

FAQ: My petition has been filed, Now what?

Congratulations and thank you for your partnership!

Your petition has been filed with USCIS. We have successfully completed another significant step in your immigration case.

This document answers the most frequently asked questions we receive from clients about this phase of the process.

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***This material is not intended to substitute as legal advice.**
Last updated: August 2020

1. What happens after my petition is filed?

After your petition is filed, it will be forwarded to one of the USCIS Service Centers. Each Service Center has jurisdiction over a specific area of the country and type of case.

An official Receipt Notice from USCIS will be issued and mailed out in 1-3 weeks, depending on the case.

The Service Center will then adjudicate the petition with possible outcomes: approval, request for evidence (RFE), or in rare cases, denial.

It is of note that USCIS periodically transfers cases between Service Centers to even out case load. If this happens to your case, a paper notice will be sent to the petitioner and attorney. It will continue to be processed at the newly assigned Service Center.

2. How long will it take for USCIS to process my case?

Processing times are difficult to ascertain as they vary based on the type of case and the Service Center where the petition is being processed. The USCIS generally processes cases in the order they are received.

For an estimate of the processing times for each visa category, visit egov.uscis.gov/processing-times. You will need to know the type of form(s) used in the petition and the Service Center processing your case. Your receipt number contains three letters identifying which Service Center is processing your petition.

These three letters and the corresponding USCIS service centers are:

- EAC: Vermont Service Center
- WAC: California Service Center
- LIN: Nebraska Service Center
- SRC: Texas Service Center

Note that the processing times on the website are subject to change.

You may accelerate your processing time by using premium processing, if it is available for your case and if it is advisable based on a variety of factors.

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3. What can I do to accelerate the processing?

USCIS offers premium processing on selected types of employment visas for an additional government filing fee. In exchange, you receive a 15-day business processing of your petition.

The usage of premium processing is a case-specific and strategic decision, when possible. This process generally provides you with more control over the processing times and your business and personal plans.

You can request premium processing at the time of the initial filing or you can upgrade later after receiving the receipt notice. Note that sometimes USCIS suspends the availability of premium processing.

4. How can I check on the status of my case?

You can check your [case status online](#) on the USCIS website.

You will need to enter your receipt number directly on the screen to be able to check the online case status. The receipt number can be found on the official USCIS Receipt Notice. Typically, it is located in the upper left-hand corner of the notice.

If you have filed more than one petition and/or application, each one will have a unique receipt number. Make sure you type the correct number for each individual petition or application. For example, employment-based adjustment cases have individual numbers for the I-140, I-485, I-765, and I-131.

If no information shows in the case status, there is an option to [submit an online inquiry about your case](#). Alternatively, if you are unable to find the information you need online, there is a Customer Service number: 1-800-375-5283.

5. Could USCIS request additional evidence?

Unfortunately, Requests for Additional Evidence (RFEs) are becoming more of a routine.

They are a result of government guidance to increase the scrutiny of certain petitions. Additionally, they are dependent on what is happening at each individual USCIS Service Center.

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Bottom line: an RFE may be issued by USCIS if they determine at their discretion that further information is required to proceed with a visa application, however sometimes this is done arbitrarily even with strong petitions.

If an RFE is issued for your case, we will reach out to you to strategize and prepare a response.

6. What are the “Do’s and Don’t” while the case is pending?

✨ Inform USCIS of a change of address

In general, foreign nationals living in the U.S. are required to file an address change notification within 10 days of moving to a new address.

This is a very important obligation. Fortunately, it is easy to file the required form. The best way to submit an address change notification is electronically. You can file your notification with USCIS here: <https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do>

USCIS is only required to send notices to the last address it has for you. “I never got my notice” is not an acceptable excuse for missing an interview or appointment if you moved and neglected to change your address with USCIS.

Moreover, you should not count on the U.S. Postal Service – or anyone living at your old address – to forward your mail to your new address.

✨ Be aware of restrictions to travel abroad

Foreign nationals should be very cautious before traveling internationally. If you are currently in the U.S. and requested an extension or change of status, traveling abroad could jeopardize the processing of the case. Sometimes, USCIS interprets leaving the U.S. as abandoning the petition/application. Please consult with us if you have any urgent international travel plans to discuss how they may impact your case.

Some initial checkpoints prior to traveling abroad include: 1) Ensure that your current visa stamp matches your current immigration status (i.e. visa stamp for H-1B, matches H-1B status); 2) Have a valid passport and 3) Ensure you don’t have an immigration case pending prior to traveling.

Because unexpected things can always occur that may delay the re-admission to the U.S., make sure to be flexible and very proactive with travel plans

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