (tel:202-357-8100) or 1-855-882-8100 (tel:1-855-882-8100) (toll free) if the issue is urgent. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern, or
- Complete the paper DHS Form 7001 and email it to us at cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov).

Please also send us screenshots of the error message(s) you receive as they will help us troubleshoot the issue.

Expedites, Appeals, and Requests from USCIS

1. What do I do if my case needs expedited processing?

You must first request expedited processing from USCIS. Before you do so, review the criteria (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request) outlined in the USCIS Policy Manual (https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-a-chapter-5). Not every circumstance that fits under one of the USCIS expedite criteria categories results in expedited processing. For example, if you request expedited processing for an application for employment authorization or student status, USCIS has stated it is not enough that you lost your job. You must provide evidence of other compelling factors that call for expedited treatment.

Please note that we cannot overturn an expedite request that USCIS has denied. However, if your circumstances have changed, you can submit a new expedite request to USCIS.

2. Does requesting case assistance extend the time I have to respond to a USCIS request or notice?

No. Submitting a case assistance request to the CIS Ombudsman does not extend USCIS deadlines to respond to a request or other notice. If you received a request for evidence (RFE) or other notice from USCIS, you **must** respond to USCIS with the requested information by the due date on the notice, even if you disagree with the request. Otherwise, USCIS may think you have abandoned your case and deny it.

3. Does requesting case assistance pause or delay the time I have to appeal a USCIS decision?

No. Submitting a case assistance request to the CIS Ombudsman does not pause or delay the time you have to appeal a USCIS decision. If you received a denial notice and believe there is clear USCIS error, you must file the appeal or motion to reopen or reconsider by the due date listed on the denial notice or you will lose your right to appeal. If you believe there is clear USCIS error, please provide us with copies of the denial notice, original submission, and appeal or motion with supporting documentation.

See USCIS' Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion (https://www.uscis.gov/i-290b) page and Questions and Answers: Appeals and Motions (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/all-forms/questions-and-answers-appeals-and-motions) page for more information.

How We Process Your Request

1. What happens after submitting a case assistance request?

Please go to the "After You Submit a Request" section on our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for details.

2. What case assistance requests does the CIS Ombudsman prioritize?

We prioritize case assistance requests involving issues that USCIS can quickly address. To identify these requests, we review the description provided in Section 2 of DHS Form 7001. Our goal is to assign these types of requests to one of our analysts within 14 business days.

Our priority issues include:

- Cases where you did not receive a USCIS notice or decision (such as requests for evidence, appointment notices, or decisions) even though USCIS systems (https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do) indicate that it issued one (If you have a USCIS online account, be sure to check it regularly for any notices or secure messages from USCIS);
- Instances where the U.S. Postal Service returned a Green Card or Employment Authorization Document to USCIS as non-deliverable;
- Certain cases where a noncitizen may "age out" of eligibility for the requested immigration benefit within 90 days (see the Child Status Protection Act (CSPA) (https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/child-status-protection-act-cspa) for additional information);
- Certain cases involving U.S. military personnel and their families;
- Instances of clear USCIS error where:
    - An application/petition was improperly rejected by USCIS due to clear errors of fact or obvious misapplication of relevant law by USCIS; or
    - You marked only consular processing on the Form I-130 or Form I-140 but USCIS has not forwarded your approved petition to the Department of State and more than 2 months have passed since the approval date; or
    - You submitted the required initial evidence with your form, but USCIS failed to acknowledge the evidence and denied the application/petition;
- Delays with USCIS notifying the Department of State's National Visa Center of an approved petition; and
- Expedite requests approved by USCIS more than 2 months ago.

To help us with our review, please provide a clear and concise summary of why you are requesting the CIS Ombudsman's assistance in Section 2 of your DHS Form 7001. You can also upload an addendum that provides additional information or a chronological description of events and your efforts to resolve the issue directly with USCIS. We cannot provide legal advice or write a brief to USCIS on your behalf.

3. Is the CIS Ombudsman still helping with cases pending outside of USCIS' published processing times?

Yes, we are. For cases where the issue involves processing delays, we are assigning these in the order we receive them and will reach out to USCIS if the agency's Check Case Processing Times (https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/) page shows that the case has been pending outside of the 93rd percentile and the applicant or petitioner reached out to USCIS at least 45 days before submitting a case assistance request to our office.

The one exception is that we cannot help if your concern is about processing delays for a Form I-134A, *Online Request to be a Supporter and Declaration of Financial Support* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-134a) filed for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV). Please see our September 27, 2023 web alert (updated on December 7, 2023) (/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) for more information on Form I-134A cases we can and cannot help with.

We will continue to work with USCIS leadership to address its lengthy processing delays. Please see our 2022 and 2023 Annual Reports to Congress (/annual-report-congress) for our recommendations on how USCIS can mitigate the impacts of its backlogs.

4. My priority date is current but USCIS has not adjudicated my Form I-485 yet. Can the CIS Ombudsman ask USCIS to adjudicate my case?

The underlying immigrant petition filed on your behalf must be approved (not withdrawn or revoked) **and** the priority date (https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/visa-availability-priority-dates/adjustment-of-status-filing-charts-from-the-visa-bulletin) must be current before USCIS will adjudicate your pending Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*. If these conditions are met, you can check USCIS' case processing times (https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times) to determine whether you can submit a case inquiry with the agency for being outside the posted processing time. With few exceptions, our office cannot help if your case is pending within published processing times, even if the Department of State's Visa Bulletin (https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html) shows that an immigrant visa number is available for you.

5. How do I check the status of my case assistance request?

1. Go to the Check the Status of Your Request (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001?tab=case) tab on our online DHS Form 7001 page.
2. Enter your CIS Ombudsman Request Number. If you submitted your DHS Form 7001 online, your CIS Ombudsman Request Number was on the confirmation page after you submitted your form. You can also find this number in the confirmation email you received after you submitted your request.
3. You will see which step of the process your case assistance request is in. You can also refer to the list of steps on the "After You Submit a Request" section of our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page.

6. I checked the status of my request and it says that the CIS Ombudsman asked me to provide more information or documents. Where can I find that information and how do I respond?

