

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
1/21/2021

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

- a. USCIS offices were closed nationally to the public on January 19 and 20th out of an abundance of caution of threats to federal facilities
 - All interviews were automatically rescheduled
 - InfoPass appointments need to call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 to request a new appointment
- b. USCIS District Office in San Francisco is sending emails from USCISNorCal@uscis.dhs.gov to applicants who are scheduled for an interview at the field offices in SF, Sacramento, Fresno, and San Jose (and who have provided an email address when they submitted their application to USCIS)
 - Email is to remind applicants about the health and safety measures that are in place at facilities and what steps to take if the applicant must reschedule
 - First time USCIS is sending out communications directly to applicants in this manner - *Any feedback would be appreciated – Was it helpful? Was the applicant confused? Did the timing of the email make sense? Email Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov or call 415-243-6646*
- c. Starting in January, applicants who apply to replace their green card (by filing Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card) will no longer receive a sticker to extend the validity of the green card when they go to their biometrics appointment
 - Instead, the receipt notice (form I-797 - which the applicant receives in the mail after filing the application) will indicate their green card is extended for 12 months
 - If the applicant has the physical green card and the receipt notice that indicates the green card has been extended, they have proof of a valid green card
 - For those not in possession of their green card, they can receive an ADIT stamp in their unexpired passport for proof of permanent resident status at the field offices by making an InfoPass appointment
 - Applicants who filed the I-90 form to replace their green card, and who have not yet been scheduled for an ASC biometrics appointment will receive an amended I-797 receipt notice that indicates their green card is extended for 12 months. However, applicants who filed the I-90 form to replace their green card, and who have already been scheduled for an upcoming biometrics appointment will receive the extension sticker at their appointment. *Please let Nina know if your clients/applicants find this process is not taking place timely*
- d. Biometrics are being reused for some applicants under limited circumstances

- Many naturalization applicants (filed Form N-400) will have their biometrics reused and will not be asked to go to a biometrics appointment
 - USCIS is sending notices (using Form I-797) to applicants to let them know if they do not require a biometrics appointment and their biometrics are being reused
 - Whether an applicant's biometrics are reused depends on the application they filed, what information is in certain databases, whether USCIS must verify identity, whether the case can be decided without biometrics, and other factors
- e. Applicants who require biometrics and who will have an interview are having their biometrics appointments scheduled closer to their interview date, as opposed to soon after they file their application (which was the process pre-pandemic)
- Due to the pandemic, closing of the Application Support Centers for biometrics for several months last year, and social distancing protocols that limit the number of appointments, there is approximately 1.3 million applications awaiting biometrics appointments as of mid-December
- f. Interviews and oath ceremonies are continuing, but at a lower rate because of health and safety measures
- Applicants can reschedule appointments without penalty
 - If an applicant requires an interpreter, the interpreter should be available by phone, and not come in-person with the applicant. Officers will call an interpreter contracted with USCIS for common languages, like Spanish. If an applicant has a disability, someone can accompany them to the office
 - The SF Field Office has small Naturalization Oath Ceremonies multiple times a week in the building
 - The San Jose field office will re-start outdoor Naturalization Oath Ceremonies in their parking lot in March when the weather improves

3. Legal Updates: Andrew Craycroft, ILRC

- a. On January 8, 2021, a US District Court Judge enjoined a sweeping federal regulation that would have undercut the US asylum system
- This rule would have changed many aspects of asylum, and it primarily focused on restriction of access to asylum (for example, adding a \$50 application fee) and making it easier for cases to be terminated and applicants removed from the US
- b. On Tuesday, January 19, 2021, Trump announced Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) status for nationals of Venezuela
- This will protect about 200,000 Venezuelans from having to go back
 - DED is like Temporary Protected Status (TPS), but it is granted directly by the president instead of the Department of Homeland Security
- c. On Wednesday, January 20, 2021, President Biden issued a series of executive actions on several immigration policies and programs, including:
- Requiring a department-wide review of all enforcement policies and practices within 100 days, along with recommendations regarding enforcement, prosecutorial discretion, detention and interaction with state and local law enforcement. This [memorandum](#) also sets interim policies during that review, including a 100-day pause on certain deportation removals starting on Friday,

January 22, except for cases that threaten national security or those that choose to be deported

Update Federal Judge [Blocks Biden's 100-Day Deportation Moratorium](#)

- Ending the [Muslim ban](#), ensuring that visa processing resumes and that cases that were denied be re-evaluated
 - Restoring [Census count](#) to include ALL people in the USA, regardless of citizenship status
 - Preserving and strengthening [DACA](#), including the acceptance of first-time requests and advance parole
 - Reinstating Deferred Enforced Departure for [Liberians](#) through June 30, 2022, giving more time for eligible Liberian nationals who have been physically present in the United States since November 20, 2014, as well as their spouses and unmarried children, to apply for a green card under LRIF
 - Halting [border](#) wall construction and redirecting those funds
 - Advancing [racial equity](#) by re-evaluating policies
- d. Q/A
- Q: What is the timeline to process U visas?
- A: There is a backlog, and in order for quicker processing, an actual change in law is required

4. Office of Community Affairs Updates

- a. The Community Crew continues to distribute masks 4 times a week to high COVID-19 positivity rate locations
 - Follow @SMC_CommAffairs on IG/Twitter to see all locations
- b. The Immigrant Services team continues to host the monthly virtual Provider Spotlight Series, and February will celebrate Black History Month
- c. The Immigrant Services team is currently working on the timeline and team structure for the Gateways for Growth grant
- d. For Verifications of Benefits Letters for fee waivers, there will be a new process in place soon. For now, continue submitting the webform:
<https://cmo.smcgov.org/webform/request-your-verification-benefits-letter-citizenship-fee-waiver-here>
- e. **COVID-19 Outreach Efforts: Melissa Vergara, Community Outreach Specialist, OCA**
 - See PowerPoint

5. Agency Update Roundtable

- a. **Latino Collaborative:** Meets 4th Tuesday of every month at 3:30 pm via Zoom, email davidj@caminocounselingcollab.com
- b. **LIBRE:** Helping with initial DACA apps (but not advance parole). Call the LIBRE hotline at 650-517-8936 regarding DACA, U visa, SIJS, VAWA, public benefits issues, and public charge questions. If not able to leave a voicemail due to phone issues, can call Eunice directly at 650-517-8934. The housing hotline at Legal Aid is 650-517-8911. Immigrant Relief Fund still has funding available and is now able to issue pre-paid cards instead of checks
- c. **Red Cross:** Helpline for families is 844-782-9441

- d. **CLSEPA:** Immigration consultation clinics every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month, over-the-phone

6. COVID-19 Vaccine Presentation, Shireen Malekafzali, Health Equity Officer

- See PowerPoint and check <https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-vaccination> for latest information