

**OFFICE OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES
OMBUDSMAN
SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Government and Stakeholders Working Together to Improve Immigration Services

*December 6, 2016
National Archives
Washington, D.C.*

8:30 – 9:00 **Registration**
Lobby of William McGowan Theater

All morning events will be held in the William McGowan Theater

Master of Ceremonies Stacy Shore
Acting Deputy Director, Ombudsman’s Office

9:00 – 9:15 **Welcome from Maria Odom**
CIS Ombudsman

9:15 – 9:30 **Remarks from León Rodriguez**
USCIS Director

9:30 – 10:00 **Keynote from Shelly Pitterman**
UNHCR Regional Representative for the USA and the Caribbean

10:00 – 10:30 **Remarks from Juan Osuna**
Executive Office for Immigration Review Director

10:30 – 10:45 **Break**

10:45 – 12:00 Morning Plenary

USCIS Now – Challenges and Opportunities to Improve our Immigration System

Moderator: Ombudsman Odom

Speakers:

Mariela Melero, Associate Director, CSPED, USCIS

Joseph Moore, Chief Financial Officer, USCIS

Donald Neufeld, Associate Director, SCOPS, USCIS

William Yates, Principal, W.R. Yates & Associates, LLC

Gary Merson, Ombudsman’s Office

This panel will bring together former and current U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) executives and Ombudsman’s Office leadership for a dynamic conversation about the current state of USCIS operations and public engagement.

12:00 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch (on your own)

12:15 – 1:15 p.m. **Ask the Experts – Questions & Answers with Ombudsman Staff**

Location: Washington Conference Room

Participants: Allison Posner, Case Team Analysts

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. **Simultaneous Roundtables – Session I**

The World of Provisional Immigrant Waivers

Location: William McGowan Theater

Moderator: Peggy Gleason

Speakers: Robert Blackwood and Roselyn Brown-Frei, USCIS; Susan Schreiber, CLINIC; Joel Nantais, DOS; Phill Slattery, NVC

Since its inception in 2013, the I-601A Provisional Waiver program has grown to approximately 50,000 applications per year. Current changes will expand the volume and eligibility criteria even further. This panel will discuss how both USCIS and the Department of State (DOS) have developed the program to date and explain new developments in USCIS guidance. The panelists will also describe interagency communication between USCIS and DOS in this process, and the impact on stakeholders of the program.

Employment Hot Topics – Year in Review

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

Moderator: Carrie Anderson

Speakers: Frederick Troncone, Ombudsman’s Office; Kevin Cummings and Ciro Parascandola, USCIS; Allen Orr, Orr Immigration Law Firm P.C.; Sunday Rubenstein, Ernst & Young; Alberto Ruisanchez, DOJ Office of Special Counsel

Employers and foreign national workers have faced a changing immigration landscape this past year. Panelists will discuss how they have responded to USCIS changes in H-1B policies, F-1 training programs, uncertain processing times, and proposed and implemented regulations. Panel experts will also highlight agency efforts to protect the foreign national worker and business owner from unlawful employment and noncompliant I-9 practices.

Humanitarian Hot Topics – Year in Review

Location: Washington Conference Room

Moderator: Emily Creighton

Speakers: Leslye Orloff, American University; Rená Cutlip-Mason, EOIR; Ted Kim, USCIS; Mary Giovagnoli, DHS; Michelle Mendez, CLINIC

This panel will explore challenges and potential solutions to the increasing asylum backlog, highlighting steps taken by USCIS’ Asylum Division and EOIR’s immigration courts, as well as the backlog’s impact on applicants. The panel also will address developments related to benefits for vulnerable immigrant populations, including victims

of crimes who qualify for a U visa and issues related to the administration of the Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) program.

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. Networking Break

3:15 – 4:30 p.m. **Simultaneous Roundtables – Session II**

Temporary Workers – Employment Issues and Labor Trafficking

Location: William McGowan Theater

Moderator: Rachel Winkler

Speakers: Naomi Tsu, SPLC; Jennifer Van Trump and Elizabeth Dallam, USCIS; James Kessler, DOL; Susan Gzesh, University of Chicago

This panel will examine current employment issues impacting temporary workers and their vulnerability to labor trafficking. The panelists will describe existing worker protections and the opportunities that exist to strengthen program compliance. Panelists will also give an overview of the Signal International case, which involved a U.S. Gulf Coast shipbuilding company's labor trafficking of over 500 H-2 temporary workers from India.

Regional Refugee Resettlement Issues and the Central American Minors Program

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

Moderator: Jason Boyd

Speakers: Anne Chiorazzi, USCIS; Kelly Gauger, DOS; Anna Greene, IRC; Jennifer Podkul, KIND

This panel will explore successes, challenges, and recent developments associated with U.S. refugee processing programs in Central America. Panelists will discuss outcomes and issues pertaining to the Central American Minors program established in December 2014. Panelists will also provide updates on and examine the announced Northern Triangle in-country referral program, as well as the Protected Transfer Arrangement for refugee applicants processed in Costa Rica.

Citizenship and Naturalization for Special Populations

Location: Washington Conference Room

Moderator: Fatimah Mateen

Speakers: Michael Valverde, USCIS; Eric Cohen, ILRC; Monica Fuentes, Welcoming America; Peter Katson, Pentagon Joint Legal Assistance Office

This panel will cover citizenship through the lenses of those having most difficulty accessing it, including military and their families, derivative children of naturalized parents, refugees, and low-income and disabled individuals. For N-400s, the panel will discuss impacts of higher fees and fee waiver processes. For those filing N-648s, the panel will describe disability waiver challenges. The panel will also give an overview of processing challenges for citizenship applications and USCIS' use of ELIS in naturalization processing.