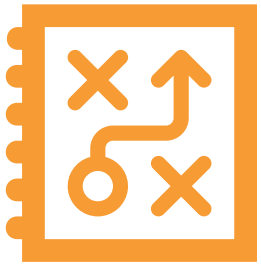




## Guide



# What To Do When Your USCIS Filing Is Stuck or Delayed



## Purpose

This guide provides ways to seek help with moving your case forward if you experience a long delay or have other problems with an immigration application. Specifically, this guide covers:

- How to check case status and processing times
- New changes to automatic employment authorization document (EAD) extensions for people experiencing EAD processing delays
- When you can seek assistance or expediting
- How to contact USCIS for assistance
- How to request outside help from Congress or the Ombudsman

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- Preparing a complete filing with all requested evidence, signatures, and fee payment as early as permitted will give you the best chance for a timely adjudication. **See our tips on preparing the best filing you can and keeping records organized in case you need help.**
- USCIS has a backlog of incomplete work on many types of immigration applications. Unfortunately, applicants for various immigration benefits, including employment authorization documents (EADs), can experience long [processing times](#). **Some applicants may wait many months or years for USCIS to decide on a case.**
- Slow processing can understandably cause applicants difficulties and stress. However, **extensive wait times are unfortunately common** in the US immigration system, and there are relatively few ways to address such issues.
- Typically, USCIS will only take action on a case that is proceeding slowly if it:
  - is taking longer than published [processing times](#)
  - has some other issue that cannot be resolved normally
  - meets [current standards for expediting](#) and USCIS grants an expedite request
- If you filed your application in a timely way and will experience significant hardships without a prompt decision, you may request expediting. [See here.](#)
- Please note that USCIS does not currently permit expediting requests 1) for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) or 2) if applicants could pay an additional fee for [premium processing](#) to expedite their type of case. Visit USCIS to see [what forms currently allow premium processing](#).

## Tips on Filing and Documentation

Prevent and prepare for delays when you can. These tips can help ensure that you have the right documents if you need to seek help for a problem or a long wait time. It will be important to be able to provide detailed information on your attempts to contact USCIS, including dates and methods of outreach, should you need to follow up for case assistance or [contact the Ombudsman](#)

- **File your application as early as you are permitted to do so** and pay the proper fee by personal check for best tracking.
- **Keep a copy of your entire application**, so you have a record of what was submitted.
- **Respond promptly to USCIS requests** for evidence or information.
- **[Update your address if you move](#)** to receive all USCIS notifications and documents to your correct address.
- **Save all USCIS documents and communications in a safe place** for easy reference. **Document all calls, inquiries, or other interactions with USCIS.** When communicating with USCIS by phone, email, chat, etc., write down the tracking number and date for future reference.
- You can find guides to specific humanitarian filings on [Amazon's Welcome Door site](#).

If your case is stuck, you **should try to resolve any issues with USCIS first before seeking outside help.**

- Many people have experienced significant processing delays when applying for initial or renewal Employment Authorization Document (EAD) using the [Form I-765](#). (See [Amazon's EAD Guide here](#) for more information.)
  - In some cases, people have lost their jobs and work authorization because USCIS was not able to process renewal applications before work authorization expired through no fault of the applicant.
  - Despite widespread delays, there were few channels to seek help, especially if the slow processing times were the only problem applicants were experiencing.
- Fortunately, [USCIS' Temporary Final Rule \(TFR\)](#) **increased the automatic extension period for people waiting for EAD renewals** processing for several categories. Please note that DACA and STEM OPT categories are not eligible for an extension at this time.

## EAD Auto-Extension

- Applicants qualify for an auto-extension of **up to** 540 days from their EADs' expiration if they:
  - **filed to renew on time** (before their EAD expired)
  - Are **eligible to renew under the same category** as their current EAD and that [category qualifies according to the USCIS table](#).
- Certain categories, including A17, A18, and C26 (spouses of Es, L-1s, and H-1Bs respectively), are subject to additional requirements related to their unexpired I-94 record. (See [the description in the table for your eligibility category](#) to view additional requirements.)
- To benefit from the increased extension, applicants' timely filed renewal must have been pending as of May 4, 2022, or filed between May 4, 2022, and October 2023. People whose automatic 180-day extension may have lapsed are also eligible if they meet the criteria.
- If your EAD is nearing its expiration or has expired due to slow processing times, check if you qualify for this extension and for how long you may work under this temporary rule. You may need to show proof to your employer to confirm your eligibility. [See "Proof of an Automatic Extension" here](#). **If your EAD renewal is the only delay you are experiencing, you may not need the rest of this guide.**


You can find your category listed on your EAD, on your receipt notice under class, or in your answer to question #27 on page 3 of the I-765 you submitted.

