



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Updates Process for Accepting Petitions for Relatives Abroad

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services today announced that, as part of the adjustment of its international footprint to increase efficiencies, [Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative](#), will only be processed domestically by USCIS or internationally by the Department of State in certain circumstances beginning Feb 1, 2020.

DOS will assume responsibility for certain services previously provided at USCIS international offices, services that DOS already provide in countries where USCIS does not have a presence. Eligible active-duty service members assigned overseas will file their Form I-130 locally with DOS, as will certain non-military petitioners who meet specific criteria for consular processing.

“USCIS continues to modernize and become more efficient as an agency,” said USCIS Deputy Director Mark Koumans. “Since the Department of State has a much larger international presence, we have delegated authority to our State partners to accept and adjudicate petitions for immediate relatives abroad in certain circumstances. USCIS continues to expand online filing options, which are available to those filing domestically or those filing from abroad, saving applicants and petitioners time and money.”

Generally, DOS will process Form I-130 locally if the petition falls under blanket authorization criteria, as defined by USCIS:

- Temporary blanket authorizations for instances of prolonged or severe civil strife or a natural disaster; or
- Blanket authorization for U.S. service members assigned to military bases abroad.

In addition to these blanket authorizations, DOS maintains the discretion to accept Form I-130 if a U.S. citizen petitioner meets the “exceptional circumstance” criteria as outlined in the Policy Manual update.

All other petitioners residing overseas must file Form I-130 [online](#) or by mail through the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility for domestic processing.

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