

Engagement Read-Out City and County Call (C3) Conference Call July 23, 2019

On Tuesday, July 23, 2019, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLIA) Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) Division hosted a webinar for city and county representatives in the United States. During this webinar, USCIS Verification Division representatives provided information on the E-Verify and the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) programs.

Of the 308 individuals that registered to attend, 171 representatives from the various cities and counties joined the webinar.

No live questions were asked from representatives during the webinar, but responses were provided to two non-case-specific, pre-submitted questions.

The first question came from Penny Boyd, Office of Newcomer Services, Virginia State Refugee Coordinator's Office.

Question #1:

Some alien/immigrant status are eligible for benefit programs (TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid) immediately upon receiving that status (for example asylees or victims of human trafficking). Benefit Program rules require a SAVE verification; for some refugee-eligible populations (i.e. asylees, victims of human trafficking), they may not yet be in the SAVE system. Please review the steps needed when a person has a benefit programs 'eligible' status, but is not in SAVE. For listeners who draft guidance documents please provide a reference to where training materials can be accessed.

Response provided by SAVE:

SAVE is not the system of record for immigration status records. Instead, SAVE checks the information provided by a benefit applicant to a SAVE user agency against government source systems where immigration status records reside. If SAVE is not automatically able to verify a benefit applicant's immigration status, it instructs the SAVE user agency to initiate additional verification. When the agency does so, that sends the case to an immigration status verifier who performs additional checks of records available to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and provides a response to the agency through the SAVE system. If SAVE cannot verify a benefit applicant's immigration status, then the benefit applicant may correct or update their immigration record with DHS by following the instructions on the Records: Fast Facts for Benefit Applicants resource.

The second question came from Susan Anderson, Refugee Stabilization Coordinator, Colorado Refugee Services Program, Colorado Department of Human Services.

Question #2:

We have noticed an increased number of Cubans being released from ICE detention with the form I-220A (Order of Release of Recognizance). It is my understanding that a Cuban with an I-220A is designated as Cuban Entrant and therefore considered a qualified immigrant (exempt from the 5-year bar) for public assistance.

When a county or state worker attempts to verify a Cuban National with this I-220A document in SAVE, even though the 3rd step of verification with uploaded scanned copies of documents, responses come back stating either they either have no immigration status, to submit updated documents (which they don't have), or they can't be found in SAVE.

Verification in SAVE is needed in order for public benefit cases (SNAP, TANF, MA) to be approved. What can be done in these situations to verify these clients in SAVE so they can receive needed public benefits?

Response provided by SAVE:

An Order of Release on Recognizance (Form I-220A) (OREC) does not confer any immigration status to the individual. Cuban and Haitian Entrants, as defined under the Refugee Education Assistance Act, include, among other things, Cuban or Haitian nationals who are in removal proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act and who are not subject to a final, non-appealable removal order. Accordingly, an agency providing a Form I-220A to SAVE for verification could receive a “Cuban Haitian Entrant” response if SAVE can also confirm that the individual has been placed into removal proceedings (i.e., the Notice to Appear was filed with the immigration court) and is not subject to a final order of removal. In some cases, SAVE cannot immediately verify Cuban Haitian Entrant information. Also, agencies must remember to specifically request Cuban Haitian Entrant information in order to receive that information in the SAVE response.