

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum
Meeting Notes
3/19/2020

1. Welcome & Introductions – Immigrant Services Team

- a. Thank you to all for joining us on Zoom.

2. USCIS Updates: Nina Sachdev, Community Relations Officer

Nina.K.Sachdev@uscis.dhs.gov

- a. USCIS has closed all offices to the public until April 1st ***UPDATE: Closure is now until at least April 7th***
 - This includes all face-to-face interviews and oath ceremonies
- b. Public benefits received due to COVID-19 related reasons do NOT count as a public charge
 - Statement should be submitted to officer explaining situation
- c. Q/A
 - Q: Is USCIS still working on applications?
A: Yes. While offices are closed to the public, some offices are open for employees only and other employees are teleworking. Processing times will be impacted though.

3. Legal Updates: Alison Kamhi, Supervising Attorney at ILRC

akamhi@ilrc.org

- a. Due to COVID-19, ICE is not carrying out normal enforcement policies (unless person is deemed as a severe danger to society)
 - ICE will not be at healthcare facilities and hospitals
 - Please see the official statement from ICE:
<https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/updated-ice-statement-covid-19>
- b. Some courts remain open while some are closed. For those that are closed, notices are being sent out in different languages
- c. ACLU sued immigration detention centers due to extremely high risk of contracting COVID-19
- d. Guatemala has closed its borders and is blocking deportation orders from the US due to COVID-19 related health concerns
 - Please see this article for more information:
<https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2020-03-17/guatemala-close-borders-to-americans-trumps-deportation-flights>
- e. Since the last Immigrant Forum meeting, the Public Charge rule was officially implemented on February 24th, 2020
 - Important to note: The rule does NOT apply to all immigrants

- Please see this advisory for more information:
<https://www.ilrc.org/overview-public-charge-and-benefits-march-2020>

**4. Presentation: Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) – Alison Kamhi,
Supervising Attorney at ILRC
akamhi@ilrc.org; 415-321-8552**

- For more detailed information, please see Powerpoint located on the Immigrant Services website:
https://cmo.smcgov.org/sites/cmo.smcgov.org/files/documents/files/ILRC.Who_We_Are.pdf
 - a. The ILRC uses policy advocacy, capacity building, and civic engagement strategies to help immigrant families be together and thrive
 - b. New Americans Campaign: National project led by ILRC to help people complete naturalization applications
 - c. Red Cards: Help people assert their rights and defend themselves in many situations, such as when ICE agents go to a home
 - Visit <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards> to print your own or order some free-of-charge in many different languages if you are an immigrant-serving organization or a public defender based in the San Francisco Bay Area
 - d. Policy Work: Focuses on addressing inequalities in the immigration system
 - For example: ILRC had huge role in pushing AB 32 forward - shutting down private prisons and immigration jails in California (took effect in January 2020)
 - e. ILRC Attorney of the Day
 - Mon-Thu 10am-5pm
 - Attorneys (Alison + 10 others) are available to answer all types of questions by email or phone regarding immigration law and practice
 - To discuss rates and set up a contract, please contact AODAdmin@ilrc.org or call (415) 255-9499 – some organizations have free access, some have special non-profit rate
 - f. Resource Guides:
 - Naturalization and U.S. Citizenship Legal Guide: learn detailed eligibility requirements for naturalization and helpful suggestions on both procedural issues and ways to effectively work with naturalization clients *For simple guidance on filling out the citizenship application (available in 13 languages): <https://www.ilrc.org/n-400-translations-spanish-other-languages>*
 - Families & Immigration Practical Guide: essential tool for practitioners who assist in all aspects of family-sponsored immigration
 - FOIA Requests and Other Background Checks Practical Guide to Filing Records Requests in Immigration Cases: provides practitioners with a

one-stop guide for information about why, when, where, and how to file background checks in immigration cases

g. Q/A

- Q: Are the Resource Guides geared toward providers or clients?
A: Providers

5. Office of Community Affairs Updates

- a. **Take Your Census Now!** Invitations to complete the Census have been mailed. The specific code designated for an address is included in the invitation letter. Please encourage your clients to complete the Census!

<https://my2020census.gov/>