

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
12/15/2022

1. Welcome & Introductions: Jennifer Llamas & Emily Smith

- a. Thank you to all for joining us on Zoom. The Immigrant Forum will be held virtually until further notice

2. USCIS Updates: Nina Sachdev, Community Relations Officer, USCIS

- a. **Outreach**, find them on <https://www.uscis.gov/outreach>
 - i. **National**
 - 1. Dec. 20 – Public Charge
 - 2. Jan. 12 – Naturalization Test Redesign
 - 3. Jan. 10, 17, 24 - DHS Blue Campaign: Recognizing and Reporting Human Trafficking
 - 4. Jan. 13 – DHS Blue Campaign: Human Trafficking Youth Forum for caretakers and adults who work with youth
 - ii. **Local**
 - 1. Dec. 19, 11am-12pm – Navigating USCIS Online Services
- b. **Announcements**, see <https://www.uscis.gov/news/all-news>
 - i. **New Edition of Form I-485** posted on <https://www.uscis.gov/i-485> , Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjustment of Status.
 - 1. If file I-485 **on or after Dec. 23, 2022**, you must use the 12/23/22 edition of the Form I-485 or it will be rejected.
 - ii. Dec. 14 announcement – **Invitation** for 1,500 individuals enrolled in adult education classes to try **updates to the English-speaking portion and civics questions** and provide feedback. Federal register notice of the trial published.
 - 1. Jan. 12 – virtual engagement
 - 2. See <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship> to stay updated.
 - iii. Dec. 9 announcement – Policy Update to **Automatically Extend Green Cards for Naturalization Applicants**.
 - 1. <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-manual-updates/20221209-ExtendingPRC.pdf>
 - 2. LPRs who properly filed their N-400 on or after Dec. 12, 2022 will receive an N-400 receipt notice that states their green card is extended for 24 months from their card expiration date. The N-400 receipt notice and expired green card is evidence of continued status.
 - iv. TPS for Ethiopians
 - 1. Registration starts Dec. 12, 2022
 - 2. Continuous residence in the US since Oct. 20, 2022 and continuous physical presence in the US since Dec. 12, 2022
 - v. TPS Extended and Redesignated for Hattians for additional 18 months
 - 1. Residing in the US as of Nov. 6, 2022

- vi. Dec. 7 announcement – New Data on Effective Backlog Reduction, Support for Humanitarian Missions and Fiscal Responsibility
- vii. Nov. 22 announcement - Extends and Expands Fee Exemption and Expedited Processing for **Afghan Nationals**. Check the list to see which forms apply: <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-extends-and-expands-fee-exemptions-and-expedited-processing-for-afghan-nationals>
- viii. Nov. 21 announcements - Certain Afghan and Ukrainian Parolees Are **Employment Authorized Incident to Parole**
 - 1. <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/certain-afghan-and-ukrainian-parolees-are-employment-authorized-incident-to-parole>
 - 2. Applies to:
 - a. Afghan parolees whose unexpired Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, contains a class of admission of “OAR.” If you are an Afghan parolee covered under section 2502(b), P.L. No. 117-43 who did not receive an “OAR” class of admission on your Form I-94, please email U.S. Customs and Border Protection at oawi94adjustments@cbp.dhs.gov to update your class of admission, if appropriate;
 - b. Ukrainian parolees whose unexpired Form I-94 contains a class of admission of “UHP”; and
 - c. Ukrainian parolees whose unexpired Form I-94 contains a class of admission of “DT” issued between Feb. 24, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2023, and indicates Ukraine as the country of citizenship on the document.
 - 3. These parolees can work for 90 days without an Employment Authorization Card or unrestricted SSA card. After 90 days of working, parolees must present an EAD or unrestricted SSA card and acceptable List B ID document - <https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/form-i-9-acceptable-documents>
 - 4. Starting Nov. 21, Ukrainian parolees do not need to pay the fee for an employment authorization card if they file by mail. Starting Dec. 5, the same fee exemption applies if filing for employment authorization online. Afghan parolees under OAW are already exempt from the employment authorization fee for their first filing.

3. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Legal Program Director, ILRC (read by Office of Community Affairs)

- a. USCIS is doing a trial (estimate of 2 years) of a new English/Civics test for naturalization (application for citizenship). They’re looking in particular at revising the spoken part of the exam to reflect current best practices in test design, and also to make the civics test a multiple-choice format.
- b. USCIS announced that it will automatically extend the validity of green cards when the green card holder applies for naturalization. This is a big step and the result of much

advocacy because otherwise applicants have to pay to renew a green card while they wait for their application for citizenship to be processed.

- c. Extension and redesignation of Haiti for temporary protected status.
- d. Employment incident to status (meaning you don't have to wait for USCIS to approve and send a work permit) for Afghans and Ukrainians who receive parole.

4. Introduction to Tahirih Justice Center Services – Payal Sinha, Managing Attorney

- a. **Mission:** serve immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.
- b. **Impact**
 - i. Coordinated outreach events and legal clinics for more than 800 community members
 - ii. Distributed more than \$35,000 in financial assistance to clients to help them with basic needs
 - iii. Tech Access Projects: Tech 101 videos for clients
- c. **Offer Range of Legal & Social Services**
 - i. Heavily assist with immigration law: represent immigrant survivors to gain legal status as survivors of gender-based violence
 - ii. Family law: partner with pro bono law firms as needed
 - iii. Civil law: support clients as they recover damages from harms they have suffered such as trafficking
 - iv. Forced Marriage Protection
 - v. Social Services: connect clients to shelter, employment training, food pantries, and other services
 - vi. Medical Services: help clients obtain medical and mental health services
- d. **Types of Cases – Need to be due to gender-based violence**
 - i. Asylum, U Visa, T Visa, VAWA, SIJS, Affirmative, Defensive, Appeals, Litigation
 - ii. Partner with pro-bono attorneys as needed to support with psychological evaluations and county conditions experts
- e. **Pro-Bono Partnership Model**
 - i. Co-Counsel Model
 - 1. Allow expansion of capacity and expertise in other fields
 - 2. Nearly 2,000 individual pro bono attorneys in our network
 - 3. 56% of cases are currently co-counseled
 - 4. Provide technical training and trauma-informed and client-centered training
- f. **Getting Involved/Partnering**
 - i. Planning at least 6 clinics for the coming year (Adjustment of Status clinics, U-Visa Application, VAWA, Employment.....)
 - ii. Email Payal to collaborate or get on the list serve: PayalS@Tahirih.org

5. Certified Welcoming – Jennifer Llamas, Immigrant Services Coordinator

- a. County of San Mateo is seeking to become a Certified Welcoming County through Welcoming America.
 - i. **Formal designation** for cities and counties that have created policies and programs reflecting their values and commitment to immigrant inclusion.

- b. **7 Categories & 5 Tiers**
- c. **Evidence Gathering**
 - i. Can be from County, Cities, or community-based partners
 - ii. From last 4 years
- d. **Currently in evidence-collection phase**
 - i. Evidence is due in Feb. 2023
 - ii. In March 2023, Welcoming America will visit to conduct an in-person audit
 - iii. Receive Final Certificate in May 2023
 - iv. Certification will last for 4 years
- e. **Follow-up emails will be sent to assist with evidence-gathering or for participating in the audit**

6. Office of Community Affairs (OCA) Updates

- a. **Immigrant Resource Guide**
 - i. Request Form: <https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/immigrants-gateway-resources-booklets>
 - ii. New, updated version will be published early 2023!
- b. **December Spotlight Event on Public Charge:** <https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/community-engagement-efforts>
- c. **Citizenship Ceremony:** <https://tinyurl.com/2p8kawep>
- d. **Strategic Plan:** Hoping to present to the Board in early 2023
- e. **January Spotlight presentation** will be on Process for Venezuelans
 - i. **January 18 at 5pm**
 - ii. **County of San Mateo**

7. Agency Update Roundtable: All

- a. **SMCOE**
 - i. SMCOE and County Health have organized a series of community live-stream events such as creating welcoming environments at school, supporting student well-being in Spanish.
 - ii. Working on a comprehensive list of the recordings; will share soon
- b. **Sequoia Union High School District**
 - i. Next semester will be offering tech classes for newcomer parents
 - ii. 5 week class: how to use email, google drive, making a complaint, navigating school websites
 - iii. After class, will take home a Chromebook. Can receive free interest if their child is part of free lunch program.