# Potential Steps to Resolving a Filing's Problems

There is no single way or order of steps that will guarantee the promptest possible resolution to any USCIS filing issues you may experience. Sometimes the order of steps may vary depending on unique features of your case. Sometimes [having a lawyer may be helpful](#) to try to address case difficulties.

The following is a sample order of steps you can take to try to resolve issues with a USCIS filing.

Steps 1-4 are  
**USCIS**  
inquiries made  
directly or  
through its  
USCIS online  
tools.

- 1 Check case status and processing times.  **Always start here!**
- 2 Request an expedite if you qualify.
- 3 Make an eRequest on the USCIS website when case is outside of published processing times or if your issue involves a missing USCIS notice or document.
- 4 Call the USCIS Contact Center to try to resolve or contact USCIS another way.

- 5 File a Congressional inquiry.
- 6 Submit a request to the Office of the CIS Ombudsman using a DHS Form 7001.

Steps 5 and 6 are  
**Outside** of USCIS.

Take these steps only when you have tried 2-3 ways to resolve an issue directly with USCIS and your situation may qualify for such relief.

Usually, a case must be delayed to seek action. To understand the [USCIS case processing times](#) for your specific application, use the USCIS receipt to identify key information about your filing and check standard processing times.

Sample Receipt

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Form I-797C, Notice of Action

THIS NOTICE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A FINAL DETERMINATION OF STATUS OR BENEFIT

NOTICE TYPE Receipt		NOTICE DATE August 28, 2021
CASE TYPE I-765, Application for Employment Authorization		USCIS ALIEN NUMBER A123456789
RECEIPT NUMBER IOE01234567890	RECEIVED DATE August 25, 2021	PAGE 1 of 1
APPLICANT INFORMATION:		DATE OF BIRTH November 12, 2020
Applicant Name Address		on/Petition Fee: \$0.00 s Fee: \$85.00 ount Received: \$85.00 ance Due: \$0.00
FILING ADDRESS		
Eligibility Category: C08		

USCIS Office Address:  
USCIS  
Potomac Service Center  
2200 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, VA 22202

USCIS location processing your case

Visit the [USCIS Case Processing Page](#). Select the form and location from the drop downs.

Form

I-765 | Application for Employment Authorization

Field Office or Service Center

Potomac Service Center

Get processing time

Click here.

You will see a [table showing the estimated time range by category/type and the receipt date for inquiry](#) as shown.

Estimated time range	Form type	Receipt date for a case inquiry
1.5 Months to 3 Months	Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]	January 17, 2022
10.5 Months to 12 Months	Based on a pending asylum application [(c)(8)]	April 22, 2021
5.5 Months to 9 Months	All other applications for employment authorization	July 21, 2021

You can submit an **“outside normal processing time” service request online** for your filing only when the received date listed on your receipt is before the **“Receipt date for a case inquiry”** listed in the table. [Visit this link for more.](#)

In this example, the application is **within standard processing** times, so the applicant **cannot call or file an eRequest to prompt USCIS action yet**. But the **applicant may be able to request an expedite** under certain circumstances.

