

**AILA / CHICAGO ASYLUM OFFICE LIAISON MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2016**

TVPRA

1. How many TVPRA asylum applicants have you interviewed since October 1, 2016?

See attached statistics.

2. How many TVPRA asylum cases have you adjudicated since October 1, 2016?

See attached statistics.

3. How many TVPRA asylum cases are currently pending awaiting a decision?

See attached statistics.

4. Within the understanding of backlogged UIC cases, on a case by case basis, after how long should AILA chapter members contact the Asylum Office regarding cases waiting to be interviewed?

TVPRA cases remain priority cases for interview scheduling. The current backlog in scheduling these cases for interview is anticipated to be reduced over the next several months. If a chapter member has been waiting for more than one (1) year for a UIC interview they should contact the Chicago AO in writing with a status request.

5. AILA chapter members report filing joint asylum applications for UIC siblings and family units that include UIC's. In most cases the applicants have been interviewed on the same day by the same officer. However, chapter members report occasionally receiving decisions for one UIC but not the joined family member. What steps should chapter members take to confirm the cases are properly consolidated?

For the purposes of interview scheduling the only family relationships that are recognized in the scheduling system and therefore trackable are: (1) parents and children and (2) spouses. The Chicago AO encourages chapter members to help identify cases where it is beneficial to interview the family members by the same officer when possible and on the same day. If you receive an interview notice for one family member and not the other please contact the AO immediately and they will make every effort to accommodate the request when appropriate.

6. Some UIC's experience difficulties when articulating past harm or have received threats when they were relatively young. In these cases, close family members are best able to explain the harm the UIC suffered. These witnesses, however, are sometimes located abroad and cannot come into the Asylum Office to testify. Would the Asylum Office be amendable, particularly in a UIC case, to allow a parent or other witness to testify telephonically, through video teleconferencing (like skype), or other electronic means?

Teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and/or phone calls will not be permitted during the course of an interview. Applicants are permitted to bring witnesses to testify at their interviews and provide written testimony by affidavit when a witness is physically unavailable. Generally speaking, a written affidavit is the most efficient form of testimony as it can easily be added to the file for adjudication.

REASONABLE/CREDIBLE FEAR

1. How many credible fear interviews have you conducted since October 1, 2016?

See attached statistics.

2. How many reasonable fear interviews have you conducted since October 1, 2016?

See attached statistics.

3. How many individuals are currently waiting to receive a credible/reasonable fear interview?

See attached statistics.

4. How many individuals are currently waiting to receive a credible/reasonable fear decision?

See attached statistics.

ASYLUM

1. How many asylum cases have you adjudicated since October 1, 2016?

See attached statistics.

2. How many grants/denials/referrals?

See attached statistics.

3. Any new trends in asylum cases? Has the asylum office seen an influx of cases from any particular region of the world?

Yes, there has been an influx in Haitian cases flown up from the southern border for CF interviews to be performed by the Chicago AO.

4. AILA members have reported that the Asylum Office has administratively closed cases without providing notice to the applicant or attorney on record. The Asylum Office stated the reason for the closures were because the USICE system indicated the applicant's NTA was served on EOIR despite the EOIR system indicating no NTA had been filed with an immigration court. How does the Asylum Office confirm jurisdiction over cases when an applicant has been served with a NTA but the NTA has not been filed with an immigration court?

The Chicago AO administratively closes cases due to lack of jurisdiction. The Chicago AO confirms lack of jurisdiction when a NTA is stamped "filed" in the A-file. Once the NTA has been filed with EOIR the AO is completely divested of jurisdiction. 8 C.F.R. section 208.2(b) The notice of administrative closure should be sent to the applicant and attorney of record. There have been cases when a NTA has been stamped "filed" although it has not been entered into the EOIR calendar system and therefore won't be listed on the EOIR hotline. If this is the case, contact the AO so they may formally confirm with EOIR.

Please note: *There have been recent quality control issues with mailers nationally. If a chapter member receives a mailer that is empty or contains an illegible notice please contact either KiKi Mosley or Diana Tafur.*

5. What are the most common types of cases that require HQ referrals?
Please refer to the January 27, 2014 Lafferty Memo for this information.

NACARA

1. How many NACARA applications are currently pending with the Chicago Asylum Office?

See attached statistics.

2. How many grants/denials?

See attached statistics.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Can you provide an update on any new staff and supervisory positions?

The Chicago AO is now fully staffed at 37 officers, all of whom are fully trained. Final staffing increases for FY 2017 are still undetermined and the AO has already received approval to further expand their offices on the 31st floor.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Adjudication Backlog – Post Interview:

The Chicago AO cancelled all interviews during the month of September to concentrate on issuing decisions on already-interviewed cases. There are some new policy changes expected from HQ that may also ease this backlog. New officers have a reduced interview schedule to promote rapid adjudications of cases in an effort to revert back to the decision pick-up system formerly used.

2. Reschedule Requests:

*If a chapter member receives an interview notice and needs to request that it be rescheduled **please alert the Chicago AO immediately**. This will help to promote efficiency and get cases on the “short list” scheduled. There has been a pattern of receiving reschedule requests **after** the date of the originally-scheduled interview.*

3. Updating cases for interview:

To help promote efficiency during the interview, if there are many changes, please provide a marked-up I-589 to the officer to reduce the amount of time at the start of an interview making the inevitable and necessary edits to the application.

The next AILA Asylum Office Liaison Meeting will be held on Thursday January 26, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the Chicago Asylum Office. The meeting is open to all Chicago Chapter AILA members, but all questions must be submitted to Diana Tafur at dtafur@heartlandalliance.org by Friday, January 20, 2017.