

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
7/16/2020

1. Welcome & Introductions – Immigrant Services Team

- a. Thank you to all for joining us on Zoom. The Immigrant Forum will be held virtually until further notice.

2. USCIS Updates: Nina Sachdev, Community Relations Officer

Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov

- a. Interviews and oath ceremonies have re-started since mid-June
 - Appointments are automatically rescheduled in the order they were canceled, so the ones canceled on March 17 when USCIS closed to the public have been scheduled first
- b. All the people who had oath ceremonies canceled after USCIS closed to the public were rescheduled in June and completed
 - USCIS continues to schedule oath ceremonies or conduct same-day oaths for people who pass their naturalization interview
- c. Application Support Centers where biometrics are taken are opening this month
 - San Jose and Oakland opened
 - San Francisco and Sacramento plan to open July 20
 - Santa Rosa, Salinas and Fresno plan to open July 27
- d. USCIS does not have the budget to pay all its employees without congressional funding
 - If a bill is not passed to fund USCIS this month, 70% of employees will be furloughed (no work and no pay) on August 3. The processing of immigration applications and petitions filed with USCIS will be affected
 - Some congress members have talked about USCIS being funded in the next COVID-19 relief package bill
 - Two congress members have also put forth a bill in the House of Representatives for USCIS funding – [HR 7508 - To provide supplemental appropriations to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and for other purposes.](#)
- e. If anyone has questions, contact Nina Sachdev at Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov

3. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Supervising Attorney at ILRC

akamhi@ilrc.org

- a. Trump administration rescinds rule on foreign students
 - On July 6th, ICE announced a rule that would have required international students to transfer or leave the county if their schools held classes entirely online because of the Coronavirus Pandemic
 - CA has highest number of foreign students (UC System)
 - On July 14th, the policy was reversed

- This is a major victory that highlights the power of public outcry
- b. DACA Decision
 - There is still no clear guidance for new DACA applicants
 - Many new applications have been rejected, with fees being refunded
 - Submitting a new DACA application depends on individual circumstances and risk for appetite – though there are strong arguments to file right now since it’s “lawful”
 - DACA renewals are still being processed quickly
 - There are rumors of another DACA rescission coming out
 - Q/A: Is there a time limit that the Trump Administration must respond? It is unclear, there may be more litigation
- c. Asylum
 - End of comment period for proposed asylum rules was 7/15
 - There was a tremendous effort of comments posted; will wait to see what the official response is
- d. USCIS Policy Manual
 - The USCIS Policy Manual is the agency’s centralized online repository for USCIS’ immigration policies
 - Policy alert – Applying Discretion in USCIS Adjudications: Discretionary info is included in the Policy Manual on work authorizations, which would change the ability for people to work and affect people that have work permits
 - The comment period is open until August 14th
<https://www.uscis.gov/outreach/feedback-opportunities/policy-manual-for-comment>
- e. Dignity Not Detention
 - Court halted new construction of immigration center in McFarland, CA
 - This proves the CA state law is robust, which bars the state from signing or renewing contracts with private prison companies (criminal or immigration)
- f. Q/A
 - Q: Given COVID-19, are children being released with families from detention centers?
 A: The Government hasn’t officially announced anything, stay tuned for updates
 *Update: A federal judge in California extended the deadline she first imposed that mandated the release of immigrant children detained with their parents in ICE family detention centers from July 17th to July 27th

4. Office of Community Affairs Updates

- a. 2010 SMC Census response rate (73.2%) has been reached for 2020 Census! There are still 3 months left to go – until 10/31/2020 – to continue increasing this percentage

- b. Our office has a new COVID monthly print and e-Newsletter: Please subscribe to e-Newsletter on our resource page – <https://cmo.smcgov.org/covid-19-resources>. Print newsletters are being sent out to NFO.
- c. Our Legal Aid Affirmative and Defense Removal Contracts have been extended
- d. The San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund is live: <https://missionassetfund.org/immigrant-families-grant-sm/>

5. Agency Update Roundtable

- a. **Multicultural Institute:** Virtual outreach daily. Helping people apply for San Mateo County Immigrant Relief Fund and helping people create emails for the application
 - Experience thus far: A pre-application was submitted July 2nd, heard back from Mission Asset Fund on July 15th. A valid photo ID is necessary (can not be expired). Person can elect to receive money by checking account or by mail (mail can take 14 days). Document or video on how person was affected by COVID-19 and why they need assistance is part of application process
- b. **Fair Oaks Community Center:** COVID-19 Relief Fund for Second Time Assistance is open. Phone number to apply is (650)780-7500
- c. **IIBA:** Call 650-780-7530 to schedule a phone appointment for immigration legal consultations. Citizenship classes right now are virtual
- d. **Latino Collaborative:** New Race & COVID-19 Town Hall coming in August
- e. **Red Cross:** Continues to help partners at U.S. border
- f. **Primary School:** Continues to work with parents of students
- g. **Puente:** Puente COVID fund – for all who didn't qualify for economic help. Food distribution will continue until end of July – survey being conducted wanting public input to continue program for August. Yearly backpack distribution is being planned