



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Public Engagement (MS 2000)
Washington, DC 20529-2000

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

June 14, 2010

Executive Summary

USCIS Field Operations Directorate Quarterly Meeting

Background

On May 25, 2010, the Field Operations (FO) Directorate and the Office of Public Engagement hosted the first quarterly stakeholder meeting to provide updates and address stakeholder concerns. The FO Directorate was established in January 2010, and includes 26 districts (divided into 4 regions) as well as the National Benefits Center. Four Regional Directors oversee the district and field employees. The objective of the first quarterly stakeholder meeting was to introduce FO leaders, and to provide an opportunity for open discussion.

FO leaders provided the following updates:

- The national average for processing Applications for Naturalization (the Form N-400) is 5 months and for processing Applications to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (the Form I-485) is 4.2 months.

In May 2002, USCIS issued a memorandum entitled [Procedures for Handling Naturalization Applications of Aliens Who Voted Unlawfully or Falsely Represented Themselves as U.S. Citizens by Voting or Registering to Vote](#). This important document is available online and addresses various concerns offered by stakeholders in advance of the first quarterly meeting. As part of a broad policy review process, USCIS welcomes stakeholder feedback on this memo.

- USCIS has revised the Medical Certification for Disability Benefits (Form N-648) which was posted in the Federal Register on May 28, 2010. Please click on the following link to review the revised form during the [30-day comment period](#). FO is also developing policy guidelines and field guidance.
- USCIS just instituted a new process whereby draft guidance or memoranda will be posted for public comment. Please visit the USCIS website at [Draft Memorandum for Comment](#). Each memorandum is available for comment for ten business days after posting. The final date for comments is listed after each link. Please email all comments to opefeedback@uscis.dhs.gov and put the title of the relevant memorandum in the subject line of your message. This process is managed by OPE; responses are analyzed and shared with relevant Program Offices.
- The FO Directorate is willing to host regional liaison meetings and looks forward to expanded opportunities to elicit and address stakeholder input.

Principal Themes

- **Adjudications and Standard Operating Procedures**

Stakeholders were interested in learning more about the adjudications process and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Immigration Services Officers. FO leaders indicated that each application or petition is adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, and as a function of all available information or evidence. It is difficult to provide general answers to case-specific questions – especially where criminal or medical histories are at issue. For example, pending criminal charges or an incomplete probationary period may impact an applicant's eligibility. USCIS at times may withhold a final adjudication pending resolution of a criminal case or a period of probation. Where an application may require a medical certification, USCIS generally does not require use of a specific provider but rather prefers that applicants identify and utilize professionals they know and trust. Please note that Agency practice involves ISOs consulting with their immediate supervisors and/or local counsel for guidance on case-specific adjudication questions.

USCIS is currently conducting a bottom-up review of all of our policies and SOPs. Headquarters received approximately 3,000 documents from the field that will be part of this assessment. USCIS also posted a policy review survey on our website to collect stakeholder feedback. As USCIS continues this review process, the Agency intends to engage on specific policies and to gather stakeholder comments and concerns.

- **Customer Service and Case Status Inquiries**

There were a numbers of questions and concerns raised by stakeholders regarding customer service and case status inquiries. In general, USCIS encourages applicants or their representatives to follow a specific procedure:

- o Contact the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 and request to generate a service inquiry. This will direct the inquiry to the appropriate district office and permit USCIS to track the status of our response.
- o Schedule an appointment through InfoPass to speak with an Immigration Services Officer (ISO). ISOs are trained to manage field, service center, and lockbox inquiries. If your query is not addressed during the initial appointment please ask to speak with a supervisor. USCIS will not give out phone numbers or emails of our adjudicators.
- o If you do not receive adequate responses, please go up the chain of command: Field Office Director, District Director, Regional Director, and then Headquarters. All inquiries sent directly to Debbie Rogers should go through the Office of Public Engagement at public.engagement@dhs.gov.
- o Additional information can be found on the USCIS website at [Contact Us](#).
- o A list of Regional Directors and District Directors is available at the [end of this document](#).

- **Requests for Evidence (RFEs)**

RFEs are a high priority for USCIS. The Service Center Operations (SCOPS) Directorate has initiated a nationwide review of RFEs. The FO Directorate is joining in the effort by looking at ways to improve RFEs generated in the field. The Agency currently sends out two types of RFEs: 1) initial evidence based on information on the form or regulatory requirements and 2) additional evidence which oftentimes arises when an adjudicator interviews an applicant and identifies that additional evidence is needed to make a

decision. However, there are times when the information in a case and/or statutory requirements warrants a denial by USCIS without sending an RFE.

- **Role of the Attorney/Representative**

Stakeholders continue to be concerned about how some attorneys are treated by USCIS adjudicators in the context of benefit interviews, particularly with regard to seating arrangements. FO leaders agree that, barring safety or security concerns, attorneys and/or accredited representatives should be able to sit next to their clients during benefit interviews. We are working on guidance to address concerns expressed by stakeholders and will post it once available on the USCIS website.

If an attorney or accredited representative feels that an adjudicator is asking inappropriate questions during the interview, they should ask to speak with a supervisor. USCIS has spent a considerable amount of time training the ISOs on interview techniques; the FO Directorate also has a quality assurance process on test administration to identify and address issues of concern.

