



IMMIGRATION UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Posted on September 30, 2024 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

USCIS Rejects 'Unusually High Number' of Alien Worker Petitions, Releases Tips – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has had to "reject an unusually high number of Forms I-140 (Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker) at intake because of incorrect fees and missing information." The agency released tips for petitioners.

Work Authorization Procedures Announced for Liberians Covered by DED –U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced procedures for Liberians covered by Deferred Enforced Departure to apply for work permits that will be valid through June 30, 2026.

Fee Exemptions and Expedited Processing Extended for Afghans – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending and expanding some previously announced filing fee exemptions and expedited application processing for certain Afghan nationals.

DHS Designates Qatar for Visa Waiver Program – The Department of Homeland Security has designated Qatar for the Visa Waiver Program, to be implemented December 1, 2024.

SAVE Transaction Charges Increase October 1 – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services reminded Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements users that transaction charges will increase on October 1.

Firm in the News

Details:

[Back to Top](#)

USCIS Rejects 'Unusually High Number' of Alien Worker Petitions, Releases Tips

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said it has had to "reject an unusually high number of Forms I-140 (Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker) at intake because of incorrect fees and missing information" since it published a new form edition and new fees. The agency released [tips for petitioners](#):

- When you file Form I-140, provide a payment with your petition for the full \$600 Asylum Program Fee, unless you qualify for a reduced Asylum Program Fee of either \$300 or \$0. If you do not provide the correct Asylum Program Fee, in addition to the \$715 filing fee, USCIS may reject your filing.
- Also, because your answers in Part 1 of the form to questions 5 and 6 tell USCIS whether you qualify for a reduced fee, they cannot be left blank.
- Provide separate payments for the \$715 filing fee and the Asylum Program Fee, using the *same* type of payment, either check/money order or Form G-1450 to pay with a credit card. Packages filed with more than one type of payment may be rejected.

USCIS provided a [chart](#) with guidance on how to complete questions 5 and 6 in Part 1 and determine the correct payment. USCIS also issued a reminder to check [form editions](#) before filing any forms.

[Back to Top](#)

Work Authorization Procedures Announced for Liberians Covered by DED

On September 23, 2024, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) procedures for Liberians covered by Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to apply for employment authorization documents (EADs) that will be valid through June 30, 2026.

USCIS is automatically extending through that date the validity of DED-related EADs bearing a Category Code of A11 and a Card Expires date of March 30, 2020; January 10, 2021; June 30, 2022; or June 30, 2024. The agency noted that nationals of Liberia, and individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Liberia, do not need to apply for DED and are covered based on the terms described in President Biden's [directive](#).

USCIS noted that the Department of Homeland Security may provide travel authorization at its discretion to those covered under DED for Liberians.

Individuals who wish to travel outside of the United States may file [Form I-131, Application for Travel Document](#). Individuals can also apply for an EAD by filing [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#).

A Federal Register notice at [89 Fed. Reg. 77885 \(Sept. 24, 2024\)](#) provides additional information about DED for Liberia and how eligible individuals may apply for a DED-based EAD or travel authorization.

[Back to Top](#)

Fee Exemptions and Expedited Processing Extended for Afghans

On September 27, 2024, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) that it is extending and expanding some [previously announced](#) filing fee exemptions and expedited application processing for certain Afghan nationals. "This will help Afghan nationals continue to resettle and, in many cases, reunite with family in the United States. It will enable USCIS to more quickly process requests for long-term status, status for immediate relatives, and associated services," the agency said.

Afghan nationals paroled into the United States on or after July 30, 2021, are eligible for the fee exemptions and streamlined processing through the dates listed in the [stakeholder message](#).

[Back to Top](#)

DHS Designates Qatar for Visa Waiver Program

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has designated Qatar for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), to be implemented December 1, 2024. DHS announced the designation via a final rule published at [89 Fed. Reg. 78783 \(Sept. 26, 2024\)](#).

Eligible citizens, nationals, and passport holders from designated VWP countries may apply for admission to the United States at U.S. ports of entry as nonimmigrant noncitizens for a period of 90 days or fewer for business or pleasure without first obtaining a nonimmigrant visa.

[Back to Top](#)

SAVE Transaction Charges Increase October 1

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reminded Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) users that transaction charges will increase

on October 1, 2024.

The federal agency charge will be \$2.25 per case in fiscal year (FY) 2025 (Oct. 1, 2024-Sept. 30, 2025). The non-federal agency charge will be \$1.50 per case in FY 2025 (Oct. 1, 2024-Sept. 30, 2025).

Information regarding the transaction charge increase as well as the phase-in timeline is available at [SAVE Transaction Charges](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Firm in the News

[Cyrus Mehta](#) and [Kaitlyn Box](#) of Cyrus D Mehta & Partners PLLC were invited speakers at a Strafford Webinar entitled *Immigration Law After Loper Bright Decision: Anticipated Agency Impact, Ramification for Attorneys and Clients* on September 26, 2024. The speakers, which also included Danielle Rizzo of Phillips Lytle and Mark Stevens of Clark Hill, discussed the ramifications of the Loper Bright decision on immigration law. Specifically, the speakers explored Loper Bright's impact on the interpretation of immigration statutes and policies and its impact on clients. The recording of the event is available on <https://www.straffordpub.com/products/immigration-law-after-loper-bright-decision-anticipated-agency-impact-ramifications-for-attorneys-and-clients-2024-09-26>

[Back to Top](#)