



# Stakeholder Message

## **USCIS Application Support Centers Updates**

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have experienced delays in scheduling or rescheduling application support center (ASC) appointments to collect biometrics. Current processing times are affected by several variables including demand and capacity at individual ASCs.

The information below may help you understand what to expect with your biometrics appointment.

### **Safely Reopening ASCs**

USCIS temporarily suspended in-person services between March and June to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and ensure employee and applicant safety. As a result, we cancelled approximately 280,000 appointments. USCIS began a phased reopening of our ASCs in July, after we installed protective screens and incorporated proper social distancing measures across 132 sites. Since reopening, there have been sporadic and temporary ASC closures for reasons such as local stay-at-home orders, COVID-19-related cleaning and extreme weather. From July to September, ASCs were operating at below 50 percent of pre-COVID levels. By late October, we increased ASC operations to approximately 65 percent of pre-COVID levels.

### **Current State**

We are working to safely maximize appointment capacity at ASCs and are also reusing previously collected biometrics to conduct background and security checks when authorized by law. Based on capacity limitations unique to each ASC, we have not yet rescheduled all cancelled appointments. USCIS is scheduling approximately 10,400 appointments per day. Approximately 1.3 million applications are awaiting biometrics appointments as of mid-December. Applicants should continue to wait for an ASC appointment notice or a Form I-797, Notice of Action, from USCIS indicating that their previously collected biometrics may be reused.

### **Priority of ASC Appointments**

Biometrics appointments are scheduled based on the prioritization of benefit types, considering adjudication capacity and processing times. Within a benefit type, USCIS generally schedules appointments on a first-in, first-out basis. The wait time for appointments will vary geographically, based on capacity and varying demand at individual ASC locations.

### **Biometrics Reuse**

USCIS is authorized to reuse biometrics under limited circumstances, and usually where we must verify an individual's identity and the case is otherwise ready to adjudicate. If USCIS will reuse biometrics for a pending application, we will mail a Form I-797 notice to



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

the applicant stating that we will be reusing the applicant's biometrics and that the applicant is not required to appear at an ASC. Not all applications meet the requirements for biometrics reuse.

**Walk-ins**

Because of our COVID facility constraints, we cannot process walk-ins for biometrics collection except for military applicants and their family members when the principal applicant is scheduled for an appointment.

Before visiting any USCIS facility, check the [USCIS Office Closings](#) webpage for the current operating status. For more information about USCIS ASCs, visit our [ASC information](#) webpage. Please use our [online tools](#) for help in managing your application and to track the [status of your case](#). If you have questions that are not addressed in your appointment notice, you may connect with the [USCIS Contact Center](#).

Kind regards,

Public Engagement Division