



January 7, 2025

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Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Customer Contact Options for Certain Asylum-Related and Other Protected Populations

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is updating policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to clarify customer service options available to certain noncitizens whose applications or processes are subject to confidentiality protections. Such noncitizens include applicants of the Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal ([Form I-589](#)); applicants of the Application for Suspension of Deportation or Special Rule Cancellation of Removal (Pursuant to Section 203 of Public Law 105-100 (NACARA)) ([Form I-881](#)); and noncitizens in the credible fear, reasonable fear, and Safe Third Country Agreement screening processes.

Background

Federal regulations generally prohibit the disclosure to third parties of information contained in or pertaining to applications for asylum, credible fear determinations, and reasonable fear determinations.¹ As a matter of policy, USCIS extends the confidentiality protections in these regulations to those applying for suspension of deportation or special rule cancellation of removal under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA)² using Form I-881. USCIS personnel, including USCIS Contact Center personnel, must follow specific procedures to ensure confidentiality is maintained when a Form I-589 or Form I-881 applicant or a noncitizen in the credible fear, reasonable fear, or Safe Third Country Agreement screening process seeks assistance.

USCIS is updating guidance in the Policy Manual to clarify the customer service options available to Form I-589 and Form I-881 applicants and noncitizens in the credible fear, reasonable fear, and Safe Third Country Agreement screening processes and their representatives, as well as to clarify the specific procedures that USCIS Contact Center personnel must follow to adhere to confidentiality

¹ See [8 CFR 208.6](#). The provisions of 8 CFR 208.6 currently applicable are those of the regulation as it existed prior to changes made by the rule titled Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal; Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear Review, [85 FR 80274](#) (Dec. 11, 2020) (final rule amending 8 CFR parts 208, 235, 1003, 1208, 1235, also called the “Global Asylum Rule”). The Global Asylum Rule, which made significant changes to 8 CFR 208.6, was to go into effect on January 11, 2021. However, it was enjoined on January 8, 2021, in *Pangea Legal Services v. Department of Homeland Security*, 512 F. Supp. 3d 966 (N.D. Cal. 2021) (order granting preliminary injunction). The previous version of 8 CFR 208.6 remains in effect and can be viewed on the USCIS [Fact Sheet: Federal Regulation Protecting the Confidentiality of Asylum Applicants](#).

² See Title II of [Pub. L. 105-100](#), 111 Stat. 2160, 2193 (November 19, 1997).

protections. This guidance, contained in Volume 1 of the Policy Manual, is effective immediately and applies to requests pending or filed on or after the publication date. The guidance contained in the Policy Manual is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance.

Policy Highlights

- Clarifies that USCIS Contact Center personnel may respond to inquiries regarding Form I-589 and Form I-881 applications and protection screenings after enhanced identity and authorization verification is completed.
- Explains that USCIS Contact Center personnel may also direct requestors to other resources, such as [USCIS online accounts](#) or the [Case Status Online](#) tool (only for inquiries related to Form I-589), the [Asylum Office Locator](#) tool, or other USCIS webpages, where appropriate.

Summary of Changes

Affected Section: Volume 1 > Part A > Chapter 7 > Section F > Subsection 3, USCIS Assistance

- Revises content under italicized subheading “Change of Address Request” throughout.
- Revises title of italicized subheading “USCIS Contact Center Status Inquiries for Form I-589 and Form I-881” to “Case Status Inquiries for Form I-589, Form I-881, and Screening Interviews” and revises content under subheading throughout.
- Revises content under italicized subheading “Inquiries Regarding Subsequent Applications or Petitions Based on Underlying Form I-589, Form I-590, or Form I-730” throughout.

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

Citation

Volume 1: General Policies and Procedures, Part A, Public Services, Chapter 7, Privacy and Confidentiality [[1 USCIS-PM A.7](#)].