- In some limited cases, **you may be able to request that USCIS decide on your application faster than normal** if you are experiencing hardship or have particularly urgent circumstances.
- According to [USCIS](#), expedites may be granted in cases where the requestor can show at least one of the following compelling factors:
  - **Severe financial loss to a company or a person, including the danger of job loss**
  - **Emergencies or urgent humanitarian reasons** related to human welfare
  - **Work in a healthcare or childcare field** with an EAD expiration within 30 days or already expired
  - Connection to **furthering certain US government, cultural, or social interests**
  - Clear **USCIS error** (See [here](#) for details on USCIS' specifically-defined administrative errors.)
- USCIS considers expedite requests on a case-by-case basis and does not have to grant or justify its decision on an expedite request, even if the request meets the criteria. Expediting is usually not possible on applications where [premium processing is available](#).
- Additionally, USCIS will not take urgent action if the need for expediting is based on a filing error or failure to respond to USCIS requests for evidence. Visit the relevant [USCIS Policy Manual webpage](#) for more details.
- **An expedite approval or denial does not affect how USCIS will actually decide the case.** When USCIS grants an expedite request, USCIS will simply process and decide on the requestor's application before other individuals who filed before the requestor.

**You need a receipt number to request an expedite.** If you are missing a notice or receipt, you can request a new copy through USCIS' [Case Inquiry link](#).

Check if you qualify for an EAD auto-extension [here](#).

## How to Request an Expedite



**Call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283** (TTY 800-767-1833). View this [tip sheet](#) on making phone communication with USCIS more effective.



**Request by chat through USCIS' Ask Emma.** Click the icon or type "Ask Emma" into the USCIS search bar. Then type "request an expedite" in the chat window and follow the prompts to connect with a Live Chat representative.

- If you determine your case is outside of the published processing times, **you must try to work with USCIS to fix any issues** before you seek outside help.
- It is important to **document all interactions and referral numbers carefully in case you need to escalate the case** and seek outside help in the future.

**You may be able to resolve an issue with USCIS by making an online case inquiry or e-Request.**

**You will  
need your:**



**Receipt number**



**A-number**



**Filing date**



**Form number**

(and filing or eligibility category if applicable)



You can also use the [Case Inquiry link](#) to make service requests related to lost or missing documents.

- For example, if inquiring about an employment authorization document, you would enter Form I-765 as the form and enter the eligibility category from page 3 question 27 as the form sub type depending on your current status and the basis on which you are eligible for a work permit.
- **Complete and submit the [USCIS e-Request online form](#) with the required information.**
  - Enter your name as it is listed on your passport (or similar official identity document). Provide your birthdate in month/day/year order.
  - In the “Last Action Taken on Case” section, copy and paste the last status update from the [case status page](#) or describe any subsequent case actions, including visits or calls relevant to your pending application.
  - Enter your email address to receive the confirmation. It is important to track all USCIS correspondence, including reference numbers in case you need more help!
  - In the “Filed By” section, select applicant or petitioner if you are submitting the inquiry yourself.
- You will receive an email and/or letter by mail indicating the status of the case and request. **Follow any additional instructions provided and save the correspondence, including the referral ID,** for your reference.
  - In some cases, USCIS may instruct you to follow up with the USCIS Contact Center by phone if you do not have a decision or a notice for further action within 60 days.



You may be able to resolve issues with your case using one or more of the methods below to contact USCIS.

**Contact USCIS by chat through [Ask Emma](#) or call the Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283.**

Applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired can call TTY 800-767-1833.

- **USCIS has greatly limited access to human operators on calls and chat, which can be frustrating.**
- USCIS provides services in English and Spanish only, so if you need to speak another language, you may want to have a friend or relative with you to interpret.
- If you get through to a person on chat or phone, collect and document the following information:
  - Date and time of the call or chat
  - Name and ID number of the USCIS operator/s you spoke to or chatted with
  - The referral or SRMT number associated with your request.



For [best ways to use the USCIS phone lines, see this tip sheet.](#)

**You will need your receipt and the information it contains, including:**

- receipt number,
- A-number,
- filing date, and
- form and filing category.

Remember to always document all interactions, service numbers, and USCIS representatives' names and ID numbers for any attempts to fix your case!



**Current USCIS communication policies may make these options less likely to succeed for some applicants.**



**Make and attend an appointment with USCIS.**

- Call 1-800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833) to request to schedule an appointment at a [local USCIS office](#).
- In-person appointments are rare and generally limited to emergencies. If granted an appointment, follow the [field office procedures](#), and document the confirmation number associated with your visit, along with who you spoke with, the date, time, and location. Walking in without an appointment is not permitted.