If the Check the Status of Your Request (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001?tab=case) tab shows that we asked you to provide more information or documents, you should have received an email from cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) asking for more information. If you do not see this email in your email inbox, it may be in your spam folder. If you still do not see the email, please contact us at cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) to ask for a copy.

Once you receive the email with the request for information, you can respond in two ways:

- **Option 1:** Go to the Upload Requested Documents (after submitting your request) (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001?tab=document) tab on our online DHS Form 7001 page. Enter your CIS Ombudsman Request Number, upload your documents, and then submit them. You can find your CIS Ombudsman Request Number in the email we sent you from cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov (mailto:mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) asking for more information.
- **Option 2:** Reply to our email and attach the requested documents.

By Topic

Afghans Paroled into the United States

1. How can I apply for re-parole and work authorization?

Please see our Afghan Re-Parole Process Tip Sheet (/publication/afghan-re-parole-process-tip-sheet) for information. You can also go to USCIS' Re-Parole Process for Certain Afghans (https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghan-nationals/re-parole-process-for-certain-afghans) and Afghan Re-Parole FAQs (https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghan-nationals/re-parole-process-for-certain-afghans/afghan-re-parole-faqs) pages.

2. My initial EAD has the wrong information. How can I fix this?

If you are an Afghan national who was paroled into the United States as part of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) and you received an EAD with incorrect information, USCIS has provided guidance on how to obtain a corrected EAD.

Errors on EADs: If your EAD has an error (such as an incorrect name or birthdate), submit the following to USCIS:

- The original EAD containing the error;
- A description of what information on the card is incorrect, such as first and/or last name and/or date of birth;
- Your U.S. mailing address; and
- Copies of supporting documentation, translated as appropriate, that show the correct information.

There is no fee to request a corrected EAD, and no need to file a new Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization*, **in this particular circumstance**. You can find additional guidance, including a unique mailing address and attention line, and examples of primary, secondary, and alternatives to supporting documentation, on USCIS' Information for Afghans (https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghans) page under the "Information about Employment Authorization" section. You can learn how to track the delivery of your EAD on USCIS' How to Track Delivery of Your Green Card, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), and Travel Document (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-track-delivery-of-your-green-card-employment-authorization-document-ead-and-travel-document) page.

You may report the non-receipt of your EAD by using USCIS' Non-Delivery of Card (https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/displayNDCForm.do?entryPoint=init) page. In certain situations, USCIS may request that you submit a new Form I-765. There is no fee to request a replacement EAD in this circumstance.

3. Do I need to pay a filing fee when applying for a travel document or EAD?

On September 29, 2023, USCIS stated that certain Afghan nationals do not need to pay the filing fee for a number of forms, including Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-131), and Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765). This policy will remain in effect through September 30, 2024. Please see USCIS' web alert (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-continues-fee-exemptions-and-expedited-processing-for-afghan-nationals) for more information

4. Do I need to request expedited processing for my travel document or EAD?

On September 29, 2023, USCIS stated that certain Afghan nationals do not need to request expedited processing for a number of forms, including Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-131), and Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765). This policy will remain in effect through September 30, 2024. Please see USCIS' web alert (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-continues-fee-exemptions-and-expedited-processing-for-afghan-nationals) for more information.

Biometrics Appointments

1. Why have I not received a biometrics appointment notice for my Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status?

There are two possible answers to this question.

1. USCIS may not ask for biometrics for your Form I-539,

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

- If you filed your Form I-539 before October 1, 2023, USCIS may have suspended the biometrics requirement for your type of case. Check USCIS' May 13, 2021 announcement (https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-temporarily-suspends-biometrics-requirement-for-certain-form-i-539-applicants) and USCIS' April 19, 2023 announcement (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-extends-temporary-suspension-of-biometrics-submission-for-certain-form-i-539-applicants) to see if your case is one of those types.
- If you filed your Form I-539 on or after October 1, 2023, USCIS began exempting the biometrics fee for Form I-539 (https://www.uscis.gov/i-539) in most cases. This means that you do not have to pay the fee and, in most cases, you will not need to go to a biometrics appointment. See USCIS' September 25, 2023 web alert (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-exempts-biometric-services-fee-for-all-form-i-539-applicants) for more information.

2. You filed your Form I-539 online.
   - USCIS will not mail you a paper biometrics appointment notice if you filed Form I-539 online. Instead, the biometrics appointment notice will appear in your USCIS online account (https://myaccount.uscis.gov/) under "Documents" once your appointment is scheduled.
   - Either way, you still are required to bring a **printed** copy of your biometric services appointment notice to your Application Support Center appointment.

2. I received a biometrics appointment notice, but I cannot make it. Can I reschedule the appointment?

You can request to reschedule your appointment through your USCIS online account. Please note that you cannot request to reschedule your biometrics appointment online if:

- your appointment is within the next *12 hours*,
- you have already rescheduled the appointment two or more times, or
- your appointment time has passed.

If you are unable to submit a request to reschedule your biometrics appointment online, you will need to call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 (tel:1-800-375-5283).

If you do not call or submit a request through your online account before your scheduled appointment and establish good cause, USCIS may decline to reschedule the appointment. If you do not appear for your appointment and it is not rescheduled, USCIS may consider your application abandoned and may deny it. See the USCIS Policy Manual (https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-c-chapter-2) for more details.

Change of Address

1. How do I update my address with USCIS?

If you have moved or plan on moving, you must notify USCIS. For most people, the easiest way is to submit the change of address online, which will update your address for all pending applications or petitions at the same time. See USCIS' How to Change Your Address (https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) page for more information, including certain situations when you must mail in a paper Form AR-11, *Alien's Change of Address Card*.

Some important points to note:

- Unlike updating your address online, **mailing Form AR-11 alone does not update your address for any pending application or petition** (unless otherwise noted on USCIS' How to Change Your Address (http://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) page).
- If you requested parole for an Afghan beneficiary who was located in Afghanistan and are looking to change their address with USCIS now that they have moved outside of Afghanistan, please see USCIS' Information for Afghan Nationals on Requests to USCIS for Parole (https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/information-for-afghan-nationals-on-requests-to-uscis-for-parole) page.
- The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) will not forward secure documents such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) or Employment Authorization Document to a new address, so USCIS must receive your new address before it mails these documents to you.
- Changing your address with USPS will not change your address with USCIS or with the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) if you have an active or pending court case. Please update your address with both USCIS and USPS (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fmoversguide.usps.com%2Fmgo%2Fdisclaimer&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) (and EOIR (https://www.justice.gov/eoir/form-eoir-33-eoir-immigration-court-listing) if you are in immigration proceedings).

