



September 30, 2013

HQRAIO 120/9.3

Memorandum

TO: All Asylum Office Personnel

FROM: John Lafferty /s/
Chief, Asylum Division

SUBJECT: Issuance of Updated *Affirmative Asylum Procedures Manual*

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the issuance of a revised *Affirmative Asylum Procedures Manual* (AAPM). The revised manual supersedes the version issued in November 2007. This version of the AAPM contains both format and substantive changes.

I. Format Changes

A. From Microsoft Word Document to Wiki Site

The format of the AAPM has changed significantly since its last release in 2007. Instead of a Microsoft Word document, the AAPM is now a SharePoint wiki site on the USCIS Enterprise Collaboration Network (ECN) located at <http://ecn.uscis.dhs.gov/team/raio/Asylum/ASMOPS/AAPMwiki/Pages/home.aspx>. Although the AAPM is a wiki site, it does **not** have the characteristic of being universally editable that is common to many popular wiki sites, such as Wikipedia. The responsibility for updating the AAPM remains with the Headquarters Asylum Operations Branch. The new wiki format will facilitate both major and minor updates to the procedures in the AAPM, reducing the risk of Asylum Office personnel referring to out-of-date procedures. The most current version of the AAPM will be available to Asylum Office personnel on the ECN. The Headquarters Asylum Operations Branch will archive versions of the AAPM on a regular basis.

B. Navigating the AAPM Wiki Site

While the AAPM has changed from a Microsoft Word document to a wiki site, it retains its previous organizational structure.

A Note on Terminology

Within this memorandum, the organizational structure of the AAPM will be referred to in the following way:

- I. Major Section
 - A. Section
 - 1. Sub-section
 - a. Sub-sub-section

The five major sections of the AAPM remain:

- I. [Background Information](#)
- II. [The Affirmative Asylum Application](#)
- III. [Expanded Topics](#)
- IV. [“How To...”](#)
- V. [Appendices](#)

A [Table of Contents](#) that contains links to each section within a major section is available on the AAPM wiki site. Major section **V. Appendices** is now a document library located on the **Table of Contents** that contains each appendix as a separate downloadable file. Most of the appendices are forms or templates, and the new format will allow Asylum Officer personnel to download each appendix separately for ease of use.

Each page of the AAPM wiki site corresponds to a section within one of the first four major sections. Each section page contains a *Navigation Panel* that provides *anchor links* to the sub-sections within the page and *navigation links* to other pages. An *anchor link* is a link that takes a user to a specific location on a page. Some pages contain anchor links not only to sub-sections, but to sub-sub-sections as well. The *navigation links* allow users to return to the Table of Contents or read the section pages of the AAPM in order. Some pages include additional links in the navigation panel, such as section-specific point of contact email addresses. Because some section pages of the AAPM are of substantial length, a “Start of Page” anchor link is provided at the bottom of each page to return users to the navigation panel at the top of the page.

The AAPM contains citations to Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate (RAIO) and Asylum Division lesson plans, the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Code of Federal Regulations, policy memoranda, and other useful resources. These citations are presented as clickable links that send users to the source material. To return to the AAPM, users press the “back” button on their internet browser. Certain sections of the AAPM also cite other sections of the AAPM. In these cases, anchor links have been provided to direct users to the precise sub-section of the AAPM that is cited. Citations to appendices of the AAPM are linked to the specific appendix as a downloadable document.

C. Searching the AAPM

The AAPM can be searched using the built-in search function of the ECN from either the search bar on the AAPM home page, or by using the ECN search bar in the top-right of the ECN page. Please note that users must select “This Site:AAPMwiki” in the Search Scope selector if using the ECN search bar in the top-right.