**Send an email to a relevant USCIS inbox based on your case type if you can.**

- USCIS discontinued the use of Service Center-specific email addresses in favor of its online tools. Email options may change over time. Visit the [USCIS Contact Us](#) page for details.
- You may be able to email if you 1) filed at a particular [lockbox](#); 2) have a legal representative to inquire about certain petitions ([Violence against Women Act, U, or T visas](#)); 3) are a [refugee](#); or 4) filed a [humanitarian parole](#) application.
- If there is a relevant email address for your case type or if you can email an individual USCIS employee, document the USCIS email address used and the date of correspondence.

**In some cases, US Members of Congress may be able to help people who live in their district or state with problems they are experiencing with US government agencies, including USCIS.**

- Please note that a Congressional office **may not be able to help in all cases and cannot force USCIS to take a certain action. However, Members of Congress may be able to dislodge a case or move it forward.**
- If you cannot dislodge the problems with your case with USCIS after submitting an e-Request and/or contacting USCIS, we recommend that you **seek assistance from the US Member of Congress who represents your district.** You can [find out who your representatives are here](#) with your address. (Please make a request to only one Congressional office at a time to avoid confusion!)
  - Often, reaching out to an elected official can help move things along in your case. USCIS, like many US government agencies, has a Legislative Affairs office staffed by liaisons that work on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The purpose of this office is to help Congressional staffers resolve problems with constituent cases.
- **Navigate to the “help with a federal agency” or “casework” portion of your representative’s webpage**, often found under services, how I can serve you, or contact.



**Congressional forms and submission processes vary. Please follow the directions to complete the form.**

- ✓ **Select US Citizenship and Immigration Service or USCIS** as the agency you need help with.
- ✓ **Provide the requested personal information**, including name, date and country of birth, A-number, and current address.
- ✓ **Enter the USCIS receipt number** associated with your filing where the form requests the agency case or tracking number, along with date of filing and form type found on your receipt.
- ✓ **Describe the problem with your filing and what help you need.** Include details like receipt numbers and the referral numbers from any other communications with USCIS in which you tried to fix the issue.
- ✓ Some Congressional forms allow you to upload supporting attachments to help staff members understand your case. If possible, provide a copy of your USCIS receipt, a copy of your filing, and any other documents relevant to your case.
- For privacy reasons, you must **sign a release form to authorize the Federal government to share case information with your Member of Congress.**
- **Follow the submission directions carefully:** some offices require requests to be printed and submitted by email, fax, or in person.
- Typically, you will **receive an automated response** to your submission t. Then, a staffer will follow up with you.

Another option for outside help with an immigration case is the Department of Homeland Security's [Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services \(CIS\) Ombudsman](#). This office may help you to resolve difficulties with certain types of USCIS cases after you have exhausted other possible options. As of writing, the office [cannot help if slow processing is your ONLY problem](#) because such delays are a "systemic issue."



## What Is An Ombudsman?

An Ombudsman is an official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints with a government agency and helps to resolve issues. The CIS Ombudsman office is independent, impartial, and not a part of USCIS itself. It works with USCIS to try to dislodge issues with immigration filings but does not have any authority to make or change USCIS case decisions. The office does not charge any fees for its services. It cannot provide legal advice, extend deadlines, or grant expedite requests. An Ombudsman inquiry to USCIS also does not guarantee that USCIS will take faster action on your case.

[Visit this page to understand what the Ombudsman can and cannot assist with](#) to determine if the Ombudsman can help you.

## You can request Ombudsman case assistance with the **DHS Form 7001**.

- The Ombudsman is often a last resort to prompt USCIS to address a case issue that cannot be resolved without litigation or other extraordinary means.
- Typically, the office will accept your case only if you have given other possible remedies sufficient time to correct the issue. This means that your case:
  - is at least 30 days past the "receipt date for case inquiry" when outside of processing times or
  - has been pending without result for over six months if processing times for your type of application are not published.
- Individual applicants, Congressional caseworkers, employers, and others can request case assistance from the Ombudsman office.
  - If someone other than the applicant is making the request, additional documentation is required to prove the requestor is acting on behalf of the applicant with that person's knowledge and permission.
- **For particularly difficult cases, having a lawyer or accredited representative can be helpful to try to address case difficulties.** [See more about finding an appropriate legal representative here.](#) When immigration lawyers or accredited representatives make the request, they should include a copy of their Form G-28, Notice of Appearance of Attorney to prove their connection to the case.



