

AILA CHICAGO CHAPTER
USCIS DISTRICT DIRECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE
CHICAGO FIELD OFFICE
December 7, 2016 MEETING

SUPPLEMENTAL MINUTES

1. Update from Carissa Cohen (Tom Cioppa is out of the office for the next week)

- a. Chicago District Office Growth: Carissa Cohen reported that the office has grown by 28 positions that have been filled. They have increased from 176 positions to 218 authorized positions.
- b. Citizenship Growth: The Citizenship branch is currently up to 6 six supervisors and they will also soon be filling the fourth Branch Chief position. They plan to split the citizenship branch into two branches with two Branch Chiefs. This will be occurring during this fiscal year. The mission and duty of the Citizenship Branch will remain the same but with two distinct branches. It will be clear which Branch Chief is responsible for which officers.
- c. Saturday Interviews for N-400s: Approximately 2000 Saturday interviews took place this year and there is a plan to return to Saturday interviews during the months of March, July and August of this fiscal year. Also, beginning in March, there will be Friday N-400 interviews scheduled up through September. Target processing times for N-400s will continue to be five months and additional oath ceremonies will be scheduled to accommodate the increased processing.
- d. Reschedule requests: If an attorney or client is unable to appear for a scheduled interview, they should request that it be rescheduled. There is no mechanism to pre-request that a case not be scheduled for a Friday or a Saturday. Members are reminded to submit reschedule requests electronically rather than with an individual officer.

2. Follow up to question 3

The full legal name is based on the name on the birth certificate. Married women may use their husband's last name or some combination of the two last names. Some kind of documentation of actual usage of the married last name may be required depending

on State law. Legal documentation of the married name would be the marriage certificate.

3. Follow up to question 5

If FDNS receives a report of notary fraud, they look into it and potentially refer it to law enforcement (ICE) as a criminal investigation. UPL can also be reported through the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in which case it is treated as a civil matter. Reports to the FTC can be anonymous. USCIS cannot extend any type of immigration benefit to persons reporting notary fraud unless a law enforcement agency acts as the sponsor

4. Follow up to question 6

Prosecutorial discretion is considered in every case reviewed by an NTA panel. An additional attorney brief or memo is not required for cases in which an NTA is specifically being sought (or not being sought), however it may be helpful if any compelling circumstances were not brought out in the filing or at the interview, for example extenuating circumstances regarding an unlawful act.

5. Follow up to question 7

Only DACA emergency Advance Paroles can be feed in at the local office at window 19. Otherwise, the fee needs to be submitted previously.

6. Miscellaneous

- a. Passport Office moving in: The Passport Office will be coming to 101 W. Congress mid-February. Their new office will be on the 9th floor. They will enter through the same entrance but will proceed through a separate entry lane, currently under construction, and will not effect the three security lines for the District Office.
- b. No Security line preclearance available: Given that members may visit USCIS multiple times a day, the question was raised whether some type of security pass may be available. Unfortunately, no such option exists. The security guards operate under the Federal Protective Office, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security, but separate from USCIS.
- c. Current processing times:
 - i. Adjustment of status: 6.2 months
 - ii. Naturalization: 7 months

- d. Processing time after interview: How long should members expect to wait after an interview for a decision? The above average times include a decision, but every case is distinct. Ordinarily, the officer should provide a letter at the time of interview indicating the status of the case. If no letter is provided, members should request a letter.
- e. Processing of cases involves a criminal arrest: Such cases will go to a supervisor for review. The average review time depends on whether all the papers are in the file. However, supervisors are generally prompt in returning reviewed files to the officers.
- f. Is a request for a new medical indicative the case will soon be adjudicated? Any RFE indicates they are trying to complete adjudication of the case. If a response to the RFE has been submitted and an unusual amount of time has passed, members should advise the supervisor.
- g. Is the FBI delay causing problems for naturalization or other cases? The office is not aware of any problems due to FBI delays.

7. Next District Director Liaison meeting is January 25th at 2:30 pm and it is a CLOSED meeting.