**San Mateo County Immigrant Forum Meeting Minutes**

**November 16, 2023**

Present:

Adriana Perez Macias

Alma Jeannette Perez

Alison Kamhi, ILRC

Aislin Palomares Anduaga, Catholic Charities

Arlyn Gorriceta, JobTrain

Amairany Bueno

Beatriz Sanchez, North Fair Oaks Libraries

Bruno Huizar, California Immigrant Policy Center

Cara, Job Train

Corina Rodriguez, Puente

Emely Garcia, Catholic Charities SF, Community Engagement Manager

Iliana Solis, BHRS Family Partner - Shasta Clinic

Jessica Rangel, CA Children's Services

Kathy Castro, Job Train SSF

Karen Kilwien, Casey Family Programs

Dr. KaRyn Holder-Jackson, ACCEL

Marisol Durand, SSF Promotores

Natalie Meltzer, CA Children’s Services

Nicoletta Kelleher, BHRS ODE

Sae Harshberger, Catholic Charities

Sai Phavisith, USCIS

Sayda Ceron, BHRS Family Partner

Sisilia Fifita, EPA Counseling Center

Scarleth Contreras, El Concilio

Sylvia Navarro, LIBRE Project

Vanessa Castillo, CORA

Yolanda Ramirez, BHRS

**Welcome and Introductions**: Carolina Salinas

* 2023 forums to be held from 10:00am-12:00pm virtually on the following dates: 12/21

**USCIS Updates**: Vilaysay (Sai) Phavisith, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

* U visa petitions pending: 334,018; USCIS can only approve 10k U visas each fiscal year which results in long wait times; bona fide determinations process does allow USCIS to issue work permits while people wait.
* **Upcoming Presentations: How to Apply for Temporary Protected Status 11/16 at 6 pm PST:** Link: [https://uscis.webex.com/uscis/j.php?MTID=m9d1e1bf3711748fed931b7063c8e32b5](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/npqqCQWK6Jsnv4W4cxNr9C) Webinar number: 2761 418 8382 Webinar password: xcEmNCNP3@32
* **How to Become a U.S. Citizen 11/30 at 6 pm PST: Link:**[https://uscis.webex.com/uscis/j.php?MTID=me562097d7a2cee945acce14a2fcc3fa1](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/4K8yCR6KPYcw4PLPINsohH) Webinar number: 2760 768 9916 Webinar password: NKgyGBsF\*353
* -[National Engagement: Stateless Noncitizens 12/5 2-3 pm EST:](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/wAb1CVO27pfVqjAjUylFtJ)
* **How to Petition Relatives 12/7 at 6 pm PST**: Link: [https://uscis.webex.com/uscis/j.php?MTID=m6ba79d1632a5281b7c3f5ec9a32de54e](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/mvk1CW6KQOc1rwBwTnQpZb) Webinar number: 2764 571 3016 Webinar password: kPKm7Jw3Pv7?
* **How to Apply for Asylum 12/14 at 6 pm PST**: Link: [https://uscis.webex.com/uscis/j.php?MTID=mfb4c75418dd1ca7d3ca1c9fe0ceed580](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/gTgyCXDXrxFlE7Y7Hm1Jga) Webinar number: 2760 619 3786 Webinar password: smYFYsmM\*527
* **USCIS Extends Parole by Two Years for Certain Afghan Nationals Under Age 14**

Because of their age, and because many of these minors may be in the United States without a parent or legal guardian, they may lack the capacity, access to resources, and general ability to navigate a complex immigration system. If they do not maintain parole, they will lose their eligibility for essential benefits, such as those offered by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement. Losing parole could also mean they fail to maintain a lawful status for purposes of adjusting their status to lawful permanent resident in the future. USCIS announced that we will consider two-year extensions of the initial parole period on a case-by-case basis for certain Afghan nationals who:

* + Were paroled into the United States between July 30, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2022, with an OAR or PAR class of admission;
	+ Were under 14 years old as of Sept. 26, 2023; and
	+ As of Sept. 26, 2023, have not yet filed:
		- Form I-131, Application for Travel Document (to apply for re-parole);
		- Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status; or
		- Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal.
* **Certain Renewal Applicants for Employment Authorization to Receive Automatic 180 Day Extension** Back in May 2022 USCIS announced a temporary final rule (TFR) that increased the automatic extension period for EADs available to certain EAD renewal applicants from up to 180 days to up to 540 days. Certain renewal applicants who have filed Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, qualify for an automatic extension of their expiring employment authorization and/or employment authorization documents (EADs) while their renewal application is pending. The 540-day increase was in response to the delays of issuing EADs. Starting 10/27/23, those who apply for a renewal and qualify for the EAD automatic extension will now revert back to 180-day extensions including those who have applied for or have received Temporary Protected Status or asylum. The change is not retroactive; all previous up to 540-day automatic extensions will remain in place.