II.G. Asylum Office Schedules Interview

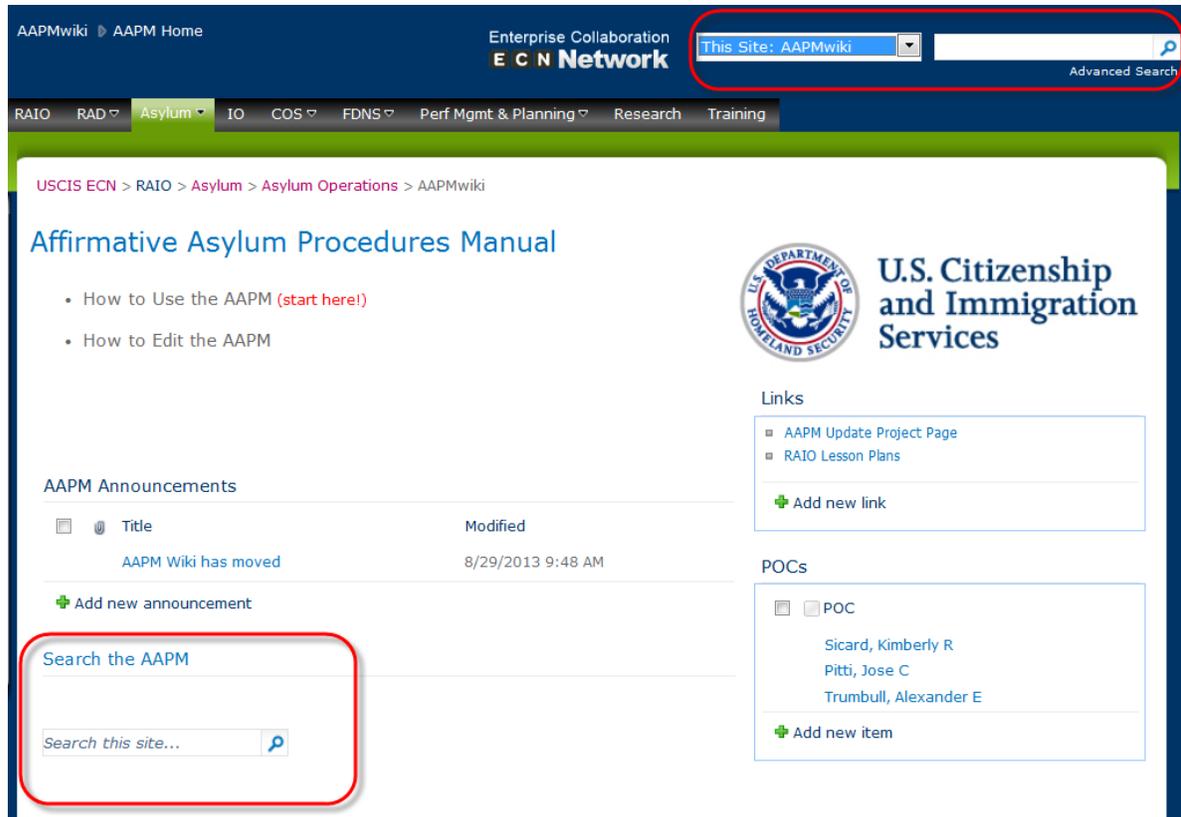
1. [Asylum Office Creates an Interview Calendar in RAPS](#)
2. [Cases are Selected for Interview Scheduling](#)
3. [Asylum Office Generates and Mails Interview Notice](#)

Navigation

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[Previous: II.F. Asylum Office Receives A-File](#)

[Next: II.H. Asylum Office Pulls Files for Interview](#)



The search results will include section pages and appendices that contain the searched keyword(s). Users can search within a section page by pressing “Ctrl+F” on their keyboard to trigger their internet browser’s “find” (search) function.

D. Printing the AAPM

The ECN does not translate well to printing. To solve this issue, a *Print Version* link has been added to each section page of the AAPM. The *Print Version* link creates a pop-up window with a printer-friendly view and triggers a print command from the user’s internet browser. If the print command is not automatically triggered, users can print from the pop-up window by right-clicking and selecting “Print” or pressing “Ctrl+P” on their keyboard. Users wishing to print the entire AAPM can go to the “Single-Page View” on the ECN Quicklaunch to view the content of the entire AAPM without navigation features. The *Print Version* link on the “Single-Page View” works similarly to the *Print Version* links on the section pages but will not automatically trigger a print command on the user’s internet browser. Although printing is facilitated by the new format, Asylum Office personnel are encouraged to always check the ECN version of the AAPM to ensure that they are using the most current procedures.



