**San Mateo County Immigrant Forum**

**April 18, 2024**

**Virtual Meeting**

<https://smcgov.zoom.us/j/96586873538?pwd=cHVYdHlBVHRqaVpOOUM5VnFWODg2dz09>

**ILRC Updates:**

* The new USCIS fee rule has gone into effect for immigration applications. Some fees have increased but others are now completely free, including U Visa, T Visa, VAWA, SIJS.
	+ Fee exemptions create an opportunity for many people to apply without having to complete a fee waiver.
	+ Citizenship fee waiver process is still in place, and the use of reduced fee has been greatly expanded. This has removed barriers for many people to naturalize.
	+ There has been one lawsuit filed against the new fee rule and the judge declined to halt the rule from taking effect.
* New forms have been released along with the fee rule, so it is important to ensure that applicants use the correct forms.
* ILRC has created a new annotated citizenship form [here](https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Annotated%20N-400%20%284.1.24%20Form%29.pdf).

**USCIS Updates:**

* U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced that any Form I-693, Report of Immigration Medical Examination and Vaccination Record, that was properly completed and signed by a civil surgeon on or after Nov. 1, 2023, does not expire and can be used indefinitely as evidence to show that the applicant is not inadmissible on health-related grounds.
	+ If an applicant’s immigration medical examinations were completed before Nov. 1, 2023, the prior policy still applies.
* USCIS announced a temporary final rule (TFR) to increase the automatic extension period for certain employment authorization documents (EADs) from up to 180 days to up to 540 days.
	+ This announcement follows improvements that have reduced processing times for EADs significantly over the past year.
	+ This temporary measure will apply to eligible applicants who timely and properly filed an EAD renewal application on or after Oct. 27, 2023, if the application is still pending on the date of publication in the Federal Register.
	+ The temporary final rule will also apply to eligible EAD renewal applicants who timely and properly file their Form I-765 application during a 540-day period that begins with the rule’s publication in the Federal Register.
* USCIS has revised Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, to provide a third gender option, “X,” defined as “Another Gender Identity.” They are also updating guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual accordingly to account for this form revision and other forthcoming form revisions that will add a third gender option; see the Policy Alert (PDF, 344.77 KB).
	+ The 04/01/24 edition of Form N-400 will be the first USCIS form to include the X gender option. Applicants filing this edition of Form N-400 on or after April 1, 2024, will have X immediately available as a gender option on their form.
	+ Applicants who have a pending Form N-400 using the edition in effect before April 1, 2024, may request to update their gender on or after April 1, 2024, as well. For all other forms, individuals must wait until USCIS revises those forms to include the X gender option.

* April 1, applicants filing Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, will have the option to request an original or replacement Social Security number (SSN) or card and update their immigration status with the Social Security Administration (SSA) without having to visit an SSA office.
* USCIS is revising our guidance (PDF, 364.37 KB) in the USCIS Policy Manual to align with the Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements Final Rule published in the Federal Register on Jan. 31, 2024, and effective on April 1, 2024. Revisions to the policy manual apply to all applications and petitions postmarked on or after April 1.
* USCIS is updating guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual to clarify how they consider expedite requests related to government interests and requests related to emergencies or urgent humanitarian situations, including travel-related requests. This update also clarifies how to make an expedite request and explains how we process expedite requests.
* With this new process, USCIS will digitally create a Form I-765 for arriving refugees and begin adjudicating it as soon as they are admitted into the United States. After USCIS approves a refugee’s Form I-765, refugees will generally receive their EAD within one to two weeks. USCIS will mail their EAD via U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail to their address of record. The time frame for a refugee to receive their EAD card may vary, depending on delivery times. Please allow a total of 30 days before inquiring. USCIS will also electronically provide the Social Security Administration with the information required to assign a Social Security number and mail a Social Security card to the refugee.
* Eligible Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members who are physically present in the United States can now be considered for re-parole so they can continue to temporarily remain in the United States. Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members who were paroled into the United States on or after Feb. 11, 2022, can apply for re-parole under this process. As with any parole application, we will consider these applications on a discretionary, case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit.

**Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants:** See attached slides.

**Partner Updates:**

* SMC Office of Education: North County school districts are planning immigrant resource night in September. Looking for more resources to share with the community, specifically legal, early childhood, and housing resources. Reach out to Niambi Clay to participate.
* CORA is holding a 40-hour virtual DV training in May. Please reach out to Mariluisad@corasupport.org for details or to sign up!