

Teleconference Summary: Updates to USCIS' Applicant Support Services

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On February 14, 2019, the [Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman](#)

(Ombudsman) hosted a teleconference with speakers from [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS) to discuss how the agency is changing the way it provides support services to applicants. USCIS is calling this initiative the [Information Services Modernization Program](#), or InfoMod for short.

On the call, officials from the USCIS External Affairs and Field Operations Directorates described how InfoMod will shift applicant support services from self-scheduled [InfoPass](#) appointments towards support services provided online or through the USCIS Contact Centers. They explained that this change is intended to reserve scarce USCIS resources for applicants whose business must, by its nature, be conducted in person. They further encouraged applicants to use [USCIS online information resources](#), particularly [myUSCIS](#), and to call the [USCIS Contact Center](#) (formerly known as the National

Customer Service Center) for information and access to in-person services. Below are some of the questions the Ombudsman's Office posed to USCIS.

Why did USCIS change the process for obtaining an in-person appointment at a field office?

USCIS officials stated that under the old system they had observed many people scheduling InfoPass appointments for information they could have received by calling the Contact Center or checking the USCIS website. Regulating in-person appointments, they said, gives USCIS field office adjudicators more time to help those who truly need assistance that can only be provided in person, such as issuing emergency documents, providing ADIT stamps, and interviewing individuals. The officials encouraged the public to visit [myUSCIS](#), the "one-stop-shop for immigration services," to obtain information on general immigration services and benefits as well as specific case information.

What is myUSCIS and what does it do?

MyUSCIS is an online public portal with many resources related to immigration benefits. Individuals can file certain immigration applications online through myUSCIS, including to renew a green card ([Form I-90](#)) or apply to become a naturalized U.S. citizen ([Form N-400](#)). When you register for myUSCIS, not only will you receive personalized case status information, such as application notices and requests for evidence (RFEs), but you also can respond to those RFEs through the myUSCIS portal. Before filing [forms](#) online and managing personal case information, you must first create and [sign into a secure online account](#). Applicants with secure online accounts will receive automated case status updates via email and

alerts to their accounts when USCIS has taken action on their cases. USCIS will also send a status notice every 2 weeks even if nothing has happened with their cases.

What if I really need to talk to a person about my immigration question?

While USCIS encouraged the public to access its online services for assistance, they reiterated that individuals always have the option of calling its Contact Center to request an in-person appointment at a local field office. As of February 2019, USCIS has eliminated InfoPass (self-scheduled appointments) at about 30 percent of its local [field offices](#) and plans to phase out that system at the remaining field offices by the end of September 2019. Where InfoPass scheduling is no longer available, applicants may call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time (except on federal holidays) to speak to a USCIS representative. A Contact Center representative at this first level, Tier 1, will determine whether a visit to a local field office is necessary based on information available in USCIS systems and provided by the caller. If the situation meets USCIS' criteria for obtaining an in-person appointment, then the representative will transfer the requestor to the next level of inquiry, Tier 2, where a second representative will call back the applicant in 24 to 48 hours to assist in scheduling a convenient appointment time.

In rolling out InfoMod, USCIS reports that it has reduced the number of in-person appointment requests, easing the amount of work placed on adjudicators, as well as making in-person appointments more readily available for emergency situations.