E. Keeping Track of Substantive Changes

The AAPM is undergoing its most significant substantive revision since 2007. To ensure that Asylum Office personnel are aware of which sections have received (or will be receiving) substantive updates, a tracking chart has been added to the beginning of each section page.

Note: The “Sections” on the tracking chart refer to sub-sections of each section page.

II.J. AO Conducts an Asylum Interview

Reviewed, No Substantive Changes since 2007	Will be Updated, Changes Pending Review	Finalized Updates
Sections: 1, 10, 12, 13, 14	Sections: 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, +(New Sections to be added)	Sections: 8, 11

- The first category (green) lists sub-sections that will not be receiving substantive changes. Asylum Office personnel should be aware that these sub-sections may receive minor changes such as updated terminology, citations, or references.
- The second category (orange) lists sub-sections that will be receiving substantive changes. Those changes are in the process of being drafted or receiving review by either Headquarters Asylum or the USCIS Office of Chief Counsel (OCC).
- The third category (blue) lists sub-sections that received substantive changes and have cleared the review process. These sections incorporate new substantive procedural guidance conveyed previously through memo issuance or other communication. Asylum Office personnel should carefully survey these updated sections and follow the new guidance.

F. Tutorial

Asylum Office personnel seeking visual, step-by-step guidance on how to use the AAPM wiki site should refer to the [How to Use the AAPM](#) page on the AAPM wiki site.

II. Substantive Changes

The following is a description of the major changes to the AAPM thus far, as incorporated in the new version and listed by relevant section in order of appearance in the manual:¹

- Section II.J.8, Retention of Applicant’s Original Documents in the File: Incorporates November 2007 OCC guidance that Asylum Officers do not need to obtain an applicant’s permission to retain a fraudulent document or a document that was fraudulently obtained.
- Section II.J.11, Conducting an Interview in a Language Other Than English: Adds guidance on how Asylum Office personnel can become certified by the Department of State Foreign Service Institute to conduct an interview in a foreign language.
- Section II.M.2, The RAIO Research Unit: Includes a current description of the unit.
- Section II.M.8, INTERPOL: Includes guidance on the role that FDNS IOs play in interacting with INTERPOL.
- Section II.M.9, Federal Law Enforcement Agencies: Includes guidance on the role that FDNS IOs play in interacting with Federal Law Enforcement Agencies.
- Section III.B.1, Children Filing as Principal Asylum Applicants: Incorporates procedural guidance issued previously through memos in March 2009 when the asylum office implemented new procedures pursuant to the TVPRA and updated guidance on those procedures issued June 10, 2012.

¹ While this list will help Asylum Office personnel identify sections that underwent more significant changes since the issuance of the November 2007 AAPM, not every change is noted on this list. Therefore, Asylum Office personnel must review the sections relevant to their responsibilities to ensure that they are following the most recent guidance.

- Section III.B.13, LGBT Issues: Expands upon and updates the former AAPM section on transgendered asylum applicants and includes guidance on recognizing same sex marriages for immigration purposes as well as issuing documents to transgendered individuals.
- Section III.S.1, Reinstatement of a Prior Order: Clarifies the relationship between asylum applicants and the reinstatement of a prior deportation, exclusion, or removal order.

With its new format the AAPM will be a living document and will continue to undergo revisions on a rolling basis. Future changes will be posted to the AAPM wiki site with notifications to Asylum Office personnel. The AAPM will continue to be available to the public on uscis.gov in PDF format and will be updated in that format as necessary.

Suggestions and questions concerning this manual should be addressed to Kimberly Sicard at kimberly.r.sicard@uscis.dhs.gov.