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PRACTICE AREAS

BUSINESS

L-1 Visas

H-1B

H-1B Transfers

Visas

TN Visas (NAFTA)

Special Visas for Other Countries

Australia

Chile / Singapore E-1

E-1 Visas

E-2 Visas

PERM Labor Certification

HOSPITALS /HEALTHCARE

H-1C Visas

H-1B Visas for Doctors

FAMILY

Spouse / Fiancee Visas

Permanent Residence for Family
Within U.S.

Naturalization / Citizenship

AMNESTY

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28 2010

E-Newsletter

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US Citizenship and Immigration Services

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) was created by the Homeland Security Act of 2002. As of March 1, 2003, USCIS replaced Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and became an office within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The DHS was created in response to the terrorist acts of 2001 against the United States. The mission of the DHS is to coordinate efforts among several federal government agencies to protect and strengthen US borders, security systems, information sharing and preparedness for future disasters and attacks.

Most of the immigration activities handled by the INS were transferred to the USCIS, including:

- Authorizing visa applications for immigrant and nonimmigrant classifications
- Renewing, updating and modifying visa status
- Processing applications for naturalization
- Administering the naturalization process
- Processing applications for asylum and refugee status
- Approving employment authorization documents (EADs)

The INS functions regarding border security were transferred to the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), another office created by the Homeland Security Act of 2002.



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The USCIS has 250 offices located abroad and employs over 15,000 employees. Within the USCIS, there are two special offices: the Office of Citizenship and the Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate.

The Office of Citizenship helps new immigrants and naturalized citizens understand their rights and responsibilities under US law. It also helps them become acclimated to US culture and society.

The Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate is divided into three divisions and is charged with ensuring refugee and asylee status are awarded to the correct people who need the benefit. The International Operations division specifically investigates fraud and breaches of national security and operates from 30 field offices outside of the US.

The USCIS has branch offices in each state. These offices are responsible for conducting interviews, processing applications for visas, status changes and extensions. It is not recommended that people with immigration-related questions stop in their local office without first making an appointment. The USCIS branch offices are not customer service centers, so it is best to call the office first to make sure they can assist you and then make an appointment to meet with someone.

If you require assistance filing a visa application for yourself or a potential employee, contesting a visa application denial or other immigration-related matter, contact an experienced immigration lawyer in your area.

Getting Ready To Apply for a Visa

To read and print out a copy of the checklist, please follow the link below.

[Getting Ready to Apply for a Visa](#)

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