
Immigration Law Update

By Michael P. Nowlan, James E. Morrison / Sep 27, 2017

Premium Processing Returns for Some Categories of Applicants Seeking H-1B Status

Premium processing provides that the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services ("USCIS") will process a petition within 15 days, for an additional \$1,225 application fee. Earlier this year, USCIS announced it would not be accepting premium processing requests for all H-1B petitions. However, on June 26, 2017, USCIS resumed premium processing H-1B petitions filed on behalf of physicians under the Conrad 30 waiver program and on September 18, 2017, USCIS resumed premium processing for all initial H-1B cap subject petitions. Premium processing remains temporarily suspended for all other H-1B petitions, including change of employer and extensions of stay. For more regarding the H-1B status, please see our [website](#).

USCIS to Significantly Expand Adjustment of Status Interview Requirements

USCIS is now requiring an in-person interview for applicants who are applying for adjustment of status ("AOS") based on an employment-based application. Implementation of this change is immediate. While USCIS has long had the authority to require interviews, the agency has waived the need for an in-person interview in the employment-based categories for many years. Clark Hill believes this affects roughly 120,000 applications per year, and the 85 plus USCIS District Offices in the U.S. Accordingly, processing times are expected to increase for employment-based green card applicants. Immigration will notify applicants once their case is scheduled for an interview.

Department of State Notice to Register for the 2019 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program

The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (the "DV Program") provides for a class of immigrants ("diversity immigrants") from countries with historically low rates of immigration to the U.S. This is also referred to as the green card lottery. The DV Program makes 50,000 diversity visas ("DV") available through a free lottery, pending the applicants meet the (1) nationality and (2) education/work experience requirements. Interested applicants must apply electronically at dvlottery.state.gov between noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4) Tuesday, October 3, 2017, and noon Eastern Standard Time (EST) (GMT-5), Tuesday, November 7, 2017. Please find the instructions [here](#).

U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Russia Reduce Visa Operations in Russia

On August 23, 2017, all nonimmigrant visa (NIV) operations across Russia were suspended. NIV interviews resumed on September 1, 2017 and are now only conducted at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Until further notice, NIV interviews have been suspended at the U.S. Consulates in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, and Vladivostok. Processing times for NIV interviews at the U.S. Embassy in Russia are expected to increase.

For more information on these and other immigration concerns, please contact James E. Morrison at (202) 572-8670 | jmorrison@clarkhill.com, Michael P. Nowlan at (313) 965-8666 | mnowlan@clarkhill.com, or another member of Clark Hill's Immigration Practice Group.