

Office of the Citizenship and Immigration
Services Ombudsman

**U.S. Department of Homeland
Security**

Mail Stop 0180

Washington, DC 20528-0180



**Homeland
Security**

Engagement Readout

The CIS Ombudsman's Webinar Series: USCIS' Online Filing and Customer Service Tools

On March 31, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) [Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman \(CIS Ombudsman\)](#) hosted a public webinar to discuss U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) online filing and customer service tools.

[CIS Ombudsman Phyllis A. Coven](#) and her staff engaged with USCIS subject matter experts to provide an overview of USCIS' tools with a particular focus on the features and benefits of online filing. USCIS elaborated on current and future operational enhancement plans for its online resources, outlined what to expect when using its customer service tools, and provided tips for filing forms electronically.

According to USCIS, it offers a variety of [online tools and resources](#) for applicants and petitioners to find information and communicate with the agency without having to visit a USCIS field office. For example, applicants and petitioners can securely file for certain immigration benefits, get case status updates, check case processing times, and receive electronic notification of application/petition acceptance.

During the webinar, USCIS shared that it is currently testing electronic filing for Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, for eligible international students. According to USCIS, it began testing the online version of this form in mid-March. The online version currently is limited to (c)(3)(A) Pre-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), (c)(3)(B) Post-completion OPT, and (c)(3)(C) 24-month extension for STEM students. For all other eligibility categories, applicants must submit a paper Form I-765.

A total of 847 stakeholders joined this webinar (attorneys/legal representatives – 38%, employers – 9%, government workers – 7%, advocacy groups – 4%, petitioners/applicants – 4%, and others – 38%). Participants submitted approximately 400 written questions and the speakers answered as many as they could during the engagement. Question topics included:

which forms were available for online filing, the integration process of paper forms into USCIS' online system, and how to submit Form I-765 electronically.

Below is a sample of the questions received:

- Will filing electronically expedite a case's adjudication more quickly than a paper application?
- How does someone get help to access their myUSCIS account, especially if they forgot their password?
- Can individuals file Form I-130 online and send Form I-485 by mail?
- Are foreign students able to file Form I-765 online?
- Is it possible to add paper-filed submissions to an existing myUSCIS account?

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 on its website.

Speakers

- Phyllis A. Coven, CIS Ombudsman, DHS
- Bertha Anderson, Chief of Public Engagement at the CIS Ombudsman's Office, DHS
- Fred Troncone, Senior Advisor at the CIS Ombudsman's Office, DHS
- Janna Evans, Community Relations Officer at USCIS
- Leah Stewart, Issue Resolution Specialist at USCIS
- Bianca Fitzpatrick, Acting Deputy Chief at USCIS
- Jocelene Aquino, Acting myUSCIS Product Owner at USCIS
- Katie McGuire, myUSCIS Product Owner at USCIS