[Watch this short video](#) to learn more about the Ombudsman case assistance services.

- If you want to seek the Ombudsman's assistance, you should [submit a DHS Form 7001](#), consisting of Sections 1-13.
  - While the form is technically not required, it is best to **use it to ensure that the office can collect all of the information it needs to help with your case** and avoid additional delays.
- **Separate DHS Form 7001 requests should be submitted for each family member** experiencing problems with a USCIS filing. Note that If you are the beneficiary of a pending petition, the petitioner must provide consent to the Ombudsman for releasing case information.
- Before you begin, [consult the form instructions here](#) and gather your case documents 1) for your reference and 2) to provide as supporting documentation. **We recommend creating a folder on your computer with all supporting documents for easy uploading.**
  - If you are seeking help with a benefit based on another immigration status you have, be sure to include evidence of that status and its underlying petition. For example, if USCIS made an error and you are seeking help to correct the error on an EAD based on temporary protected status or a pending asylum application, you would include receipts for those filings as evidence also.



To file a request, you will need:



A-number



A copy of all documents submitted to USCIS



Documents received from USCIS, including all receipt notices



Other information and documentation important to the case

- **Prepare your answers to the form in a separate document and then copy and paste them into the online form to avoid losing your work!** You cannot save your work on this online form: you must complete the form at one time. Sessions time out (expire) after 20 minutes of inactivity. This method also helps you check that you are within required character limits on written responses. Alternatively, you may complete the [PDF version of the form and email it](#).
- **You must provide an answer to the required questions that are indicated with a red star.** If there are any questions that do not apply to you or your case, you can leave that question blank. Otherwise, provide as much information as possible. Please note that submitting the form online is the preferred method.

In Sections 1-4, you will provide the name, contact and citizenship/birth information, and A-number as requested.

Name (Section 1) —

**1. Name:** Please identify the name of the individual or employer (applicant/beneficiary/petitioner) encountering difficulties with USCIS. **Do not enter the attorney/law firm's name here.**

☒ Individual

☐ Petitioning Company/Organization

Prefix

- None - ▾

First Name \*

Middle Name

Last Name \*

Contact Information (Section 2) +

Identification Information - Citizenship and Birth (Section 3) —

Birthdate \*

Year ▾ Month ▾ Day ▾

Country of Citizenship \*

United States  
Afghanistan  
Aland Islands  
Albania  
Algeria  
American Samoa  
Andorra  
Angola

Hold down the Ctrl key (PC) or CMD key (Mac) for multiple selections.

Country of Birth \*

- Select - ▾

Identification Information - A-Number (Section 4) —

☐ Please provide your A-Number, if applicable, to assist with the review of your request.

☐ NOTE: Most A-Numbers are 9 digits and follow the following format: A012-345-678. If yours is 8 digits, please add a zero ("0") before the first number. If USCIS did not assign an A-Number to you, leave this section blank. While this is not a required field, the information provided will assist with our review.

A-Number A-

Click this to expand and complete each section.

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Sections 5 and 6 collect important details on your filing.

Provide the date/s of your receipts (often listed on the receipt as "received date").

You can add rows to provide as many receipt numbers as you need to. Be sure to include receipt numbers for any underlying petitions.

Form or case type: this is the form number and type of filing

You can remove any extra rows you do not need by clicking the minus sign.

For Question 6, select all that may apply to your case. Interim benefits are benefits that applicants are eligible for while an initial application is pending. EADs allow applicants to work while other applications are pending. Advanced parole to travel is another example of an interim benefit.

Application/Petition Information (Sections 5 and 6)

5. Applications/Petitions Filed

List all applications and/or petitions pending with USCIS related to your request for assistance. Please provide the USCIS Receipt Date, USCIS Form Number, and Receipt Numbers in the three columns below. List all available receipt numbers. The receipt number is located in the top left corner of your Notice of Action (USCIS Form I-797). Receipt number format: EAC1012345678; MSC0944556677. Do not include dashes between the characters.

