

CLIENT ALERT

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KEY SEPTEMBER USCIS PROCESS UPDATES

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U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a number of important updates in September of 2021. Four of the most significant updates include COVID-19 vaccination requirements for immigrant medical examination, extension of flexibility for responding to agency requests, lockbox filing location updates, and expansion of USCIS' credit card payment pilot program.

1. COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for Immigration Medical Examination

- On September 14, 2021, USCIS released updated guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual regarding health-related grounds of inadmissibility following updated requirements issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Beginning October 1, 2021, the updated guidance "requires applicants subject to the immigration medical examination to submit COVID-19 vaccination records before completion of immigration medical examinations conducted in the United States and overseas." Please refer to Dickinson Wright's [previous blog](#) on this topic for more details.

2. Extension of Flexibility for Responding to Agency Requests

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, USCIS originally announced on March 30, 2020, that it would offer flexibility for responding to certain agency requests, including Requests for Evidence, Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14), Notices of Intent to Deny, Notices of Intent to Revoke, Notices of Intent to Rescind, Notices of Intent to Terminate regional centers, and Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5. Specifically, USCIS stated that it would consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking any action. USCIS also announced that it would consider a Form N-336 or Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the decision date before taking any action. USCIS' flexibility applies to the above documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice, or decision is between March 1, 2020 and January 15, 2022. The applicable dates were initially from March 1, 2020 to May 1, 2020, inclusive. On May 1, 2020, USCIS extended the time frame from March 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020. Please refer to the [immigration policy tracking link](#) for further details.
- Most recently, on [September 24, 2021](#), USCIS announced that it is extending the flexibilities for response deadlines it posted on March 30, 2020. USCIS' flexibility applies to the above

documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice, or decision is between March 1, 2020 and January 15, 2022.

- In addition, USCIS announced that it will consider a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, or Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA) if: 1) the form was filed up to 60 calendar days from the issuance of a decision; and 2) USCIS made that decision any time between March 1, 2020 and January 15, 2022.

3. Lockbox Filing Location Updates

- USCIS routinely changes filing locations among its lockbox facilities to balance its incoming workload for timely processing. Failure to mail applications or petitions to the appropriate filing location may experience processing delays.
- In order to assist the public in tracking updated lockbox form filing locations, USCIS' website now features a Lockbox Filing Location Updates page (<https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-updates/lockbox-filing-location-updates>). The page provides an up-to-date summary of changes USCIS is making to any lockbox filing location.
- The most current information on where to file an application or petition should also be verified on the "Where to File" section on the USCIS webpage for your form. You can also subscribe to the "Forms Updates" distribution list (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSCIS/subscriber/new>) to receive an email each time USCIS updates a filing location.

4. Expansion of Credit Card Payment Pilot Program

- On July 19, 2021, as part of a USCIS pilot program, the Nebraska Service Center started accepting credit card payments using Form G-1450 for petitioners filing Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers, with Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service, or when filing Form I-907 to upgrade a pending Form I-140 to premium processing.
- On September 16, 2021, USCIS announced that, as part of the credit card payment pilot program, the Texas Service Center is now accepting credit card payments using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions, for petitioners filing Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers, with Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service, or when filing Form I-907 to upgrade a pending Form I-140 to premium processing.
- At the end of the credit card payment pilot program, USCIS will evaluate the results and determine the next steps for expanding this payment option for other forms or service centers. USCIS' stated goal of the pilot program is to accept digital payments using a credit card at all service centers. For

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more information and to access Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/pay-with-a-credit-card>.

The foregoing are only four of the most significant and recent updates from USCIS. For more updates, and to enroll for updates via email, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/updates>. For further responses by USCIS to COVID-19, please refer to: <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-to-covid-19>.

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