



## How to Avoid Common Mailing Errors When Filing with the USCIS Lockbox

The Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman) is providing this information to help you navigate recent changes to USCIS Lockbox filing locations. USCIS sometimes changes filing locations in order to balance its workload and improve its ability to process applications and petitions on time.

To make sure that you send your form to the right location, stay informed of recent changes and always follow the most up-to-date instructions when you file a form with USCIS.

### A. Where can I find the most recent changes to USCIS Lockbox filing locations?

- ✓ Go to USCIS' [Lockbox Filing Location Updates](#) webpage.
- ✓ Subscribe to the [USCIS GovDelivery distribution list](#) and select "Form Updates" in your subscriber preferences to receive an email each time USCIS updates a filing location.
- ✓ Contact the [USCIS Contact Center](#) at 800-375-5283 to get information on where to file your form. The USCIS Contact Center provides information in English and Spanish.

### B. What steps should I take when mailing forms to USCIS?

- ✓ **Always check the "Where to File" section of the form on USCIS' website** for the most current information on where to file.
  - You may experience processing delays if you mail your form to the wrong filing location.
  - If you mail your form to the wrong filing location, USCIS may reject your form as improperly filed and will return the form to you to re-file. Make sure to check the most current filing location before re-submitting a previously rejected form.
- ✓ **Make sure to properly sign all forms.**
- ✓ Make sure you have used the most current version of the form you are filing. You can find the edition date at the bottom of the page on the form. Make sure you include the correct filing fee(s).
- ✓ You can use the [USCIS Fee Calculator](#) to help you determine the correct filing fees.
- ✓ If you are including other USCIS forms as supporting documents, clearly mark the top of the first page of these other forms with "COPY" in black ink.

### C. What do I need to put on the front of the envelope I send to USCIS?

- ✓ Write the filing address exactly as listed on USCIS' website. USCIS is continuously making updates to its filing locations, so always confirm the mailing address the day you mail your form. Mailing your form to the wrong address could result in a processing delay or a rejection.
- ✓ Clearly label the "Attention" line with your form type and eligibility category.
- ✓ Mark the envelope with the nature of the submission. *For example: "Original Submission," "Brief for an Appeal," or "Response to Request for Additional Information."*
- ✓ Mark the envelope with the form number. *For example: I-130, I-690, or I-698.*
- ✓ Make sure to use the designated ZIP + 4 code in the filing address. *For example: 75266-0864.*
- ✓ You can find additional tips on USCIS' [Form Filing Tips](#) page.

#### **D. If I file a paper form by mailing it to USCIS, can I link it to my USCIS online account?**

- ✓ If you mail your paper form to a USCIS Lockbox and received a receipt notice with a receipt number that begins with "IOE," you will also receive an Account Access Notice with an Online Access Code.
  - Follow the step-by-step instructions provided on the Account Access Notice to log in and confirm your USCIS online account within 90 days.
  - After you confirm your USCIS online account, you will be able to link the paper form to your online account. If you need more information, please contact the [USCIS Contact Center](#).
- ✓ If you just want to receive a text message or email when USCIS accepts your paper form, you can include [Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#) with the form you mail to USCIS. When USCIS sends the confirmation text message or email, it will list your receipt number and tell you how you can get case status information.
  - This service is available for forms filed at the USCIS Lockbox facilities located in Chicago, Phoenix, and Lewisville, Texas.
  - You do not need to have a USCIS online account to receive these e-notifications.

#### **E. How will the [October 1, 2021 changes](#) that the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) made with first-class mail service impact the form I mailed to USCIS?**

- ✓ If the USCIS Lockbox or service center you are mailing your form to is **local**, the USPS changes will likely not affect you. USPS defines "local" as being within a three-hour driving distance.
- ✓ If the USCIS Lockbox or service center you are mailing your form to is **not local**, the USPS changes mean it may take longer for your package to arrive.
- ✓ USPS encourages customers to send their mail early, especially where a filing deadline is involved, to ensure that it reaches its destination on time.
- ✓ You may submit your petition or application to USCIS using USPS or a private courier service approved by USCIS. *For example: FedEx, DHL, or UPS.*