The Agency respects the attorney-client relationship and asks that attorneys and accredited representatives likewise respect USCIS staff in the context of benefit and other interviews/interactions. Future guidance will address how ISOs should report instances involving perceived inappropriate conduct by attorneys and/or accredited representatives and also the reverse (i.e., how attorneys and/or accredited representatives should report perceived inappropriate behavior by ISOs).

Northeastern Regional Office
Tracy Renaud, Regional Director
 70 Kimball Avenue
 South Burlington, VT 05403-6813

District	Location	District Director	Field Offices
1	Boston District Office JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street Government Center Boston, MA 02203-0701	Dennis Riordan	Lawrence, MA Manchester, NH Portland, ME Providence, RI
2	Buffalo District Office 130 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, NY 14202-2404	M. Frances Holmes	Albany, NY Hartford, CT Rochester, NY St. Albans, VT Syracuse, NY
3	New York City District Office 26 Federal Plaza New York City, NY 10278-0127	Andrea Quarantillo	Garden City, NY
4	New Jersey District Office 970 Broad Street Newark, NJ 07102-2506	John Thompson	Mt. Laurel, NJ
5	Philadelphia District Office 1600 Callowhill Street Philadelphia, PA 19130-4106	Karen Fitzgerald	Charleston, WV Dover, DE Pittsburgh, PA
6	Baltimore District Office 31 Hopkins Plaza Baltimore, MD 21201	William Donohue (Acting)	
7	Washington District Office 2675 Prosperity Avenue WAS/MS 2480 Fairfax, VA 20598-2400	Sarah Taylor	Norfolk, VA

Southeastern Regional Office
Don Monica, Regional Director
Rosemary Melville, Acting Regional Director
 390 North Orange Avenue, Suite 220
 Orlando, FL 32801-1640

District	Location	District Director	Field Offices
8	Atlanta District Office 2150 Parklake Drive Atlanta, GA 30045	Denise Frazier (Acting)	Birmingham, AL Charleston, SC Charlotte, NC Greer, SC Raleigh-Durham, NC
9	Miami District Office 8801 NW 7th Avenue Miami, FL 33150	Linda Swacina	Charlotte Amalie, FL Christiansted, St. Croix Hialeah, FL Kendall, FL Oakland Park, FL San Juan, PR
10	Tampa District Office 5524 West Cypress Street Tampa, FL 33607-1708	Kathy Redman	Jacksonville, FL Orlando, FL West Palm Beach, FL
11	New Orleans District Office 2424 Edenborn Avenue, Suite 300 Metairie, LA 70001-1845	Cindy Gomez	Fort Smith, AR Jackson, MS Memphis, TN

Central Regional Office
Evelyn Upchurch, Regional Director
Lynn Langton, Acting Regional Director
 7701 North Stemmons Freeway
 Dallas, TX 75247

District	Location	District Director	Field Offices
12	Detroit District Office 1411 East Jefferson Avenue Detroit, MI 48214	Mirash "Mick" Dedvukaj	
13	Cleveland District Office 1240 East Ninth Street, Room 501 Cleveland, OH 44199-2085	Mark Hansen	Cincinnati, OH Columbus, OH Indianapolis, IN Louisville, KY
14	Chicago District Office 101 W. Congress Parkway Chicago, IL 60605	Ruth Dorochoff	Milwaukee, WI
15	Kansas City District Office 9747 Northwest Conant Avenue Kansas City, MO 64153-1833	Michael Jaromin	Des Moines, IA Omaha, NE St. Louis, MO St. Paul, MN Wichita, KS
16	Dallas District Office 6500 Campus Circle Drive East Irving, TX 75063	Lisa Kehl	Oklahoma City, OK
17	Houston District Office 126 Northpoint Houston, TX 77060	Sandra Heathman	
18	San Antonio District Office 8940 Fourwinds Drive San Antonio, TX 78239	Mario Ortiz	Albuquerque, NM El Paso, TX Harlingen, TX
19	Denver District Office 12484 East Weaver Place Centennial, CO 80111	Robert Mather	Boise, ID Casper, WY Helena, MT Salt Lake City, UT

Western Regional Office
Carolyn Muzyka, Regional Director
24000 Avila Road, 6th Floor
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

District	Location	District Director	Field Offices
20	Seattle District Office 12500 Tukwila International Blvd. Seattle, WA 98168-2506	Anne Arries Corsano	Anchorage, AK Portland, OR Spokane, WA Yakima, WA
21	San Francisco District Office 630 Sansome Street, Suite 1080 San Francisco, CA 94111-2280	Larry Crider (Acting)	San Jose, CA
22	Sacramento District Office 650 Capitol Mall, 2nd Floor Sacramento, CA 95814	Susan Curda	Fresno, CA
23	Los Angeles District Office 300 N. Los Angeles Street Los Angeles, CA 90012	Jane Arellano	San Bernardino, CA Santa Ana, CA
24	San Diego District Office 880 Front Street, Suite 1234 San Diego, CA 92101-8834	Paul Pierre	Chula Vista, CA Imperial, CA
25	Phoenix District Office 2035 North Central Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85004-1548	John Kramar	Las Vegas, NV Reno, NV Tucson, AZ
26	Honolulu District Office 595 Ala Moana Boulevard Honolulu, HI 96813-2700	David Gulick	Hagatna, Guam