Contacting USCIS

1. How can I make my call to the USCIS Contact Center more effective?

To help our customers, the CIS Ombudsman posted a tip sheet (/publication/contact-center-tip-sheet) on how to most effectively reach out to the USCIS Contact Center. The USCIS Contact Center made changes to reduce reliance on live phone assistance while promoting the use of online self-help tools (https://www.uscis.gov/tools/uscis-tools-and-resources/uscis-tools-and-resources) and inquiry options such as Ask Emma (which you can access by going to www.uscis.gov (http://www.uscis.gov/) and clicking on the "Need Help? Ask Emma" icon at the top right of the page).

2. When can I contact the USCIS Lockbox?

To help our customers, the CIS Ombudsman posted a tip sheet on When to Contact a USCIS Lockbox (/publication/lockbox-contact-tip-sheet).

Employment Authorization Documents (EADs)

1a. What should I do if I am experiencing processing delays related to my EAD application that is based on an application to extend/change my nonimmigrant status?

Start by checking if you qualify for an automatic extension of your employment authorization. EAD categories eligible for automatic extension are listed on USCIS' Automatic Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Extension (https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/information-for-employers-and-employees/automatic-employment-authorization-document-ead-extension) page. You can also see when your EAD expires by going to USCIS' Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Automatic Extension Calculator (https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-resources/employment-authorization-document-ead-automatic-extension-calculator) page.

Next, if your Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization*, is based on a Form I-539, *Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status* (even if it was not filed at the same time), check USCIS' processing times (https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/) for your Form I-539—not for Form I-765. USCIS will not adjudicate your Form I-765 (regardless of the processing times for Form I-765) before your Form I-539.

If your Form I-539 has been pending beyond USCIS' posted processing times, you may contact USCIS about both forms (your Form I-765 and Form I-539). If USCIS does not respond after 30 days, you may submit a case assistance request with our office. Please visit our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for more information.

1b. What should I do if I am experiencing processing delays related to my EAD application that is based on a DACA application?

If your Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization*, is based on a Form I-821D, *Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals*, check USCIS' processing times (https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/) for Form I-821D (not the associated Form I-765). USCIS will not adjudicate your Form I-765 before your Form I-821D.

If your Form I-821D has been pending beyond USCIS' posted processing times, you may contact USCIS about both forms (your Form I-765 and Form I-821D). If USCIS does not respond after 30 days, you may submit a case assistance request with our office. Please visit our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for more information.

2. What should I do if I did not receive my EAD or if the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) may have lost it?

Call the USCIS Contact Center (https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter) or submit an e-Request (https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/displayNDCForm.do?entryPoint=init&sroPageType=ndc). If the USCIS Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do) page shows the EAD was delivered but you never received it, you may wish to contact USPS or use the USPS website (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.usps.com%2F&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) to locate your EAD using the assigned tracking number. If USCIS properly mailed your EAD to you at the address it had in its systems at the time it approved your application and your document was not returned to USCIS as undeliverable, USCIS instructions indicate that you will need to file a new application to replace it and pay the filing fee again. Please carefully read the instructions on the form before filing your new application.

3. What should I do if the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) returned my EAD to USCIS as undeliverable?

If USCIS' Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do) tool shows that your EAD was returned to USCIS as undeliverable, please:

1. First, verify with USPS that you are registered to receive mail (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.usps.com%2Fmanage%2F&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) at the address that is on file for you with USCIS. If you live in an apartment, put your name on your mailbox to ensure delivery. If you are living with someone, make sure the address on file with USCIS includes "in care of" or "c/o" and the person's name you are living with (for example: "Jane Doe, c/o John Smith, 123 Main Street, Anytown, MD 25555"). If you are not registered to receive mail at the address USCIS has on file for you, your EAD will continue to be returned to USCIS as undeliverable.

   If you are not sure if your address is up to date with USCIS or have moved after filing your Form I-765 application, you will need to change your address (https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) with USCIS. Please allow USCIS at least 5 business days to update their systems with your new address for your I-765 receipt number.

2. You may then submit a case inquiry (https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do) to USCIS to request that it mail your EAD to your current address. If you recently updated your address with USCIS, please allow at least 5 business days for USCIS to update their systems with your new address before submitting the case inquiry to USCIS.

3. Since USCIS' policy is to destroy EADs 60 days after USPS returns them to USCIS as undeliverable, you may then choose to request case assistance (https://www.dhs.gov/case-assistance) from the CIS Ombudsman. Please include the date and service inquiry number for your inquiry to USCIS. If you recently updated your address with USCIS, please allow at least 5 business days for USCIS to update their systems with your new address before submitting a request for case assistance with our office.

You may also register for "Informed Delivery" through USPS to get previews of mail in transit. Please visit USPS' Informed Delivery (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Finformeddelivery.usps.com%2Fbox%2Fpages%2Fintro%2Fstart.action&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) page for additional information.

4. I heard that USCIS is issuing EADs for longer validity periods. Is this true?

On September 27, 2023, USCIS updated its Policy Manual (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-increases-employment-authorization-document-validity-period-for-certain-categories) and began issuing new and renewed EADs that will be *valid for up to five years* for applicants who:

- Were admitted as a refugee (EAD category: A03);
- Were paroled as a refugee (EAD category: A04);
- Were granted asylum (EAD category: A05);
- Were granted withholding of deportation or removal (EAD category: A10);
- Have a pending application for asylum or withholding of removal (EAD category: C08);
- Have a pending Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, filed under INA 245 (EAD category: C09); or
- Have a pending application for suspension of deportation, cancellation of removal, or relief under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) (EAD category: C10).

