



Leadership News

Message from Acting Center Director Tom Cioppa

Although I have been the Acting Director for only a short time, I have been very impressed by the VSC employees, their commitment to the mission, and pursuit of excellence. One of my first experiences here was the annual stakeholder conference on October 18, 2013. This provided representatives from the American Immigration Lawyers Association, community-based organizations, private law firms, and others to learn more about the VSC's work. Later that day we naturalized six candidates from three countries in front of an "I love the USA" banner made by children at the VSC childcare center. It was an outstanding day that provided us the opportunity to engage with stakeholders and hear their voice and to witness the achievement of welcoming new citizens.

The VSC is dedicated to creating a workplace focused on quality, professional development and mission accomplishment. We emphasize with our employees how the work each of us performs is connected to our mission. By fostering high performance, we support, encourage and recognize the skills and accomplishments of our workforce by focusing on quality. We recognize there is always room to develop and improve and are always looking to get better at what we do.



Stakeholders, VSC staff, and friends and family of new citizens enjoy the Oct. 18 naturalization ceremony.

G-28 Best Practices

- The number one reason for rejection of G-28s is signatures – the signatures must be original. We will not accept photocopied or typewritten signatures.
- Other common reasons for rejection include: no individual attorney name is listed in part 1, lack of or incomplete attorney address in part 1, or submission of an old version of the form.
- It can take up to two weeks for a G-28 that is submitted after a petition or application has been filed to be properly matched with the file and for our computer systems to be updated.
- If you would like to submit a G-28 via Fed Ex or UPS, please place the G-28 in an inner envelope with the PO Box 600 address. This will ensure that it is routed properly once it arrives at the VSC.

I-290B Guidance

Due to recent changes on Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, the attorney or representative is considered the individual filing the appeal. The attorney information (name, address, etc.) appears as the petitioner on notices generated by the VSC.

The VSC continues to receive inquiries and requests for corrected notices because the petitioner's name does not appear on the notice. Please note that this is not an error and a new notice will not be issued.

USCIS Approves 10,000 U Visas for 5th Straight Fiscal Year

USCIS has approved the statutory maximum 10,000 petitions for U-1 nonimmigrant status (U visas) for fiscal year (FY) 2014. This marks the fifth straight year that USCIS has reached the statutory maximum since it began issuing U visas in 2008.

Each year, 10,000 U visas are available for victims of certain qualifying crimes who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse and are willing to help law enforcement authorities investigate or prosecute those crimes. More than 89,600 victims and their family members have received U visas since the program was implemented.

Though USCIS has reached its statutory cap of 10,000 U visas, it will continue to review pending petitions for eligibility. USCIS will send a letter to all eligible petitioners who, due solely to the cap, are not granted U-1 visas, notifying them that they are on a waiting list to receive a U visa when visas again become available and what options they have in the interim. Petitioners and qualifying family members must continue to meet eligibility requirements at the time the U visa is issued.

In the fall of 2013, the VSC trained an unprecedented number of officers in the adjudication of Form I-918, Petition for U Nonimmigrant Status, in order to be able to reach the cap and review pending applications early in the fiscal year. USCIS will resume issuing U visas on Oct. 1, 2014, the first day of FY 2015, when visas become available again.

Business Related Filing Tips

O/P related

- It is helpful when petitioners list each criterion in their cover letter that they are using to qualify the beneficiary. Then place the documentation together accordingly in the record.
- The VSC will issue a request for evidence (RFE) for a consultation if the petitioner does not provide evidence the consultation was requested from the appropriate labor organization.
- If awards or similar documentation are being submitted as evidence, please explain the significance of each award.

H1B related

- Duplicate copies are forwarded to the Kentucky Consular Center. Both in the initial petition and when responding to RFEs, petitioners should include a duplicate copy so the KCC receives a complete record to be uploaded to PIMS.

Employee Appreciation Day

On September 23, we held an Employee Appreciate Day for VSC staff. In the field adjacent to the St. Albans office, the Employee Services Committee set up tables and provided food and refreshments. Deputy Director Karen FitzGerald recognized employees who had gone above and beyond in fulfilling the mission of the VSC and USCIS.



VSC Employees show off their certificates of appreciation at Employee Appreciation Day.

Reminders

As we enter into 2014, we would like to remind you to put the correct year on any checks sent to the VSC and Lockbox. For example, a check dated January 3, 2013, but received in 2014, may be rejected due to the incorrect date!

We would also like to remind you that Requests for Evidence (RFEs) issued by the VSC are no longer printed on blue stock paper, but as of Dec. 9, 2013, are being printed on light yellow paper.

38 River Road Update

Construction on our new facility at 38 River Road in Essex, Vt., next to the existing Essex facility, is progressing on schedule. The new 54,000-square-foot structure will have space for approximately 285 employees. In addition, the building will feature several conference rooms, file storage facilities, a training room and a designated space for the quality and training unit. We expect to move in by early to mid-March.

This new space will allow us to discontinue the second shift for VSC employees, which was instituted in February of 2013 due to rapid growth at the Center and the lack of space to accommodate that growth. We look forward to occupying this new building!



The new VSC facilities under construction in Essex, Vt.

State Department Visit

On November 15, representatives from the Department of State visited the VSC. Service Center Leadership met with Matthew Hurley, Consular Section Chief, DOS Montreal, and Leslie Doumbia, American Citizen Services Deputy, DOS Montreal, who both recently took on their Montreal posts. Also in attendance was William Swaney, Director of the Vermont Passport Agency located in St. Albans, who helped coordinate the visit. The representatives from DOS were particularly interested in speaking with Center Fraud Detection Operations (CFDO) and Family Division Leadership.

Associate Brad Brouillette and Acting Section Chief Ray Gratton represented National Security and CFDO, while Associate Carrie Selby and Section Chief Michael Kiey spoke for the Family Division on fraud and family petition matters.

Vermont Service Center Contact Information

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National Customer Service Center (NCSC): (800) 375-5283

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