



February 14, 2011

HQRAIO 120/9.3a

## Memorandum

TO: Asylum Office Directors  
Asylum Office Deputy Directors

FROM: Joseph E. Langlois /s/  
Chief, Asylum Division

SUBJECT: Procedures for Reviewing and Processing Asylum Office Customer Disability  
Accommodation Requests

### I. Purpose

This memorandum outlines Asylum Division procedures for receiving and processing requests for disability accommodations from qualified customers who are scheduled for an appointment at an asylum office.<sup>1</sup> These procedures are effective February 14, 2011. This memorandum supplements the Affirmative Asylum Procedures Manual (AAPM) draft guidance in section III.B.6 (Disabilities – Physical and Mental).

### II. Background

Currently, asylum customers with disabilities request accommodations for their Asylum Office appointments by contacting the Asylum Office that scheduled the interview. The procedures for responding to accommodation requests differ by Asylum Office. Moreover, Asylum Office procedures for responding to disability accommodation requests differ from the procedures used by other USCIS offices. As a result, USCIS responds to customer requests for disability accommodations inconsistently. To remedy this situation the Asylum Division is bringing its procedures in line with the procedures used by USCIS field offices.

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<sup>1</sup> Asylum Offices will not receive requests for disability accommodations for asylum office customer fingerprint appointments. Those requests will be handled by the USCIS field office that oversees the Applicant Support Center (ASC) that will be collecting the fingerprints.

### **III. Procedures**

The procedures are as follows:

1. Customers call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283 (TTY: 1-800-767-1833) to request an accommodation.
2. Customer service representatives at the NCSC enter requisite information about the accommodation request into the Service Request Management Tool (SRMT) and forward it to the Asylum Office that serves the customer's zip code.<sup>2</sup>
3. The Asylum Office contacts the customer requesting the accommodation and fulfills the SRMT request. The SRMT request must be fulfilled within seven calendar days of the SRMT inquiry being sent to the Asylum Office unless unusual circumstances exist (e.g., the customer cannot be contacted). If such circumstances exist, the Asylum Office will explain the delay in the case notes section of the SRMT inquiry and complete its processing as soon as possible. A service request cannot be fulfilled until at least one response has been sent to the customer.
4. In the event that an Asylum Office customer contacts the Asylum Office directly to request a disability accommodation for an interview, the Asylum Office will open an SRMT request, work with the customer to respond to the request, and mark the request as fulfilled when it is complete so that the request and the response are recorded. If the customer requests an accommodation for a fingerprint appointment then the Asylum Office will create a service request using SRMT.

### **IV. Communication Plan**

The USCIS website and appointment notices will be modified to notify customers who need accommodations to call the NCSC to request them. The Asylum Division also notified asylum stakeholders of the procedural change at the January 25, 2011 Stakeholder Engagement Meeting. Additionally, posters containing information are available from the Western Forms Center upon request.

### **V. Monitoring and Tracking**

As part of the overall commitment of USCIS to ensure customer service, HQASM will receive monthly Service Request Timely Completion reports from the Customer Service Division (CSD), which will be reviewed for timeliness. Asylum Offices must check and respond to SRMT requests on a daily basis.

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the SRMT User Guide and list of Frequently Asked Questions is available on the Asylum Virtual Library (AVL). These documents should be used for training purposes only.

**VI. Contact Information**

Please direct any questions or comments you may have to the HQASM Operations Branch Chief.

cc: Associate Director, Customer Service Directorate