Additionally, for the following groups, USCIS will continue to follow its February 7, 2022, announcement (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-updates-guidelines-on-maximum-validity-periods-for-new-employment-authorization-documents-for) that:

- VAWA self-petitioners (EAD category: C31) will receive new and renewed EADs that are *valid for up to two years*.
- People paroled into the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit (EAD category: C11) will receive new and renewed EADs that are *valid for up to the end of the parole period*; or

- People granted deferred action (EAD category: C14) will receive new and renewed EADs that are *valid for up to the end of the deferred action period*. Please note that this category does not include DACA recipients.

If USCIS issued you an EAD before the date an extended validity period went into effect, the longer validity period does not apply to your EAD. Applying for a replacement will not extend an EAD's validity period. USCIS will continue to issue replacements with the same validity date as the original EAD.

5. I am an Afghan national who arrived through Operation Allies Welcome, and my EAD has the wrong information. How can I fix this?

Please see Question 2 in the Afghans Paroled into the United States (#AfghansParoledIntoUS) section of this page.

6. How long will USCIS automatically extend the validity of my current EAD while my renewal Form I-765 is pending?

In most situations, USCIS extends the validity of your EAD for up to 180 days while your Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765) is pending. The receipt notice that USCIS sent you for your Form I-765 will state how long your current EAD has been extended.

However, if you filed an EAD renewal application between May 4, 2022 to October 26, 2023 (or your renewal application was pending on May 4, 2022), USCIS may have temporarily extended your EAD for up to 540 days after the expiration date on your current EAD. The automatic extension applied only if you had a pending Form I-765 to renew your EAD in a category eligible for an automatic extension (https://www.uscis.gov/eadautoextend). Additionally:

- In general, the category on the current EAD must have been the same category requested on the pending renewal Form I-765.
- The automatically extended EAD expires after the 540-day mark or when USCIS makes a decision on your renewal Form I-765, whichever is sooner.
- As long as it has not been more than 540 days since the expiration date on your EAD and you belong to one of the eligible categories, you may start or continue working while your renewal Form I-765 remains pending or until you hit the 540-day mark.
- If you filed a renewal Form I-765 before May 4, 2022, and received a receipt notice for your renewal Form I-765 that does not mention the 540-day extension, USCIS will not mail you a new one. Refer to USCIS' Automatic Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Extension (https://www.uscis.gov/eadautoextend) page for what documents you need to show as proof of your employment authorization. You can also see when your EAD expires by going to USCIS' Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Automatic Extension Calculator (https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-resources/employment-authorization-document-ead-automatic-extension-calculator) page.
- If you filed a renewal Form I-765 between May 4, 2022 and October 26, 2023, your receipt notice will show information about the 540-day extension.

7. How do I ask USCIS to correct a mistake on my EAD?

There are different processes for requesting a correction based on if:

- **The mistake is due to USCIS error** (for example, your name is incorrect on your EAD even though you correctly entered your name on the application).
  - **Go to USCIS' Updating or Correcting Your Documents** (https://www.uscis.gov/tools/uscis-tools-and-resources/information-about-your-immigration-document/updating-or-correcting-your-documents) **page for information**.
  - If you followed USCIS' instructions for submitting a service request and the agency has not responded in 60 days, you may submit a case assistance request (/case-assistance) to our office.
- **The mistake is not due to USCIS error** (for example, you made a typo when entering your name on the application form) or you want to update your biographic information or gender.
  - You will need to file a new form, mail the original card, and pay a new fee. See the Special Instructions section of USCIS' Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765) page for more information.
- **You want to correct your name or gender on a Form I-765 that is still pending with USCIS**.
  - Go to USCIS' Updating or Correcting Your Documents (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.%2Ftools%2Fuscis-tools-and-resources%2Finformation-about-your-immigration-document%2Fupdating-or-correcting-your-

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

documents&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) page for information.

Employment-based Cases

1. I requested to transfer the underlying basis of my Form I-485 but I see a "temporary pause" message when I use Case Status Online to check the status of my case. Is this an error?

If you submitted a written request to transfer the underlying basis of your Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, you may see this message in Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do):

> *"We are temporarily pausing work on your application because an immigrant visa number is not immediately available to you. Once an immigrant visa number becomes immediately available to you, we will resume processing of your application."*

This is **not a USCIS error** — according to USCIS, your case status does not automatically change once USCIS receives your request. This message about visa availability will remain in place until USCIS takes action on your Form I-485 (for example, issuing a request for evidence (RFE), decision, or notice transferring the application between offices).

You may see this updated case status even after USCIS has issued you a Supplement J receipt notice and moved your application from a service center to the National Benefits Center or a USCIS field office.

2. When should I submit a new Form I-693 to USCIS if the current one is going to expire soon?

Please do not send Form I-693, *Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-693) to USCIS unless the agency sends you a request for evidence (RFE) asking for the form. USCIS generally considers a completed Form I-693 to be valid for up to two years after the date the civil surgeon signed the form. Also, USCIS updated its policy on March 31, 2023 so that civil surgeons can sign Form I-693 more than 60 days before you file your underlying form (such as a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-485)).

If USCIS determines it needs a new Form I-693 from you, it will send you an RFE. Once you receive the RFE, respond to it as soon as possible rather than waiting the entire response period. USCIS does not provide written confirmation after it has received evidence, including a Form I-693.

File Transfer Issues

1. I have been informed that USCIS is waiting for my file to be transferred from one records center to another. Can the CIS Ombudsman help expedite my file transfer so USCIS can continue processing my case?

USCIS often transfers workloads between offices as one way to reduce processing times. The CIS Ombudsman cannot help to expedite file transfers between USCIS offices. However, if your file is lost or was transferred to the wrong office, we may be able to help. We can also help if USCIS has not transferred your file to the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC) when more than two months have passed since the approval notice was issued. Please go to our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for instructions on submitting a case assistance request.

Filing with USCIS

1. Do I need to physically sign each form/document I submit to USCIS or can I submit scans or copies?

On July 25, 2022, USCIS announced (https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-extends-covid-19-related-flexibilities) it will accept copies of original signatures on all benefit forms and documents, even if the form instructions require an original handwritten ("wet") signature. This means that you can submit a scanned, faxed, photocopied, or similarly reproduced copy of a document to USCIS as long as the copy is of an original document containing an original handwritten signature. You must keep the original document with the wet signature and provide it to USCIS if requested.