USCIS Receipt Date			Receipt Numbers	USCIS Form Number *
Year	Month	Day		- Select -
Year	Month	Day		- Select -

Add

1

more items

6. Type of Immigration Benefit Sought: Please provide the type of immigration benefit sought from USCIS. Check all that apply.

☐ Nonimmigrant Status (ex. Student)

☐ Immigrant Status (ex. Permanent Residency)

☐ Citizenship or Naturalization

☐ Asylum or Refugee Status

☐ Interim Benefits (ex. Employment Authorization)

☐ Waiver (ex. Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility)

☐ Other

**Sections 7 and 8** are where you explain the reason you are seeking the Ombudsman’s help.

Mark this box and include any applicable proof you have of hardship, including job loss, loss of access to benefits, etc.

Mark this box. You will provide evidence of your efforts to resolve the issue with USCIS in the next section.

Use this space to describe your case problem as requested. Check that your response is under 2000 characters. You will provide evidence of your efforts to resolve the issue with USCIS in the next section.

Case Description (Sections 7 and 8)

7. Reason for Inquiry/Case Assistance Request: Check all that apply. Provide a description in Section 8 and add documentation related to your inquiry in Section 12.

☒ I am facing or am about to face an immediate adverse action or impact, an emergency or any other type of significant hardship, caused by an action/inaction/delay in processing by USCIS.

☒ I am facing a problem that was not resolved through the normal processes provided by USCIS.

☐ I am experiencing a delay with a case that is beyond the anticipated processing time.

☐ I am incurring or am about to incur significant and unusual costs (including fees for professional representation that are not normally incurred).

☐ I have received an action or decision that involves clear errors of fact or gross and obvious misapplication of the relevant law by USCIS.

☐ Other

8. Description of Your Case Problem \*

*Describe the difficulties experienced with USCIS, including all responses USCIS provided. In Section 12, attach relevant correspondence concerning actions taken to resolve the issue before submitting to the Ombudsman’s Office including: receipt notices; requests for evidence; decisions; notices and any other correspondence from USCIS about your case. **Limited to 2000 characters.***

This field is limited to 2,000 characters. 2000 characters remaining.

Mark any additional issues that relate to your case issue.

Check the 4<sup>th</sup> box if you have had to seek a lawyer’s assistance and/or face other costs related to a loss of benefits. For example, if you have lost your job and health insurance and will have to pay for a medical procedure out of pocket. Include documentation whenever possible.

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Use [Section 9](#) to indicate all prior efforts to fix the case issue.

Mark this box AND any others that apply to the steps taken to correct the issue.

Please note that you DO NOT have to have tried all of these steps before submitting an Ombudsman request but generally should have attempted 2-3 remedy options, including the Contact Center.

Use this space to describe all the ways you tried to fix issues with your case (with USCIS and/or with congress). Provide the requested detail for each box you check that proves your efforts to resolve the issue with USCIS. Keep your response under 2000 characters.

Prior Actions Taken to Remedy the Problem (Section 9)

9. Prior Actions Taken:

Check all that apply and provide the additional information requested for each selection in the "Please Describe" section provided below. Note that if selecting "Visited MyUSCIS Case Status" you must indicate what additional actions were taken to remedy the problem before submitting your inquiry to the Ombudsman.

☒ Visited [MyUSCIS Case Status](#)

☐ Contacted USCIS at its toll-free number 1-800-375-5283.  
Provide Referral Number (also referred to as SRMT Number)

☐ Attended appointment with USCIS.  
Provide Confirmation Number

☐ Sent an e-mail to USCIS.  
Provide date email sent:  

Year

Month

Day

  
Provide USCIS email address:

☐ Contacted a U.S. Government Department or Agency for assistance.  
Provide Name and Contact Information

☐ Contacted a U.S. Congressional Representative for assistance.  
Provide Name and Contact Information

