

**National I&R Support Center
Notes from February 11, 2014 Webinar:**

Immigration and Refugee Resources for Older Adults and People with Disabilities.

This webinar was coordinated by the Public Engagement Division and the National Information and Referral Support Center, a grantee of the Administration for Community Living, Health and Human Services (HHS) which is a grantee of Administration on Aging (AoA).

Presenters included staff and subject matter experts within the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the Department of Homeland Security; and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) of the Department of Health and Human Services. The notes included here are only the ones provided by the USCIS staff.

The following topics were covered by USCIS staff:

- I. **A brief overview of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services,
By Courtney Winship, Public Engagement Division, USCIS**

USCIS is the government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States

Website: <http://www.uscis.gov/>

USCIS Structure, February 2014

- 18,000 Government employees and contractors
- 250 Offices around the world
 - 25 International offices
 - 8 Domestic asylum offices
 - 4 Service centers and the National Benefits Center
 - 26 Districts in the United States
 - 83 Field Offices
 - 136 Application Support Centers

USCIS holds a variety of external stakeholder events in which we share information and obtain feedback on USCIS programs and policies. There are 35 Community Engagement/Relations Officers in the field.

Contact the Headquarters, Service Centers, Regional Locations and National Benefits Centers near you: <http://www.uscis.gov/outreach/contact-us>

Social Media Sites:

- Facebook www.facebook.com/uscis
- Twitter - @USCIS and @USCIS_es www.twitter.com/uscis

- YouTube www.youtube.com/uscis
- USCIS Idea Community www.uscisconnect.ideascale.com

II. Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL), By Tsegaye Wolde, Public Engagement Division, USCIS

Website: www.uscis.gov/avoidscams

The term Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL) generally refers to the provision of legal advice and/or representation regarding immigration matters by an individual who is not an attorney eligible to practice law and in good standing or is not an accredited representative.

UPIL Initiative

- UPIL is a serious problem that can affect anyone seeking an immigration benefit
- Perpetrators of immigration services scams often engage in UPIL as a means to defraud their victims
- Through this initiative to combat UPIL and immigration services scams, USCIS seeks to protect the integrity of our immigration system and the best interests of the communities we serve.

Common Scams include:

- Maintaining websites that resemble official USCIS resources available at www.uscis.gov;
- Selling USCIS forms which are available free of charge at www.uscis.gov/forms;
- Applying for benefits on behalf of an individual who is ineligible for those benefits;
- Falsifying information in documents submitted to USCIS;
- Accepting an individual's money for filing fees without submitting any application or petition to USCIS; or
- Making claims that he or she can obtain government-issued documents because he or she has special influence or a connection with the government.
- Calling individuals and posing as USCIS personnel and requesting personal information or identifying false problems with an immigration matter and requesting payment to correct the records.

III. Citizenship Resource Center & Local Naturalization Information Sessions By Rachael Shaw, Office of Citizenship, USCIS

Website for the Citizenship Resource Center: www.uscis.gov/citizenship

This website provides learners, teachers and organizations with a one-stop resource for locating helpful materials and activities for people preparing to become U.S. citizens.

Additional links reviewed during the presentation:

- [Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants](#)
- [Information on the age and time exemptions for the naturalization test](#)
- [Information in languages besides English](#)

- [Teacher Tip Sheet](#) on Essential Ways to Enhance Learning for Older Students in the Adult Citizenship Education Classroom.
- [Local Naturalization Information Sessions](#) (Free and current listing):

USCIS regularly holds information sessions for the public. These sessions will help permanent residents and others interested in naturalization learn about naturalization eligibility, testing, and citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Each session is free of charge and open to the public. Topics covered at these sessions will include:

- Naturalization eligibility requirements
- The naturalization process
- The naturalization test
- Rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship

**IV. Naturalization and SSI benefits,
By Haleh Taghavi, Office of Public Engagement, USCIS**

USCIS will prioritize the processing of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, for certain SSI recipients when the applicant's:

- SSI benefits will be terminated within 1 year from the date listed on your SSI notice;
AND
- Form N-400 has been pending for 4 months or more from the date of receipt.

For the details, please refer to:

<http://www.uscis.gov/news/n-400-priority-processing-certain-non-citizen-ssi-recipients>

**V. Accommodations for in-person office visits,
By Jason Johnsen, Field Operations Directorate, USCIS**

Website: <http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/directorates-and-program-offices/field-operations-directorate>

The Field Operations Directorate within USCIS is responsible for the day-to-day and long term policy and operational guidance of the National Benefit Center and the 83 field offices located in the continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The directorate also has an immigration officer in each of the approximately 136 Application Support Centers located throughout the country. Each day our officers process thousands of in-person office visits, many of which involve brief informational discussions at our InfoPass windows, or interviews for immigration benefits. These in-person visits can last anywhere from a couple of minutes to an hour or more, depending on the reason for the visit.

[Click here to find a USCIS Field Office.](#)

**VI. Fee waiver overview and eligibility requirements,
By Natalie Duffy, Intake Operations Division, USCIS**

Eligibility

- USCIS established a fee waiver process for certain forms and benefit types to assist applicants who could not otherwise pay the filing fees.
- An applicant must demonstrate an inability to pay when requesting the fee waiver.
- General fee waivers will be considered on designated form types.
- Conditional fee waivers will be considered on designated forms under certain conditions.
- Humanitarian fee waivers will be considered for vulnerable populations

Filing and Basis

- An applicant may submit either a Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, or a written request for consideration of a fee waiver.
- Fee waiver requests should be based on an inability to pay under at least one of the following criteria:
 - Receipt of a means-tested benefit
 - Household income at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
 - Financial hardship

Supporting Documentation

- The applicant may provide proof of his or her inability to pay.
- Decisions will be based on the information provided in the request and supporting documentation.
- Denied requests for fee waiver will be returned to the applicant with an explanation of the denial. Denied requests may be resubmitted with additional information to substantiate the inability to pay.