This exception only applies to signatures. You must follow all other form instructions when completing a form.

2. If I pre-print a courier (FedEx, UPS, DHL, etc.) shipping label but submit my form to USCIS at a later date, what date will USCIS consider to be my postmark date?

USCIS generally provides receipt dates based on the date it physically receives your form package at the correct filing location. However, when it offers a grace period for a new form, USCIS uses the postmark date for your receipt date. For courier shipping labels:

- USCIS generally considers the shipping date printed on the USPS or courier service shipping label as the postmark date.
- If there is no shipping date on the label, USCIS considers the date you printed the label to be the postmark date.
- If the label does not have a shipping date or print date, USCIS will assume that the postmark date is 10 days before it received the package.

To avoid confusion, we recommend:

- If available, file your form online (https://www.uscis.gov/file-online/forms-available-to-file-online).
- If you are using FedEx, UPS, DHL, or another courier, print your shipping label and ship your form *on the same day*.
- Stay up to date on form and filing fee updates, and plan accordingly. You can sign up to receive email on USCIS' Form Updates (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-updates) page.

If USCIS has rejected your form for using an improper version and you have documented proof your ship date was before the end of the grace period, you can try to resolve the issue with USCIS. Go to the "Inquiries Based on Filing Location" section of USCIS' Contact Us (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-updates) page for who to contact at the agency.

3. What time zone does USCIS use to determine the date and time it received my form or response online?

When determining what time and date your form or response was received online, USCIS uses Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). UTC is not a time zone, and it does not change with daylight saving time.

Always check UTC to make sure you submit your form and responses to USCIS notices before the deadline. You can go to time.gov (https://www.time.gov/) to see what UTC is in your local time in the United States. There are also many commercial websites you can use to convert UTC to your time zone.

Here are two examples of how UTC translates to local times depending on whether your area uses daylight saving time (https://www.nist.gov/pml/time-and-frequency-division/local-time-faqs) or not:

Example 1 (during daylight saving time)

If the deadline for responding to USCIS is 11:59 p.m. (23:59 UTC) on Wednesday, March 20, 2024

If you are in...	***Then the local time you would need to respond by is...***
Honolulu	1:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Hawaii Standard Time)
Los Angeles	4:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Pacific Daylight Time)
Denver	5:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Mountain Daylight Time)
Houston	6:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Central Daylight Time)
New York City	7:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Eastern Daylight Time)
London	11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 (Greenwich Mean Time)
Nairobi	2:59 a.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024 (Eastern Africa Time)

If you are in...	*Then the local time you would need to respond by is...*
Beijing	7:59 a.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024 (China Standard Time)
Tokyo	8:59 a.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024 (Japan Standard Time)

Example 2 (not during daylight saving time)

If the deadline for responding to USCIS is 11:59 p.m. (23:59 UTC) on Thursday, January 4, 2024

If you are in...	*Then the local time you would need to respond by is...*
Honolulu	1:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Hawaii Standard Time)
Los Angeles	3:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Pacific Standard Time)
Denver	4:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Mountain Standard Time)
Houston	5:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Central Standard Time)
New York City	6:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Eastern Standard Time)
London	11:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 4, 2024 (Greenwich Mean Time)
Nairobi	2:59 a.m. on Friday, January 5, 2024 (Eastern African Time)
Beijing	7:59 a.m. on Friday, January 5, 2024 (China Standard Time)
Tokyo	8:59 a.m. on Friday, January 5, 2024 (Japan Standard Time)

Form I-134A for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV)

1. How can I fix a mistake on a pending Form I-134A?

You can correct mistakes on your submitted Form I-134A, *Online Request to be a Supporter and Declaration of Financial Support* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-134a) at any time through your USCIS online account (https://my.uscis.gov/). To do so, upload your request and supporting evidence as "Unsolicited Evidence" in your account that:

- Identifies what information needs to be updated; and
- Is relevant and supports the change or update you wish to make.

Only call the USCIS Contact Center to correct mistakes on your Form I-134A if you cannot correct the mistake through your online account.

Do **not** submit the beneficiary travel attestation until the typographical errors are corrected.

If more than 45 days have passed since you uploaded the unsolicited evidence and your online account does not reflect the requested corrections, you may submit a DHS Form 7001, *Request for Case Assistance* (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001#no-back) to request help from our office.

For more information, please read:

- The September 27, 2023 alert on our CIS Ombudsman Web Alerts (/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) page
- USCIS' Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (https://www.uscis.gov/CHNV) page
- USCIS' Frequently Asked Questions About the Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-processes-for-cubans-haitians-nicaraguans-and-venezuelans) page

2. I filed a Form I-134A but have not heard from USCIS. Can the CIS Ombudsman help me get a case status update or expedite my case?

If your issue is *only* about processing delays for your Form I-134A, *Online Request to be a Supporter and Declaration of Financial Support* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-134a), that you filed for a Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, or Venezuelan (CHNV), we will not be able to help you at this time.

USCIS and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can grant up to 30,000 travel authorizations each month on a case-by-case basis. This means that each month, USCIS will:

- Randomly select about 15,000 cases out of the pending Forms I-134A related to the CHNV parole program to process, regardless of filing date; and

- Process approximately another 15,000 cases based on filing dates, which means that the oldest pending Form I-134A will be reviewed first.

This means that processing times will not be the same for all, and USCIS has not posted processing times for Form I-134A. **USCIS does not accept expedite requests for Form I-134A**.

Please see our September 27, 2023 alert (updated on December 7, 2023) on our CIS Ombudsman Web Alerts (https://www.dhs.gov/cis-ombudsman-web-alerts) page for when you can request our help.

3. Some of my family members have received travel authorization under the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans but other family members are still waiting. Can the CIS Ombudsman help me?

If more than 45 days have passed since you submitted a secure message to USCIS and the other family members have not received their travel authorizations, you can submit a case assistance request with our office. To do so, you should:

- Submit a separate DHS Form 7001, *Request for Case Assistance* (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001#no-back) for each family member that needs our help.
- In response to question 1 of DHS Form 7001, please include your most recent communications with USCIS. You can upload copies of the correspondence or secure messages.
- In response to question 2 on DHS Form 7001, include the names and receipt numbers for the family members who have already received their travel authorizations.

