



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Fact Sheet

April 8, 2004

CIRCUIT RIDE LOCATION CHANGED FOR THE CHICAGO AND HOUSTON ASYLUM OFFICES

Background

The interview locations for some applicants for asylum and section 203 of the Nicaragua Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA 203) who reside within the jurisdiction of the Chicago and Houston Asylum Office will change effective May 3, 2004.

An announcement was published Friday, April 2, 2004 in the *Federal Register*. Each asylum and NACARA 203 applicant affected by these changes in interview locations will be notified of the change by mail when they receive their notices for interview. Interviews already scheduled to take place will not be affected by these changes.

Who is Affected By the Changes?

Houston Asylum Office

- All asylum and NACARA 203 applicants who reside within the jurisdiction of the USCIS District Office in Harlingen, Texas, will have their asylum and/or NACARA 203 interviews conducted at the Houston Asylum Office at 16630 Imperial Valley Drive, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77060.
- All asylum and NACARA 203 applicants who reside within the jurisdiction of the USCIS District Office in New Orleans, Louisiana, except residents of Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi (who currently interview in Memphis, Tennessee) will have their asylum and/or NACARA 203 interviews conducted at the Houston Asylum Office.

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Chicago Asylum Office

- All asylum and NACARA 203 applicants who reside within the state of Ohio zip code areas 43000-43399 (the Columbus zip code area), 43400-43699 (the Toledo zip code area), 44800-44999 (the Mansfield zip code area), 45000-45299 (the Cincinnati zip code area), 45300-45599 (the Dayton zip code area), 45600-45699 (the Chillicothe zip code area), 45800-45899 (the Lima zip code area), and the State of Indiana zip code areas 47000-47099 will have their interviews conducted in the Chicago Asylum Office at 401 South LaSalle Street, 8th Floor, Chicago, IL, 60605.
- All asylum and NACARA 203 applicants who reside within the state of Ohio zip code areas 43700-43899 (the Zanesville zip code area) and 45700-45799 (the Athens zip code area) will have their interviews conducted at the USCIS District Office in Cleveland, Ohio at 1240 East Ninth Street, Cleveland, OH 44199.
- All asylum and NACARA 203 applicants who reside in the state of Kentucky zip code areas 40000-40299 (the Louisville zip code area) and 41000-41099 (the Cincinnati zip code area) will have their interviews conducted in the Chicago Asylum Office.

Why Are These Changes Being Made?

These changes are being implemented to enhance the Asylum Division's efficiency and ability to timely process a greater number of asylum and NACARA 203 cases. Conducting interviews at local asylum offices is a more efficient use of government resources, than having asylum officers travel to distant locations to conduct interviews – particularly when it comes to interview locations where there are a relatively small number of applicants. Making the above-noted changes in interview locations will enable the Chicago and Houston Asylum Offices to conduct more interviews in a shorter period of time.

How Many People Will Be Affected by These Changes?

A relatively small number of individuals will be affected by these changes. Currently, there are just over 2,000 individuals awaiting asylum and/or NACARA 203 interviews at the circuit ride locations that are being eliminated. These individuals will now be required to travel a greater distance to have their interviews, but their applications will be decided more timely. Annually, we expect this change will affect no more than 2,000 new applicants.

How Will the changes Affect Asylum and NACARA 203 Applicants?

Nationally, most of the existing circuit ride locations will be unchanged, and Asylum Officers will

continue to circuit ride to the majority of existing circuit ride locations. In making the determination to eliminate or consolidate certain circuit ride locations, USCIS carefully considered the additional burden the changes will make to some asylum seekers and NACARA 203 applicants who will be required to travel greater distances for their asylum interviews. However, USCIS determined that the benefit of more timely adjudications for a larger number of asylum seekers outweighs the burden certain asylum seekers may experience in traveling a greater distance to their interviews. While some asylum and NACARA 203 applicants will now be required to travel further for their interviews, they will benefit by having their applications decided much sooner. While they will be required to travel for their interviews, they will generally not be required to return to the interview location to pick-up their decisions. Their decisions will instead be mailed to them.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.