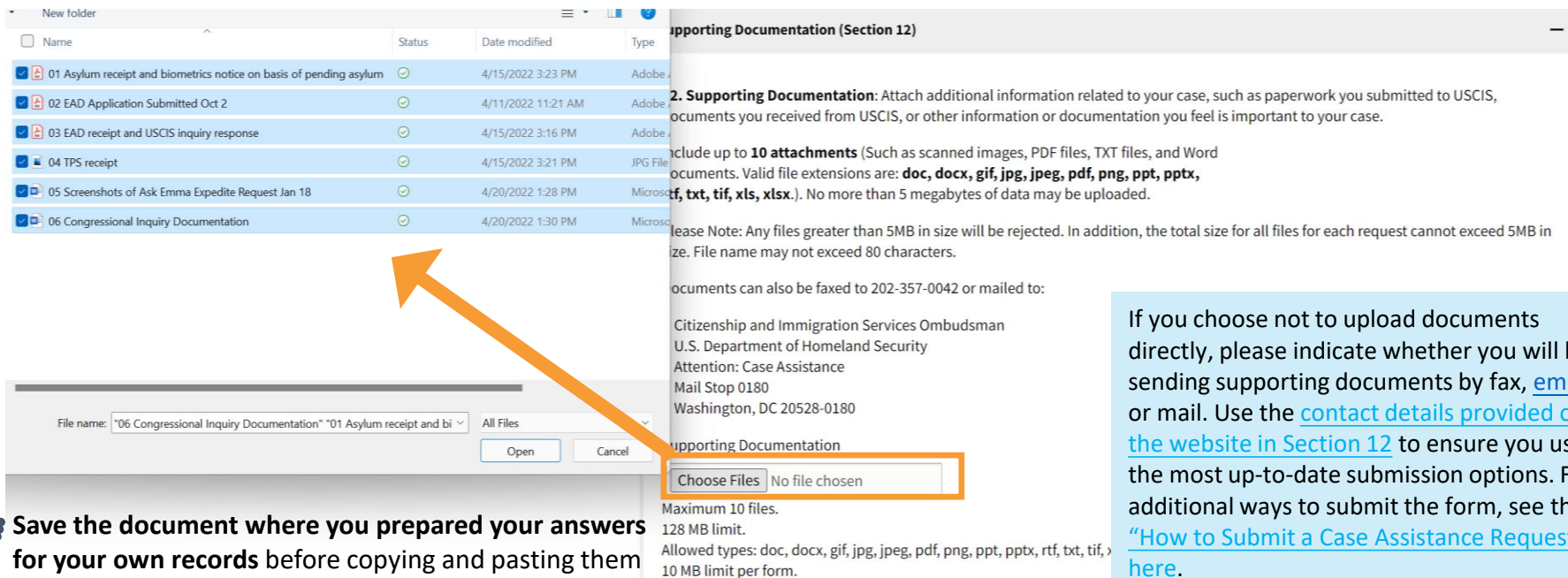
Please Describe: \*

This field is limited to 2,000 characters. 2000 characters remaining.

For all additional boxes, indicate the desired referral number or details. For example, here you will include the referral number the phone agent provided and then indicate the date and time of the call and the actions taken below.

You should wait 30 days after contacting a Congressional Representative for help before submitting an Ombudsman request to allow time for that potential remedy to work.

- Follow the prompts **to indicate who is preparing the form in Section 10.** (There is currently no Section 11.)
- **Section 12 provides options for you to provide the Ombudsman with supporting documentation**, such as receipt notices and key correspondence, about your case.
- **You can upload up to 10 attachments in various formats** by clicking Choose Files and then selecting your documents as shown in the screenshot below.



**Supporting Documentation (Section 12)**

**2. Supporting Documentation:** Attach additional information related to your case, such as paperwork you submitted to USCIS, documents you received from USCIS, or other information or documentation you feel is important to your case.

Include up to **10 attachments** (Such as scanned images, PDF files, TXT files, and Word documents. Valid file extensions are: **doc, docx, gif, jpg, jpeg, pdf, png, ppt, pptx, rtf, txt, tif, xls,xlsx**). No more than 5 megabytes of data may be uploaded.

Please Note: Any files greater than 5MB in size will be rejected. In addition, the total size for all files for each request cannot exceed 5MB in size. File name may not exceed 80 characters.

Documents can also be faxed to 202-357-0042 or mailed to:

Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Attention: Case Assistance  
Mail Stop 0180  
Washington, DC 20528-0180

**Supporting Documentation**


**Choose Files** No file chosen

Maximum 10 files.  
128 MB limit.  
Allowed types: doc, docx, gif, jpg, jpeg, pdf, png, ppt, pptx, rtf, txt, tif, xlsx, xls.