4. USCIS confirmed my Form I-134A but the beneficiary has not received the confirmation notice. Can the CIS Ombudsman help me?

If USCIS' Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/) shows that USCIS confirmed your Form I-134A, *Online Request to be a Supporter and Declaration of Financial Support* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-134a) but the beneficiary has not received the email with their confirmation notice, first send a secure message to USCIS through your USCIS online account to try to resolve the issue. If more than 45 days have passed since you submitted a secure message to USCIS, you may submit DHS Form 7001 (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001#no-back) to request our help.

Green Cards (Permanent Resident Cards)

1. What should I do if the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) returned my Green Card to USCIS as undeliverable?

If USCIS' Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do) tool shows that your Green Card was returned to USCIS as undeliverable, please:

1. First, verify with USPS that you are registered to receive mail (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.usps.com%2Fmanage%2F&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) at the address that is on file for you with USCIS. If you live in an apartment, put your name on your mailbox to ensure delivery. If you are living with someone, make sure the address on file with USCIS includes "in care of" or "c/o" and the person's name you are living with (for example: "Jane Doe, c/o John Smith, 123 Main Street, Anytown, MD 25555"). If you are not registered to receive mail at the address USCIS has on file for you, your Green Card will continue to be returned to USCIS as undeliverable.

   If you are not sure if your address is up to date with USCIS or have moved after filing your Form I-485 application, you will need to change your address (https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange) with USCIS. Please allow USCIS at least 5 business days to update their systems with your new address for your I-485 receipt number.

2. You may then submit a case inquiry (https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do) to USCIS to request that it mail your Green Card to your current address. If you recently updated your address with USCIS, please allow at least 5 business days for USCIS to update their systems with your new address before submitting the case inquiry to USCIS.

3. Since USCIS' policy is to destroy Green Cards 60 days after USPS returns them to USCIS as undeliverable, you may then choose to request case assistance (https://www.dhs.gov/case-assistance) from the CIS Ombudsman after submitting a case inquiry to USCIS. Please include the date and service inquiry number for your inquiry to USCIS. If you recently updated your address with USCIS, please allow at least 5 business days for USCIS to update their systems with your new address before submitting a request for case assistance with our office.

You may also register for "Informed Delivery" through USPS to get previews of mail in transit. Please visit USPS' Informed Delivery (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Finformeddelivery.usps.com%2Fbox%2Fpages%2Fintro%2Fstart.action&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) page for additional information.

If you need temporary evidence of your current immigration status while waiting to receive a replacement Green Card, USCIS may issue you an Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunications (ADIT) stamp. You can submit an online form (https://my.uscis.gov/appointment) to request an appointment with your local USCIS field office to obtain an ADIT stamp. If you cannot submit the form online, you can also contact the USCIS Contact Center (https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter) at 1-800-375-5283 (1-800-767-1833 TDD for the hearing impaired).

2. What should I do if USCIS mailed my Green Card and USPS tracking shows "delivered" but I never received it?

You may wish to check www.USPS.com (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.usps.com%2F&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) using the assigned tracking number to obtain detailed tracking information. **Please note that USPS only keeps tracking information for 120 days.** You can also contact your local post office and ask them to initiate an investigation. USPS will send you a letter explaining the results of the investigation.

You may register for "Informed Delivery" through USPS to get previews of mail in transit. Please visit USPS' Informed Delivery (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Finformeddelivery.usps.com%2Fbox%2Fpages%2Fintro%2Fstart.action&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions) page for additional information.

If your card was **not** returned as undeliverable to USCIS, USCIS instructions indicate that you will need to file a Form I-90, *Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-90) to replace the lost card. Please refer to the Form I-90 instructions to determine which "Reason for Application" to select and whether you will need to pay the filing fee.

If you need temporary evidence of your current immigration status while waiting to receive a replacement Green Card, USCIS may issue you an Alien Documentation Identification and Telecommunications (ADIT) stamp. You can submit an online form (https://my.uscis.gov/appointment) to request an appointment with your local USCIS field office to obtain an ADIT stamp. If you cannot submit the form online, you can also contact the USCIS Contact Center (https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter) at 1-800-375-5283 (1-800-767-1833 TDD for the hearing impaired).

3. How do I get an extension sticker on my Green Card?

If you filed Form I-90, *Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)*, to renew an expiring Green Card, you no longer need to get an extension sticker on your Green Card. Starting in January 2021, USCIS began sending Form I-90 applicants a Form I-797 receipt notice printed on secure paper as proof of the extension of their Green Card validity period. These receipt notices replace the extension sticker that USCIS used to issue at field offices.

The receipt notice, together with your Green Card, serves as temporary evidence of lawful permanent resident status for 24 months from the expiration date on the Green Card. You will receive the receipt notice in the mail approximately 7-10 days after USCIS accepts your application.

If you still need temporary evidence of your current immigration status while waiting to receive a replacement Green Card, USCIS may issue you an Alien Documentation, Identification, and Telecommunications (ADIT) stamp. You can submit an online form (https://my.uscis.gov/appointment) to request an appointment with your local USCIS field office to obtain an ADIT stamp. If you cannot submit the form online, you can also contact the USCIS Contact Center (https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter) at 1-800-375-5283 (1-800-767-1833 TDD for the hearing impaired).

For more information regarding replacing your Green Card, please see USCIS' Replace Your Green Card (https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/replace-your-green-card) page.

4. How do I ask USCIS to correct a mistake on my Green Card?

There are different processes for requesting a correction based on if:

- **The mistake is due to USCIS error** (for example, your name or photo is incorrect on your Green Card even though you correctly entered your name on the application form).
  - **Go to USCIS' Updating or Correcting Your Documents** (/tools/uscis-tools-and-resources/information-about-your-immigration-document/updating-or-correcting-your-documents) **page for information**.
  - If you followed USCIS' instructions for submitting a service request and the agency has not responded in 60 days, you may submit a case assistance request (/case-assistance) to our office.
- **The mistake is not due to USCIS error** (for example, you made a typo when entering your name on the application form).
  - You will need to file a new form and pay a new fee. See the instructions for Form I-90, (https://www.uscis.gov/i-90) *Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-90) for more information.
- **You want to correct your name or gender on a form that is still pending with USCIS.**
  - Go to USCIS' **Updating or Correcting Your Documents** (/tools/uscis-tools-and-resources/information-about-your-immigration-document/updating-or-correcting-your-documents) page for information.

