CYRUS D. MEHTA & PARTNERS PLLC
US IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY LAW

IMMIGRATION UPDATE - MARCH 18, 2024

Posted on March 18, 2024 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

USCIS Implements Streamlined Process to Shorten Wait Times for EADs, SSNs for Refugees – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is implementing a streamlined process to provide Employment Authorization Documents more efficiently to eligible refugees after they are admitted into the United States. USCIS will also electronically provide the Social Security Administration with the information required to assign a Social Security number and mail a Social Security card to the refugee.

USCIS Issues Guidance Clarifying Anti-Discrimination Policy for USCIS Employees and Contractors Interacting With Public – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services clarified its anti-discrimination policy pertaining to USCIS employees and contractors interacting directly or indirectly with members of the public.

E-Verify Updates Tutorial – E-Verify updated its tutorial and knowledge test "to accurately reflect E-Verify's processes, images, branding, and resources, and to provide new and existing users with an improved experience." The tutorial requirement and process has not changed.

Details:

USCIS Implements Streamlined Process to Shorten Wait Times for EADs, SSNs for Refugees

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on March 12, 2024, that it has begun implementing a streamlined process to provide Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) more efficiently to eligible refugees after they are admitted into the United States. The process shortens the wait time for an EAD to approximately 30 days instead of several months,

USCIS said. All individuals admitted into the United States as refugees on or after December 10, 2023, will receive EADs pursuant to this new process.

The new process is fully automated and no longer requires refugees to apply for an EAD. USCIS will digitally create a Form I-765 (EAD) for arriving refugees and begin adjudicating it as soon as they are admitted into the United States. USCIS indicated that after it approves a refugee's Form I-765, refugees "will generally receive their EAD within one to two weeks," although timeframes may vary depending on delivery times. USCIS will mail the EAD via U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail to the refugee's address of record. USCIS asks that refugees allow a total of 30 days before inquiring.

USCIS will also electronically provide the Social Security Administration with the information required to assign a Social Security number and mail a Social Security card to the refugee.

USCIS noted that this process does not apply to following-to join refugees admitted into the United States based on an approved Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition. Additionally, refugees seeking a replacement or renewal EAD will still need to complete and submit Form I-765, USCIS said.

Details:

- USCIS alert (Mar. 12, 2024).

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USCIS Issues Guidance Clarifying Anti-Discrimination Policy for USCIS Employees and Contractors Interacting With Public

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued guidance on March 15, 2024, to further clarify its anti-discrimination policy pertaining to USCIS employees and contractors interacting directly or indirectly with members of the public. The guidance "is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance," USCIS said. The agency noted that its policy is "to treat the public in a nondiscriminatory manner regardless of whether they belong to a class or group specifically protected under federal anti-discrimination laws or other legal authorities." The new policy guidance:

- Clarifies USCIS' anti-discrimination policy, specifically pertaining to USCIS employees interacting directly or indirectly with members of the public.

- Confirms that USCIS provides agency-wide training on its anti-discrimination policy to all its employees and contractors who interact directly or indirectly with members of the public.
- Affirms that USCIS is committed to providing consistent public service in accordance with its mission statement and core values.

Details:

- USCIS Policy Alert, PA-2024-04 (Mar. 15, 2024).

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E-Verify Updates Tutorial

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on March 13, 2024, that E-Verify updated its tutorial and knowledge test "to accurately reflect E-Verify's processes, images, branding, and resources, and to provide new and existing users with an improved experience." The tutorial requirement and process has not changed. USCIS said that new users must complete all lessons and pass the knowledge test with a score of 70% or above to begin using E-Verify. The agency noted:

- Existing users who successfully completed the knowledge test before this update can review the new content but are not required to retake the tutorial. Users may review or retake the tutorial by navigating to the "Take Tutorial" option under the Resources menu in their account.
- Users who were in the process of completing the tutorial but had not yet passed the knowledge test will have their progress reset. These users must start the tutorial over and complete the knowledge test to gain access to their accounts.
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