

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
8/20/2020

1. Welcome & Introductions – Immigrant Services Team

- 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

Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov

- a. San Francisco and San Jose offices continue to interview naturalization and adjustment of status applicants, but in low numbers to maintain physical distancing and time for disinfecting between interviews
- b. Oath ceremonies in the San Francisco office occur multiple times a week, and people may be asked to come back later in the day to take the oath and receive their naturalization certificate
- c. Oath ceremonies in the San Jose office happen every other Friday in the parking lot
 - Tomorrow's (8/21) ceremonies are rescheduled for next week because of the poor air quality
 - Everyone who was scheduled received a phone call and messages went out to stakeholders and the media to alert folks
- d. New fee rule is effective on October 2 (USCIS [new release](#)) and more information will be on the USCIS website in September – www.uscis.gov. There are several changes and [ILRC has a good breakdown](#). Some changes are:
 - Fee waivers are no longer available to everyone. They are only available to people applying under VAWA, U/T visas, TPS, SIJ and SIV programs, and they must show their gross household income is at or less than 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Means tested benefits will not be considered
 - Filing online will reduce the fee by \$10
 - N400 applications will have a fee of \$1,170 if filing by paper and \$1,160 if filing online (almost doubling from current fee of \$640)
 - There will be no reduced fee for the N400 (the I-942 will be eliminated)
 - An application for adjustment of status for a green card will not be bundled with employment authorization or advanced parole documents. Each application will have its own separate fee. I-485 will be \$1,130, I-765 will be \$550, and I-131 will be \$590, totaling \$2,270
 - Asylum applications have a fee of \$50
- e. USCIS Furlough – If congress does not pass a bill that includes funding for USCIS, 70% of employees will be furloughed starting August 31. This will impact all applications with USCIS. USCIS has limited funds to start their new fiscal year in

October, so funds from congress or additional funding from applications will be needed to bring employees back to work on applications

- Actions include contacting senators/congressional members to fund USCIS

***UPDATE: We are happy to report that the USCIS has canceled furloughs scheduled to begin August 31**

f. If anyone has questions, contact Nina Sachdev at Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov

g. Q/A

- Q: To sum up, will fee waivers only be available to people applying under humanitarian visas?

A: Yes

Q: Where are the fee increase proposals located on the USCIS website?

A: On a news release – almost 500 pages long

Q: Has anyone talked to Congresswoman Jackie Speier regarding the USCIS furloughs?

A: Not yet, but it's a good idea

Q: What are the delays in processes due to COVID?

A: Different visas are processed in different offices, so there are different timelines

3. Legal Updates: Ariel Brown, ILRC

a. DACA

- On July 28, DHS issued a memo that states that they will continue to reject initial DACA applications and only accept DACA renewals
 - o DHS will send back forms/fees for applications
 - o Renewals are being shortened from 2 years to 1 year
 - o All Advance Parole applications will be rejected unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Should people apply? Submitting a new DACA application depends on individual circumstances and risk for appetite – though there are strong arguments to file right now since it's "lawful"
- DACA renewals are still being processed quickly
- Litigation talks against the memo are in the works
- Check out ilrc.org/DACA

b. Public Charge

- State of public charge uncertain
- On July 29, public charge rule was halted nationwide due to COVID-19
- On August 12, the second circuit limited the nationwide injunction to New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, however, USCIS hasn't updated website to reflect this
 - o I-944 form is still off the USCIS website
- Check out ilrc.org/public-charge

c. Fee Rule

- Encourage people to submit applications before October 2

- Mission Asset Fund offers zero interest [loans](#) to low-income immigrants for immigration applications
- Check out 2d above for more information

4. Office of Community Affairs Updates: Census Presentation, Melissa Vergara, mvergara1@smcgov.org; smccensus.org

- For more detailed information, please see Powerpoint located on the Immigrant Services website
<https://cmo.smcgov.org/sites/cmo.smcgov.org/files/documents/files/Immigrant%20For%20um%20Aug%202020%20Census%20Updates.pdf>
 - As of August 21, 2020, SMC is at 75.7% self-response rates
***UPDATE: Now at 76.9%**
 - Pescadero is still one of the lowest self-response census tracts (& now with the fires, it will be even harder to count)
 - Our office is creating banners, postcards, and ads in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog
 - There have been NFO/SSF Car Caravans, and DC may be next
 - US Census Bureau is sending a 7th mailer to some census tracts, and are also performing random sampling at some households that have already completed the census

5. San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund Update: Sophie Mintier, Management Analyst, County Manager's Office, smintier@smcgov.org

- For more detailed information, please see Powerpoint located on the Immigrant Services website
<https://cmo.smcgov.org/sites/cmo.smcgov.org/files/documents/files/Immigrant%20Relief%20Fund%20progress%20report.pdf>
 - As of August 17, 2020, the [Immigrant Relief Fund](#) is at about 83% progress of the \$9.6 million total
 - 18,290 pre-apps
 - 12,183 apps
 - 8,473 grant apps started
 - 7,604 grants approved
 - 75% of apps approved are from households that are making \$1000 or less per month, with 43% having no income
 - Most applications are from NFO, EPA & San Mateo and there are a wide range of household sizes – 15% are household of 1, 19% HH of 2, 24% HH of 3, 24% HH of 4, and 18% HH of 5+
 - Make sure applicants are applying to the San Mateo County specific fund on the Mission Asset Website and not the national fund, and that applicants are only submitting one application per email address

- d. There is a technical support box (in blue) on the Mission Asset website for assistance. Also reach out to Eunice at ehernandez@legalaidsmc.org or 650-517-8934 for any questions
- e. Q/A
 - Q: What is the timeline for applications?
A: Applications are prioritized based on demonstrated level of need. Once prioritized, timeline is a couple of days.
 - Q: Are denial letters being sent?
A: No.

6. Agency Update Roundtable

- a. **Multicultural Institute:** Vegan outreach at Fair Oaks Community Center starting Thursday, August 27 from 3-5 PM, no prior registration needed
- b. **Primary School:** School reopened on August 19, managing online learning
- c. **LIBRE:** SMC Eviction moratorium ending August 31
***UPDATE: Evictions will not be processed by the San Mateo Court until October 2nd. If a client receives an eviction notice or a court summons before October 2nd, contact the Legal Aid Society (650-517-8911) or CLSEPA (650-326-6440)**
- d. **BHRS:** Virtual Parent Cafes continuing in September: 2 in Spanish, 1 in English. Virtual Parent Project classes coming up as well