Reporting Poor Treatment

1. How do I submit a complaint about poor treatment by USCIS officers at interviews?

Go to the Report USCIS Employee Misconduct (https://www.uscis.gov/scams-fraud-and-misconduct/report-uscis-employee-misconduct) page on USCIS' website to see how you can report USCIS employee misconduct to the agency. If you do not feel your complaint has been resolved, you can submit a DHS Form 7001 (/topic/cis-ombudsman/forms/7001) to our office and describe the treatment/customer service at issue. If you have a civil rights complaint, you can submit it to the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (/file-civil-rights-complaint). Finally, you can report misconduct to the DHS Office of Inspector General hotline (https://www.oig.dhs.gov/hotline).

2. How do I submit a complaint about poor treatment in detention facilities by DHS staff?

The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO) (/office-immigration-detention-ombudsman) helps individuals with complaints about the potential violation of immigration detention standards or misconduct by DHS (or contract) personnel. For more information, please see our The CIS Ombudsman's Listening Session: Get to Know DHS's New Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (/publication/cis-ombudsmans-listening-session-get-know-oido) page.

3. How can I submit a complaint or provide feedback to DHS?

Please visit the Department's Provide Feedback or Make Complaints to DHS (/provide-feedback-or-make-complaints-dhs) page to learn more about opportunities for the public to provide feedback and make complaints involving DHS employees or programs, alleged violations of civils rights and civil liberties, travel redress, and other types of grievances.

Students

1. If I want to change my status to an F-1 student, do I need to first change or extend my current nonimmigrant status?

On July 20, 2021, USCIS announced that applicants seeking a change of status to F-1 (student status) no longer need to apply to change or extend their initial nonimmigrant status to prevent a gap in status while their initial F-1 change of status application is pending.

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

Under this policy (https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-manual-updates/20210720-StudentsChangeOfStatus.pdf), USCIS will grant the change of status to F-1 effective the day an applicant's Form I-539, *Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status* (https://www.uscis.gov/i-539) is approved. F-1 students are no longer required to "bridge the gap" by continuously applying for and obtaining status all the way up to 30 days before their academic program start date while their initial F-1 change of status application is pending. USCIS is in the process of revising the Form I-539 instructions to reflect these changes.

2. What is Special Student Relief (SSR)?

SSR is available for certain F-1 students when the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security suspends certain requirements for maintaining F-1 status for students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. Emergent circumstances can include natural catastrophes, war and military conflicts, and national or international financial crises.

SSR often allows F-1 students to apply for off-campus employment authorization, work more hours while school is in session, and reduce their course load while continuing to maintain their F-1 status. When SSR is available for a particular country or part of the world, the Department of Homeland Security will issue a Federal Register Notice (FRN) with details. You can see a list of all active FRNs in the Special Student Relief section of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Student and Exchange Visitor Program's (ICE SEVP's) What's New (https://www.ice.gov/sevis/whats-new) page. Please review the general eligibility requirements (https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/special-student-relief) and the specific eligibility requirements in the FRN for your country or area.

If you believe you are eligible for SSR, you may be able to apply for off-campus employment authorization. To start, please:

1. Go to ICE SEVP's Student Process Steps (https://www.ice.gov/sevis/students) page to see what your designated school official (DSO) must do to certify you in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
2. Go to USCIS' Form I-765 (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765) page for information on applying for employment authorization.

3. How can I avoid Form I-765 delays when applying for OPT?

Please see our updated tip sheet on How F-1 Students Seeking Optional Practical Training (OPT) Can Avoid Form I-765 Delays (/publication/f1-OPT-tip-sheet) that we posted on September 18, 2023.

4. I'm an F-1 student who paid for premium processing for my Form I-765. When can I expect to receive my EAD?

Here are some reminders for when you submit your application and while USCIS processes your case:

- **File your Form I-907, *Request for Premium Processing Service*, online** (https://www.uscis.gov/i-907) or make sure to mail it to the correct USCIS lockbox. Go to USCIS' Direct Filing Addresses for Filing Form I-907 for Form I-765 or Form I-539 (https://www.uscis.gov/forms/all-forms/direct-filing-addresses-for-filing-form-i-907-request-for-premium-processing-for-form-i-765-or-form) page to find the correct filing address. If you mail your premium processing request to the wrong USCIS lockbox, the lockbox will reject your form and it may take some time for you to receive the rejection notice.
- **The 30-calendar-day premium processing timeframe does not include the time it takes to produce your EAD or, if applicable, the time it takes for you to respond to a request for evidence (RFE).** According to the regulation (https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-106/section-106.4), premium processing means that USCIS must generally take one of the following actions on your Form I-765 within 30 days of receiving your properly completed form: (1) approve, (2) deny, (3) send you a notice of intent to deny, or (4) send you an RFE.
- **After USCIS approves your Form I-765, your EAD should be produced within one to two weeks.** USCIS will mail your EAD via U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Informed Delivery (https://www.dhs.gov/now-leaving?external_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.usps.com%2Fmanage%2Finformed-delivery.htm&back_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fcisombudsman-frequentlyaskedquestions).
- **The wait for receiving your EAD may vary, depending on USPS delivery times.**

Please wait 30 days from the date your form was approved before contacting USCIS. If you do not receive your EAD after 30 days, you can submit an online case inquiry (https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do) to ask about your missing EAD.

We encourage you to use USCIS' Case Status Online (https://egov.uscis.gov/) page to find the USPS tracking number for your EAD delivery. If the page shows the EAD was delivered but you never received it, or if USPS returns your EAD to USCIS as undeliverable, please see the Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) (#EADs) section above for more information. If you need to correct an error on your EAD (for example, your name is spelled wrong), go to USCIS' **Updating or Correcting Your Documents** (/tools/uscis-tools-and-resources/information-about-your-immigration-document/updating-or-correcting-your-documents) page for information.

