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Archived Content

The information on this page is out of date. However, some of the content may still be useful, so we have archived the page.

Release Date : 05/27/2020

 We have extended the temporary final rule (TFR) requiring certain asylum applicants to use USCIS contract telephonic interpreters instead of bringing their own interpreter to their affirmative asylum interview. This rule is in effect through Sept. 12, 2023. For more information, visit our [TFR webpage](#).

The federal public health emergency for COVID-19 expired on May 11, 2023. Extending the TFR beyond that date provides public notice that the TFR is expiring and helps ensure an orderly and efficient return to prior practice. After Sept. 12, 2023, affirmative asylum applicants who cannot proceed with the interview in English must provide their own interpreters. During this time, we will also assess the impact of providing contract interpreters at affirmative asylum interviews to determine whether a future permanent rule allowing us to provide contract interpreters would be beneficial to the government and the public.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is preparing some domestic offices to reopen and resume non-emergency public services on or after June 4. On March 18, USCIS temporarily suspended routine in-person services at its field offices, asylum offices and application support centers (ASCs) to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). USCIS is following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines to protect our workforce and the public. For the latest information on the status of individual offices, check [our office closures page](#).

While certain offices are temporarily closed, USCIS continues to provide limited emergency in-person services. Please call the [USCIS Contact Center](#) for assistance with emergency services.

As services begin to reopen, offices will reduce the number of appointments and interviews to ensure social distancing, allow time for cleaning and reduce waiting room occupancy. Appointment notices will contain information on safety precautions that visitors to USCIS facilities must follow.

If you are feeling sick, please do not go to your appointment. Follow the instructions on your appointment notice to reschedule your appointment for when you are healthy. There is no penalty for rescheduling your appointment if you are sick.

Asylum Offices

USCIS asylum offices will automatically reschedule asylum interviews that were cancelled during the temporary closures. When USCIS reschedules the interview, asylum applicants will receive a new interview notice with the new time, date and location for the interview and information about safety precautions.

In accordance with social distancing guidelines, and due to the length of asylum interviews, asylum offices expect to conduct video-facilitated asylum interviews, where the applicants sit in one room and the interviewing officer sits in another room. Asylum offices will use available technology, including mobile devices provided by the agency, to ensure that the officer, applicant, interpreter and representative can fully and safely participate in the interview while maintaining social distancing.

For affirmative asylum interviews, applicants must bring all immediate family members listed as dependents on the application and an interpreter, if the applicant does not speak English. Additionally, a representative, witness, individual providing disability accommodations or “trusted adult” if an applicant is a minor, may attend the interview.

For non-detained credible or reasonable fear interviews, individuals must bring any family members listed on the interview notice. Representatives may attend credible and reasonable fear interviews but are encouraged to participate telephonically. USCIS will provide contracted, professional interpreters for credible and reasonable fear interviews.

Naturalization Ceremonies

USCIS will send notices to applicants to reschedule postponed naturalization ceremonies. The ceremonies may be shorter to limit exposure to those in attendance. Instead of playing videos during naturalization ceremonies, attendees will receive a flyer with information and links directing them to the videos on the [USCIS website](#). Under the shortened format, all legally required portions of the ceremony will take place.

Attendance is limited to the naturalization candidate and individuals providing assistance to disabled persons.

Interviews and Appointments

USCIS will send notices to applicants and petitioners with previously scheduled appointments and interviews. Those attending appointments should follow the safety guidelines outlined below.

Those who had other appointments must reschedule through the [USCIS Contact Center](#) once field offices are open to the public. Please check our [office closure page](#) to see if your respective office has been reopened before calling the Contact Center.

Visitors are limited to the applicant, one representative, one family member and one individual providing disability accommodations. The applicant should arrange to have their interpreter available by phone.

Application Support Centers

USCIS will automatically reschedule any necessary ASC appointments that were cancelled due to the temporary office closure. Individuals will receive a new appointment letter in the mail with specific safety requirements. Individuals who appear at a date or time other than what is listed on the ASC appointment notice may encounter significant processing delays, except for military members.

Guidelines for Entering USCIS Facilities

- Visitors may not enter a USCIS facility if they:
 - Have any symptoms of COVID-19, including cough, fever or difficulty breathing;
 - Have been in close contact with anyone known or suspected to have COVID-19 in the last 14 days; or
 - Have been individually directed to self-quarantine or self-isolate by a health care provider or public health official within the last 14 days.
- Visitors may not enter the facility more than 15 minutes prior to their appointment (30 minutes for naturalization ceremonies).
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for visitors at entry points.
- Members of the public must wear facial coverings that cover both the mouth and nose when entering facilities. Visitors may be directed to briefly remove their face covering to confirm identity or take their photograph. There will be markings and physical barriers in the facility; visitors should pay close attention to these signs to ensure they follow social distancing guidelines.
- Individuals are encouraged to bring their own black or blue ink pens.

More information on visiting USCIS facilities can be found at uscis.gov/visitorpolicy.

Please also visit uscis.gov/coronavirus for updates.

