



Questions and Answers

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

Follow up Questions:

Q1: What is the processing time for Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status?

A1: The processing time for initial Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, is approximately six months. Note that processing times are estimates and some cases may take longer than others. For more information on our methodologies for calculating processing times, visit the [Processing Times](#) page on the USCIS website.

Q2: Are individuals who have previously held TPS, but are now applying as initial applicants, eligible for online filing?

A2: Yes, but only if you are filing the Form I-821 online as an initial TPS applicant from Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen or Haiti, or are an individual without nationality who last habitually resided in one of those countries. USCIS is starting with these countries because they are either new designations or recently announced re-designations.

All other TPS applicants, including those who have previously been granted TPS and current beneficiaries who are re-registering under the extension of a TPS designation, must continue to file a paper Form I-821. If an initial TPS applicant from a country *other than* Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen or Haiti or a re-registrant files Form I-821 online, USCIS will deny the application and retain the fee. USCIS is working to make online filing available for re-registrants and initial applicants for all TPS designations in the future.

Q3: 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?

A3: Yes, as long as you are filing an initial TPS application. The option to file the Form I-821 online is available to initial TPS applicants from Burma, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen or Haiti, or individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in one of those countries.

Q4: I filed Forms I-821 and I-765 online and the photo I uploaded is marked as “unvalidated photograph.” What does this mean?

A4: This indicates that the photo will need further validation to ensure it can be used for the Employment Authorization (EAD) card.

Q5: In a few cases, after the application has been submitted and paid, the online account shows the following message: "Your I-821/I-765 forms have not been submitted, although we have accepted your payment, the submission has not been completed. You need to call USCIS to complete submission." If the applicant is unable to resolve the situation by calling USCIS, what should the next step be?

A5: USCIS is aware of this issue and is currently trying to resolve it. The initial investigation has revealed that there is an issue with A-number validation in the case management system. In most cases, the issue resolves itself within 72 hours.

Q6: What should an applicant do when the Online Access Code used to link a paper case with the online account doesn't work?

A6: If an applicant filed by paper and their receipt number begins with “IOE,” they can link their case to the USCIS online account using the Online Access Code. The Online Access Code can be found on the USCIS Account Access Notice, which is mailed shortly after the receipt notice is issued. Once applicants with “IOE” receipt numbers create the account and link their case, they will be able to use the full features of the account (e.g. see case status and history, send secure messages, view notices, upload additional evidence, and respond to Requests for Evidence (RFEs)). The Online Access Code is valid for 90 days. If it expires or is otherwise not working, applicants can request a new Online Access Code through the Contact Center.

Q7: Can someone, who submitted a paper application (but has a myUSCIS account), upload unsolicited evidence, and/or provide RFE responses, through the myUSCIS account (even if the receipt number does not begin with IOE)?

A7: Only applicants who submitted a paper form and have an “IOE” receipt number will be able to use the full features of the account, to include uploading unsolicited evidence and responding to RFEs. All other paper filers will only be able to check case status within the account.

Q8: When will Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver be available to file online?

A8: We do not have an estimated timeline for when Form I-912 will be available for online filing.

Q9: Is information entered on Form I-821 (e.g., names, addresses) transferred over to the Form I-765?

A9: Currently, information entered on Form I-821 is not transferred to Form I-765.

Q10: Is there a target date for initiating online filing of Forms I-914 and I-942?

A10: We do not have an estimated timeline for when Form I-912 or Form I-942 will be available for online filing.

Q11: Many people do not have bank accounts or credit cards. How can they pay the fee?

A11: To pay for your forms online, you must use either a U.S. bank account, debit card, or credit card. Unfortunately, if you are unable to provide either a U.S. bank account, debit card, or credit card, you must paper file as the system is unable to accept money orders at this time.

Q12: Is there an additional service charge for using a credit card?

A12: No, USCIS does not charge additional fees for using a credit card to pay filing fees.

Q13: If a legal representative prepares the online form, is the fee paid from the representative's or the applicant's account?

A13: Attorneys and accredited representatives can use their USCIS online account to prepare forms online for clients. The attorney or representative must first create an account for themselves as a representative where they can track and manage all their client cases. The representative can then prepare a draft of the client's application and Form G-28. The system provides the representative with a one-time passcode, which the representative sends to their client. After the client reviews and approves the forms, the attorney then pays for and submits the application and Form G-28 to USCIS.

Q14: Can USCIS make available to legal representatives' exemplars of properly completed Forms I-821 and I-765?

A14: USCIS is not currently considering providing exemplars. The online form is intuitive and contains conditional logic. Conditional logic reduces or eliminates questions based on the responses that the applicant provides for previous questions. For example, if the applicant states that he or she is single, they will not be asked about their spouse's name or date of marriage. In this way, the online application drastically reduces the chance of application rejection. Additionally, if there's an error or a required data field is empty, the applicant will see a red alert. This is a hard stop that will not allow the applicant or preparer a chance to submit the form until the error is corrected. This feature also greatly reduces errors that would lead to a form being rejected.

Q15: Do legal representatives need a separate USCIS online account for each client?

A15: No, attorneys and accredited representatives can use a single USCIS online account to prepare forms online for **all** their clients. The attorney or representative must first create an account for themselves as a representative. They can then prepare a draft of the client's application and Form G-28. The system provides the representative with a one-time passcode, which the representative sends to their client. The client will need to log in to **their own** account, enter the passcode, and review and sign the forms their attorney or representative prepared.

Q16: Is the future of USCIS operations digital? At some point, will applicants and petitioners be required to file all forms online?

A16: USCIS is committed to creating a better customer experience, and much of that effort and investment is dedicated to making all forms available for online filing. We certainly encourage our customers to file online. However, mandatory online filing is not being considered at this time.