

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
8/19/2021

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: Vilaysay “Sai” Phavisith, Community Relations Officer, USCIS

- a. What can I do to help family members in Afghanistan?
- Sponsor a family member: <https://www.uscis.gov/family>
 - Check status on a pending application/petition (for those who do not have a myUSCIS account): <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>
 - Ask a question about a pending application/petition (for those who do not have a myUSCIS account): <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>
 - Read refugee/asylee welcome guide, available in different languages: [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/brochures/USCIS Welcomes Refugees and Asylees.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/brochures/USCIS_Welcomes_Refugees_and_Asylees.pdf)
 - Attend free info sessions from USCIS: <https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/upcoming-local-engagements>
 - Request an expedite on an application/petition: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request> or call 1-800-375-5283
- b. Social Security Numbers can now be applied for directly on Form I-485 (green card application), instead of having to go to the Social Security Office: <https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-expands-partnership-with-social-security-administration>
- c. Fire victims who need assistance with immigration docs: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>
- d. There has been an increase in validity time for medical exams (4 years instead of 2 years): <https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-temporarily-extending-validity-period-of-form-i-693>
- e. SAVE – Electronic Immigration Status Verification
- Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee and Lawful Permanent Resident Status
 - On July 30, 2021, the [President announced that the first flight of Operation Allies Refuge had arrived](#) in the United States, carrying Afghans who are eligible for Special Immigrant Visas (SIV), including family members. These individuals and future arrivals that are part of this operation will have a special immigrant Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status or special immigrant parole that meets the special immigrant requirement for certain government benefits
 - As with other Iraqis and Afghans and their dependents admitted as LPRs under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 or other applicable law regarding special immigrants, these special immigrant LPRs will generally have

- foreign passports with a Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection stamp admitting them with an SQ1, SQ2, or SQ3 Class of Admission (COA). However, some of the new Afghan special immigrant LPR arrivals may not have a physical immigrant visa in their passport and may not have a temporary Form I-551 stamp
- USCIS is also issuing a Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card, to these special immigrant LPRs. In addition, regardless of the documentation presented, SAVE can provide an initial verification response of LPR for these special immigrant LPRs except those whose case involves something unusual that may require additional verification
 - Special immigrant parolees will have a separate, printed page on Customs and Border Protection letterhead with their Form I-94, Arrival Departure Record, information and the following notation, signed and dated by a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer
 - As do Afghan special immigrant LPRs, these special immigrant parolees meet the immigration status requirement for public benefits pursuant to section 602(b)(8) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note), which states that Afghans granted special immigrant status “shall be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted under [section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157)] to the same extent, and for the same period of time, as such refugees.” The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has also published a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) informing the refugee resettlement network that ORR has amended its guidance to reflect that these Afghan special immigrant parolees meet the immigration status requirement for Refugee Resettlement Program benefits
 - USCIS is issuing these special immigrant parolees a Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document, with a C11 parolee category. For these individuals, SAVE can provide an initial verification response of Parolee with an SQ4 or SQ5 COA unless there is something unusual about the case that may require additional verification. Please submit the case for additional verification if you need to verify whether a special immigrant parolee also has a pending application to adjust their status to LPR
 - Please send any questions or concerns to your SAVE Agency Relationship Manager or SAVE.Help@uscis.dhs.gov

3. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Supervising Attorney, ILRC

- a. ICE Directive issued 8/9
 - Enforcement actions against victims of crime will not be taken unless there are exceptional circumstances (i.e. a national threat or a threat to others)
 - This means no arresting, detaining, or deporting
 - This applies to U visa, T visa, SIJS, VAWA, or even if a person identifies as a victim but there is no application pending yet
 - What is a national threat? A “terrorist warrant” is issued on a person
 - DUIs are not being counted as posing a threat
- b. “Remain in Mexico” Policy
 - President Biden ended this policy, but a judge in Texas ruled that Biden couldn’t end the policy the way he did

- Policy must be reinstated within 7 days; ***Update: The Supreme Court on 8/24 refused to block the lower court ruling; DHS will continue to challenge the order**

c. Q/A

Q: What is the current wait time for a U visa?

A: Only 10,000 visas are allowed per year. The wait is super long as there are 270,000 pending applications, however, bona fide determination will allow certain U petitioners and their family members to receive work authorization and deferred action in the meantime

Q: Are there updates with DACA?

A: Still can't file initial applications but can continue to renew. USCIS is holding initial applications, not rejecting or accepting them

4. Core Service Agencies Presentation: Ana Morales, Human Services Analyst, San Mateo County Human Services Agency

a. See PowerPoint for information

b. Q/A

Q: How are Core Service Agencies serving now? How are they keeping up with demand?

A: More funding for staffing has been allocated from the County, as well as the state itself has given administrative support

Q: Is there a due date to apply for ERAP?

A: No, applications are accepted on a rolling basis

5. Community College Programs Presentation: Andrea Vizenor, Dean of Strategic Partnerships & Workforce Development, Skyline College

a. See PowerPoint for information

b. Q/A

Q: Are the engineering/graphic design classes online or in-person?

A: In-person, as they are very hands-on

6. San Mateo County Parks Interpretative Strategic Plan Presentation: Katherine Wright, Parks Ranger, San Mateo County Parks

a. See PowerPoint for information

***Update: Survey is now live: <https://parks.smcgov.org/press-release/interpretive-strategic-plan-community-engagement-survey> and is open until Monday, September 20**

7. San Mateo County Strong, Small Business Grant Program Presentation: Donna Vaillancourt, Special Projects Coordinator, San Mateo County Human Resources

a. See PowerPoint for information

b. Q/A

Q: Is citizenship a requirement to apply?

A: No, only requires an ITIN/picture ID, and information is not shared with any agency

8. Office of Community Affairs Updates: Immigrant Services Team

a. Efforts are underway in finalizing the survey that will be distributed to immigrant residents as part of the San Mateo County Immigrant Integration and Inclusion Strategic

Plan. Partners are still welcome to sign on as a Community Engagement Team
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G4GTeams>

- b. The mask mobile is back as masking requirements have returned to the County and the calendar can be found on our social media: @SMC_CommAffairs
- c. The Immigrant Services Provider Spotlight Series continue monthly – September will celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month! All past Spotlight Series starting from November of 2020 can be found on our webpage <https://cmo.smcgov.org/community-engagement-efforts>

9. Agency Update Roundtable

- a. **JobTrain:** Has 6 vocational programs starting soon
- b. **Red Cross:** U.S. Government has asked for Red Cross to assist with the Afghanistan humanitarian crisis