Meanwhile, USCIS recently published a Policy Manual update increasing the maximum EAD validity period to five years for initial and renewal applications approved on or after Sept. 27, 2023, for the following categories:

* + Certain noncitizens who are employment authorized incident to status or circumstance, including those admitted as refugees, paroled as refugees, granted asylum, and recipients of withholding of removal; and
	+ Certain noncitizens who must apply for employment authorization, including applicants for asylum and withholding of removal, adjustment of status, and suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal.

USCIS is making every effort to help avoid gaps in employment and/or employment authorization documentation for noncitizens with pending EAD renewal applications, and to help reduce EAD processing times, including by dedicating additional personnel and implementing processing improvements to decrease the median processing time for certain EAD applications to 30 days.

* **USCIS Potomac Service Center Will No Longer Accept Paper Responses** As of Aug. 21, 2023, the Potomac Service Center (PSC) has begun to move to a new facility in Camp Springs, MD, and can no longer receive paper responses to correspondence such as Notices of Intent to Deny (NOID), Notices of Intent to Revoke (NOIR), Intents to Deny (ITD), Requests for Evidence (RFE) or supporting documentation for filings currently pending at the PSC.

PSC will no longer accept mailed correspondence beginning on Nov. 13, 2023. All mailed correspondence intended for cases processed by the PSC must be mailed to the Texas Service Center (TSC), unless otherwise noted.

To avoid any processing delays, applicants and their representatives should instead upload their responses to their USCIS online account (for receipt notices that start with IOE-) or mail them to the Texas Service Center at:

USCIS Texas Service Center

Attn: Digital RFE

6046 N Belt Line Rd. STE 114

Irving, TX 75038

We strongly encourage you to use your USCIS online account self-service tools to upload your responses for all online cases.

* **USCIS Updates Guidance for Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) Petitions**

We updated our guidance for SIJs. SIJ is an immigration classification for noncitizens in the United States who need the protection of a juvenile court because they have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent. They may apply for SIJ classification using Form I-360, Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant. Noncitizens with SIJ classification may qualify for lawful permanent resident status (also known as getting a Green Card). Effective immediately, we are updating guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual (PDF, 343.18 KB) for adjudicating Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) petitions. This update will make the SIJ adjudication process more efficient for some applicants. We are updating this guidance to align with the July 31, 2023, declaratory order in Casa Libre/Freedom House v. Mayorkas. The 180-day time frame for USCIS to adjudicate an SIJ petition applies only to the initial adjudication of an SIJ petition. It does not extend to the adjudication of any motion or appeal filed after a denial of an SIJ petition.

**Immigrant Legal Resource Center Updates:** Alison Kamhi

* Conversations in Congress continuing: Republicans introducing harsh border policies in exchange for funding for Ukraine. None of these have passed but pressure is expected to increase in January.

**California Immigrant Policy Center:** Bruno Huizar, Supervisor, California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC)

* CIPC is a statewide advocacy organization, addressing core issues around access to health and public benefits, economic justice and worker rights, and protection from deportation.
* Please see attached presentation slides for details or [Here are the slides](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/CNzsCn5mgQF49r5NH9Tkq7)

**Agency Updates:**

* NOVA Works workforce development program is holding office hours at San Mateo Adult and Career Education, on Wednesday November 29th from 9:00-12:00pm. Located at 789 East Poplar Ave, San Mateo.
* SMC Office of Community Affairs United Against Hate digital messaging toolkit is available [here](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15YMFjDLbPwvD0zw9R1-BnUO93tmqcWVF).
* Redwood City Public Library is hosting Drag Story Hour on Saturday, 11/18, at 11:00am.
* Jefferson Union Highschool District is hosting an Immigration Resource Night on Wednesday, December 6th, from 6-8pm. LIBRE Project, Legal Aid Housing, SMC Office of Community Affairs, and more partners will be tabling, please help us spread the word to the community!
* New members from Catholic Charities: Aislin Palomares Anduaga and Sae Harshberger welcome!
* New members from JobTrain: Kathy Castro, Cara and Arlyn Gorriceta, welcome!