File name: "06 Congressional Inquiry Documentation" "01 Asylum receipt and biometrics notice on basis of pending asylum" All Files

Open Cancel

If you choose not to upload documents directly, please indicate whether you will be sending supporting documents by fax, [email](#), or mail. Use the [contact details provided on the website in Section 12](#) to ensure you use the most up-to-date submission options. For additional ways to submit the form, see the ["How to Submit a Case Assistance Request" here](#).

 **Save the document where you prepared your answers for your own records before copying and pasting them into the form.**

- Then **check over your work** on all sections to make sure you have filled in every relevant blank.
- Lastly, read the verification and consent statement in **Section 13**, **type your name to sign**, and **press submit**.

## Next Steps After You Submit a Request


- Requestors who submit online will receive a confirmation email with their request number. To ensure you receive this message and other Ombudsman communications, add [cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov) to your email contacts.
- The Ombudsman's office will notify you when it has contacted USCIS about your case. If your case is resolved or your address or circumstances change, let the office know by email. Otherwise, the office will contact you to follow up on any case details as required.

In cases where a USCIS filing is particularly problematic or complex, a **reputable, paid immigration attorney** may be best suited to helping you resolve complications with USCIS.

A [good legal representative](#) can give you the best chance for a good result on your complex case.

## Who can represent me?

### Licensed Attorney = Licensed Lawyer




The words lawyer and attorney refer to the same job. Only lawyers who have a **valid bar license from a US state** or territory should practice law. There are many kinds of law. For asylum or other complex immigration filings, you will most likely want an **immigration attorney**, a person who specializes in US immigration law. Immigration lawyers may be in private practice on their own or they may work at a law firm or another organization like a non-profit or charity.

### Accredited Representative


The US Department of Justice authorizes certain non-profit legal service providers to employ accredited representatives. Accredited representatives are not attorneys but are qualified to represent immigrants. [Click here](#) for the list of all active recognized organizations and their accredited representatives.

## Where can I find immigration help?

The following links are good starting points:

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- The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) allows you to search for individual lawyers based on the type of help you need and language that the lawyer speaks. Lawyers on [AILA's Lawyer Search](#) are AILA members and have a currently valid state bar license.
  - The Executive Office of Immigration Review has a [list of free and low-cost legal service providers](#) that you can search by state.
  - Immigration Advocates Network has a [directory of free or low-cost immigration legal services](#) as well.

## Costs Vary.

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- It is always a good idea to ask about the fees and any payment options in advance and agree to the price in writing.
  - Some lawyers and organizations offer immigration legal services **pro bono**, meaning for free or at a low cost (often based on your income).

This page offers some tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of immigration fraud and ensure that a legal representative is worthy of your trust.

## Check that the legal representative you are considering has the right credentials.

- **Attorneys must be properly licensed to practice law.** This means they will have a bar license or number from a state or territory.
  - Because immigration laws are federal (and do not vary by state), immigration attorneys may be licensed to practice law in another state from the state where you live. You can ask the attorney where s/he is admitted to practice law.
- **All accredited representatives are listed [here on the Department of Justice website](#).**
- Check here to make sure your legal representative **does not** appear on [the list of people disciplined for or banned from practicing immigration law](#).

When seeking representation for cases that are already experiencing problems or delays with USCIS, explain those issues fully in any initial intake conversations. Not all attorneys or organizations handle such cases.

## Other tips to protect yourself.

- ✓ **Be sure you have copies of or access to all filings made for you.** You have a right to this information and may need it in the future.
- ✗ **Do not sign blank forms or documents.** Counsel must allow you to review the completed forms and accompanying materials before signing. You will be personally responsible for the information they contain.
- ✗ **Do not pay for forms.** All forms are available for free on the USCIS website. The CIS Ombudsman form is also free.
- ✗ **If your representative asks you to include or say something you know is not true, do not do it!** Find new counsel immediately because this person is not honest. Lies on immigration forms can have serious consequences for your immigration case. Explaining that your counsel told you to lie will not keep those consequences from happening. Please do not risk it.