



Engagement Readout

The CIS Ombudsman’s Webinar Series: USCIS Introduces Online Filing for Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status

On August 24, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) [Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman \(CIS Ombudsman\)](#) hosted a public webinar to discuss online filing for [Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status](#), and concurrent filing of [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#), for individuals applying for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

During this webinar, CIS Ombudsman’s staff engaged with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) subject matter experts (SMEs) to provide an overview of online account features, a review of who is eligible to file Form I-821 online, a description of how to create an online account, a summary of the required evidence and an overview of how to navigate through and [file Forms I-821 and I-765 online](#).

Currently, eligible nationals of Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen or Haiti, or individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in one of those countries, can file Form I-821 online if they are applying for TPS for the first time. All other initial TPS applicants (such as an individual from a country other than Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen or Haiti) and any listed beneficiaries who are re-registering under the extension of a TPS designation must continue to file a paper Form I-821.

Individuals who are eligible to submit an initial TPS application online can also request an employment authorization document by submitting a completed Form I-765 electronically with their Form I-821. To file Form I-821 online, eligible TPS applicants must first visit my.uscis.gov to create a free USCIS online account.

USCIS shared that even though processing times for applications filed online are generally the same as paper cases, there are many benefits to filing online. These benefits include:

- The convenience of having all notices available in one electronic account
- Fewer rejections because using the online form ensures the application is signed electronically and the correct fee is paid

- The ability to update contact information and mailing addresses quickly and easily
- The ability to upload a response to a request for evidence (RFE)
- The ability to send secure messages to USCIS
- The option to access case information 24/7 from any device

A total of 191 stakeholders joined this engagement, including attorneys and legal representatives (51%), applicants (5%), advocacy groups (5%), government employees (12%), employers (1%), and others (26%). Participants submitted 43 written questions and the speakers answered as many as possible during the engagement. Inquiries covered a wide variety of topics, including processing times, the online filing process for legal representatives, fee payment and waivers, evidence and continuous residence requirements for TPS, applying for advance parole and how a grant of TPS may affect an applicant's current or future immigration status.

Below is a sample of the questions received:

- What is the processing time for Form I-821?
- Do legal representatives need a separate USCIS online account for each client?
- Am I still eligible to complete Form I-821 online if I am Haitian, but the last country I lived in before entering the U.S. was Brazil?
- Many people do not have bank accounts or credit cards. How do they pay the fee?
- Is changing the address online enough or do applicants need to print the AR-11, sign it and send it via mail as well?
- If a TPS applicant also wants to apply for advance parole, must the [Form I-131, Application for Travel Document](#), be paper filed?
- When international students (F-1 nonimmigrant status) are approved for TPS, do they automatically lose their F-1 status, or can they still maintain it?

The CIS Ombudsman will share a complete list of inquiries with USCIS to allow the agency to address the public's concerns. Additionally, the CIS Ombudsman will post the engagement's presentation and follow up questions and answers on its website.

Speakers:

- Nathan Stiefel, Deputy CIS Ombudsman, DHS
- Rachel Ellis, Community Outreach Specialist, CIS Ombudsman, DHS
- Fatimah Mateen, Senior Advisor, CIS Ombudsman, DHS
- Leah Stewart, Issue Resolution Specialist, USCIS
- Janna Evans, Issue Resolution Specialist, USCIS
- Durrell Scott, myUSCIS Product Manager, USCIS
- Michael Gonzalez, Immigration Services Officer, USCIS