

## Immigration Alert

MAY 25, 2012

### USCIS ELIS: New Online Processing of Immigration Applications

On May 22, 2012, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced the launch of an electronic immigration benefits system, USCIS ELIS. This marks the first phase of the agency's transition from paper-based filings to a more modern online process for filing and adjudicating applications for immigration benefits.

Electronic filings are not entirely new for USCIS. In 2005, USCIS began accepting e-Filing applications for limited immigration benefits including replacement of lost or stolen green cards, immigrant visa petitions, employment authorization documents and requests for premium processing. Under the current e-Filing system, applicants are required to mail USCIS supporting documentation to complete an application. USCIS ELIS is more convenient: applicants may upload supporting documentation for an application through a secure web site. This change should lead to faster processing times.

The scope of applications eligible for filing under USCIS ELIS is currently limited to requests for a change or extension of status (Form I-539) for qualified students, temporary visitors traveling for business or pleasure, and individuals receiving medical treatment. Over time, USCIS ELIS will include more applications. Instructions on registering for USCIS ELIS are at <http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis>.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of Mintz Levin's Immigration Section for additional information regarding this development or any other immigration issues you may have.

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