T, U, and VAWA Cases

1. Can protected individuals (T, U, or VAWA) obtain information from USCIS about their cases by using e-Request?

No. Form I-914, *Application for T Nonimmigrant Status*, and Form I-918, *Petition for U Nonimmigrant Status*, are not available as a selection in e-Request. Though the Form I-360, *Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant*, is available as a selection in e-Request, only individuals who filed as a special immigrant international broadcaster or religious worker may use e-Request. Protected individuals who filed a Form I-360 as a VAWA petition cannot use e-Request.

2. How do I contact USCIS about pending T, U, or VAWA cases?

Because the cases involve victims of crime, trafficking and/or abuse, there are certain confidentiality protections that USCIS must follow.

The USCIS Contact Center is generally not able to assist with inquiries related to T, U, or VAWA status applications and petitions due to confidentiality protections established by statute. If the self-petitioner, applicant, or representative calls the USCIS Contact Center, it will direct the individual to the appropriate inquiry mechanism listed below. In certain scenarios, the USCIS Contact Center might schedule the caller to appear at a USCIS field office to verify the individual's identity so that an inquiry or service request can then be submitted.

To request a biometrics appointment, attorneys and accredited representatives may reach out to USCIS via the email hotlines below to request a new date/time, or to request a location change for the appointment.

Attorneys and accredited representatives may send inquiries to the following inboxes:

- For U nonimmigrant petitions, Petitions for Qualifying Family Members of U-1 Nonimmigrant and U-based adjustment of status applications **located at the Nebraska Service Center**: nsc.i-918inquiries@uscis.dhs.gov (mailto:nsc.i-918inquiries@uscis.dhs.gov)
- For U nonimmigrant petitions, Petitions for Qualifying Family Members of U-1 Nonimmigrant and U-based adjustment of status applications **located at the Vermont Service Center**: HotlineFollowupI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov (mailto:HotlineFollowupI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov)
- For all T nonimmigrant status and T-based adjustment of status applications: HotlineFollowupI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov (mailto:HotlineFollowupI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov)
- For all VAWA petitions: HotlineFollowUpI360.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov (mailto:HotlineFollowUpI360.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov)

Note: In order to receive a response, the representative making the inquiry must have a Form G-28, *Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative*, filed on the specific case. USCIS will not respond to emails from anyone who is not named on the Form G-28 on file for the case.

Unrepresented petitioners and applicants may send signed written inquiries/requests for biometrics appointments, including a new date/time or location, to:

- **For cases located at the Vermont Service Center:**
  U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Vermont Service Center
  ATTN: Humanitarian Division
  38 River Road
  Essex Junction, VT 05479-0001

- **For cases located at the Nebraska Service Center:**
  U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Nebraska Service Center
  ATTN: I-918

P.O. Box 87918
Lincoln, NE 68501-7918

If the inquiry is related to an I-751 waiver (https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/conditional-permanent-residence/removing-conditions-on-permanent-residence-based-on-marriage), based on battery or extreme cruelty, then petitioners and/or their representatives must submit the signed inquiry to the appropriate service center by paper correspondence:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  California Service Center
  ATTN: WS 13057
  P.O. Box 10751
  Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1075

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Nebraska Service Center
  P.O. Box 87918
  Lincoln, NE 68501-7918

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Potomac Service Center
  2200 Potomac Center Drive, MS 2425
  Arlington, VA 20598-2425

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Texas Service Center
  ATTN: SRMT/COA or SRMT/IRT
  6046 N Belt Line Rd. STE 751
  Irving, TX 75038-0020

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  Vermont Service Center
  ATTN: Humanitarian Division
  38 River Road
  Essex Junction, VT 05479-0001

3. For a T, U, or VAWA case, can I submit a case assistance request to the CIS Ombudsman's office if I do not have a legal representative?

Yes. However, please note two requirements:

- Your address must match the address in USCIS systems. We will only communicate with you via U.S. postal mail to comply with the law and keep your case confidential.
- You will need to provide your actual ("wet") signature on the case assistance request. You can do so by signing the consent part of the DHS Form 7001, scanning it, and uploading it as a supporting document with your online submission.

Please see our How to Submit a Case Assistance Request (/case-assistance) page for complete information on how to request our help.

4. How do I contact USCIS if my form is at the HART Service Center?

On March 30, 2023, USCIS announced (https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/notices/USCISOpenstheHumanitarianAdjustmentRemovingConditionsandTravelDocumentsHARTServiceCenter.pdf) that it is opening a new Humanitarian, Adjustment, Removing Conditions, and Travel Documents (HART) Service Center. The HART Service Center will initially focus on the following case types:

- Form I-601A, *Application for Provisional Unlawful Presence Waiver*;

AILA Doc. No. 24071263. (Posted 7/12/24)

- Bona Fide Determinations (BFD) for Form I-918, *Petition for U Nonimmigrant Status*;
- Form I-730, *Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition*; and
- VAWA-based Form I-360, *Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant*.

HART coordinates with USCIS' existing service centers to provide customer service. Therefore, you should continue to contact USCIS as you normally would for your type of case. See Question 2 in this section for contact information.

Topics

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (/TOPICS/CITIZENSHIP-AND-IMMIGRATION-SERVICES)

OFFICE OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (/TOPICS/CIS-OMBUDSMAN)

Keywords

GREEN CARD (/KEYWORDS/GREEN-CARD) IMMIGRATION (/KEYWORDS/IMMIGRATION) LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT (LPR) (/KEYWORDS/LEGAL-PERMANENT-RESIDENT-LPR)
MAIL (/KEYWORDS/MAIL)
OFFICE OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (CISOMB) (/KEYWORDS/OFFICE-CITIZENSHIP-AND-IMMIGRATION-SERVICES-OMBUDSMAN-CISOMB)
U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS) (/KEYWORDS/US-CITIZENSHIP-AND-IMMIGRATION-SERVICES-USCIS) ASYLUM (/KEYWORDS/ASYLUM)
EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION (/KEYWORDS/EMPLOYMENT-VERIFICATION) OPERATION ALLIES WELCOME (/KEYWORDS/OPERATION-ALLIES-WELCOME)
BIOMETRICS (/KEYWORDS/BIOMETRICS)

Last Updated: 07/10/2024