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Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Application Support Center Reschedule Requests and Missed Appointments

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to address procedures related to biometric services appointments at an Application Support Center (ASC).

Background

U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulations govern biometric services appointments, including appearances, requests to reschedule, and failure to appear.¹ These regulations provide that a person scheduled for an ASC appointment may, before the date and time of the appointment, request to reschedule the appointment for good cause.²

USCIS has not previously issued guidance on “good cause” in the context of rescheduling a biometric services appointment and has received feedback from the public requesting that USCIS provide guidance related to good cause determinations.³ USCIS is therefore clarifying its policies and procedures relating to requests to reschedule biometric services appointments for good cause.

The regulations also provide that USCIS considers most benefit requests abandoned and denied if a person fails to appear for a biometric services appointment unless, by the appointment time, USCIS receives notice of a change of address or a request to reschedule the appointment that warrants excusing the failure to appear.⁴ This update also explains how USCIS reviews a benefit request when a person fails to appear for their biometric services appointment.

¹ See [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)\(9\)](#) and [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)\(13\)\(ii\)](#).

² See [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)\(9\)\(ii\)](#).

³ On April 19, 2021, USCIS issued a request for public input in the Federal Register which sought the public’s opinion on how to reduce administrative barriers and burdens that impede access to immigration benefits. See *Identifying Barriers Across U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Benefits and Services; Request for Public Input*, [86 FR 20398](#) (Apr. 19, 2021).

⁴ See [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)\(13\)\(ii\)](#). This regulation does not apply to applicants who have filed an Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal ([Form I-589](#)). See instead [8 CFR 208.10](#) (Failure to comply with fingerprint processing without good cause may result in dismissal of the application. Failure to appear at the fingerprint appointment will be excused if the applicant demonstrates that such failure was the result of exceptional circumstances.). See [8 CFR 208.14\(d\)](#) (No application for asylum or withholding of removal may be subject to denial under [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)](#)).

Occasionally, after a person misses their biometric services appointment, USCIS receives an untimely request to reschedule the missed appointment. While generally, regulations must be followed by an agency and the regulated public, agencies have some latitude to relax procedural rules adopted for the orderly transaction of business if justice so requires under the circumstances.⁵ USCIS is now issuing this Policy Manual update to provide guidance regarding the treatment and rescheduling of missed biometric services appointments in certain circumstances, and clarifies that USCIS may consider whether the benefit request is abandoned when USCIS receives a request to reschedule a biometric services appointment after the appointment has passed. This Policy Manual update ensures uniform guidance, promotes consistent and efficient handling of such requests, and provides transparency.

This guidance, contained in Volume 1 of the Policy Manual, is effective immediately. The guidance contained in the Policy Manual is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance.

Policy Highlights

- Explains that requests to reschedule a biometric services appointment must be made through a [myUSCIS](#) online account or to the [USCIS Contact Center](#).⁶ USCIS does not accept requests to reschedule by mail or in person at a USCIS office.
- Clarifies how USCIS evaluates a timely request to reschedule a biometric services appointment for good cause.
- Explains that USCIS may consider an untimely request to reschedule a biometric services appointment, and the effect of failing to appear for an appointment.

Summary of Changes

Affected Section: Volume 1 > Part C > Chapter 2 > Section A, Application Support Center Appointments

- Changes title of Section A to “Biometric Services Appointments.”
- Revises the first two paragraphs, including footnotes 1 and 2.
- Adds new Subsection 1 (Timely Requests to Reschedule), and new Subsection 2 (Missed Biometric Services Appointments).

USCIS may also make other minor technical, stylistic, and conforming changes consistent with this update.

Citation

Volume 1: General Policies and Procedures, Part C, Biometrics Collection and Security Checks, Chapter 2, Biometrics Collection [[1 USCIS-PM C.2](#)].

⁵ See *American Farm Lines v. Black Ball Freight Services*, 397 U.S. 533, 539 (1970).

⁶ For more information on rescheduling a biometric services appointment, see the [Preparing for Your Biometric Services Appointment](#) webpage.