

# Asylum Office Guide – Best Practices

Updated March 2, 2015

## Arlington, VA (ZAR)

This office is often referred to as “ZAR.” It changes its rules and procedures frequently. Published rules are sometimes not followed. Nonetheless, ZAR in general is a friendly office.

### **Location and Contact Information**

#### *Street Address:*

Arlington Asylum Office  
1525 Wilson Blvd, #300  
Arlington, VA 22209

#### *Mail Address:*

Arlington Asylum Office  
1525 Wilson Blvd  
Mailstop 2500  
Arlington VA 20598-2500

*Main Number:* (703) 235-4100

*Fax Number:* (703) 812-8455

Arlington.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov

Director: Jedidah Hussey

Deputy Director: Antonio Donis

1. **Walk-in Time for Inquiries:** members of the public, without an appointment, may walk in on Wednesdays from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm.
2. **Open to the public:**  
Monday – Wednesday: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Thursday: 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

People may walk in during these times and request an appointment, or make an inquiry, to be answered later.

3. **Rescheduling Requests:** send reschedule requests via fax, and then telephone ZAR
4. **Delivery of Documents:** ZAR will not accept deliveries from couriers such as Fed Ex and UPS. Mailstop 2500 is in the state of Maryland, perhaps resulting in a five-day delay. A lawyer, or paralegal who brings a letter from the lawyer verifying the paralegal’s employment, may walk in and hand-deliver documents.

Additional evidence must be submitted one week in advance or your case will be rescheduled. While this has been their policy for some time, it began to be strictly enforced as of 2/9/15. As a result, you should now bring in supplementary documents, in triplicate, one week before the interview. You need a table of contents, and tabs (either on the bottom or on the side).

Documents may be hand-delivered Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday between 7:00 am-11:00 am and Wednesday between 7:00 am-3:00 pm.

See two memorandum dated January 14, 2015, one from Jedidah Hussey on [hours of operation](#) and another on [document submission](#) for more details.

5. **Local AILA Liaison Chairs**  
Washington, D.C.:

Lynn Garfinkel  
7315 Wisconsin Avenue # 400-West  
Washington DC 20036  
[202] 640-4420  
lg@garfinkel-law.com

Georgia-Alabama:

Olesia Gorinshteyn  
270 Carpenter Drive NE  
Suite 530  
Atlanta, Georgia 30328  
[404] 400-1774  
gorinshteyn@gmail.com

6. **Service Area:** This Asylum Office serves the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

This office also serves the following counties in the state of Pennsylvania: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Butler, Cambria, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland.

7. **Additional Information:** ZAR often answers questions by quoting from the Affirmative Asylum Procedure Manual.

**Chicago, IL (ZCH)**

## Location and Contact Information

181 West Madison Street  
Suite 3000  
Chicago, IL 60602

*Main Number:* (312) 849-5200

*Fax Number:* (312) 849-5201

*E-mail:* [chicago.asylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:chicago.asylum@uscis.dhs.gov)

Asylum Office Director: Kenneth Madsen, ext. 5225

Asylum Office Deputy Director: Lisa Flanagan

Congressional Liaison: (312) 849-5200

Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

1. **Waiting Period:** The Chicago Asylum Office is currently experiencing a significant backlog in the scheduling of cases for interviews and in issuing decisions. Although some applicants are interviewed within 45 days, many applicants have not received an interview notice for one year or more after filing. The number of circuit rides decreased significantly in FY2014.
2. **Rescheduling Requests:** Rescheduling requests must be hand written and sent via mail, hand delivery, or fax to the attention of Supervisor Timothy Bondy or Kelly Burch. You may contact Timothy Bondy at 312-849-5211.
3. The request for a rescheduled interview must include the reason for the request and why the applicant or attorney cannot appear on the scheduled date.
4. You may also contact the Chicago Asylum Office by email at [CHICAGO.ASYLUM@USCIS.DHS.GOV](mailto:CHICAGO.ASYLUM@USCIS.DHS.GOV). Asylum Officers are bound by confidentiality restrictions and therefore may not be able to respond via email, so please include your contact information in the email.
5. **Filing Documentation:** The Chicago Asylum Office pre-assigns officers to cases a week before the interview. Attorneys may submit additional supplementary documents to the Chicago Asylum Office on Wednesday through Friday prior to the interview and it will make it to the file for review by the pre-assigned officer.

## 6. Liaison Committee Chairs:

### Chicago:

Ashley Huebner  
Managing Attorney  
National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)  
208 S. LaSalle St., Suite 1300  
Chicago, IL 60604

Phone: 312-660-1303  
Fax: 312-660-1505  
[ahuebner@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:ahuebner@heartlandalliance.org)

KiKi M. Mosley  
Law Offices of KiKi M. Mosley  
Immigration and Nationality Law  
208 S. LaSalle St. Suite 1400  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
Phone: 312-600-6220  
Fax: 312-263-3416  
[kiki@kikislaw.com](mailto:kiki@kikislaw.com)

Minnesota/Dakotas:

Sarah Brenes  
[sbrenes@advrights.org](mailto:sbrenes@advrights.org)

Alan Goldfarb  
[alan@dgvisalaw.com](mailto:alan@dgvisalaw.com)

Wisconsin

Melissa Soberalski  
[msoberalski@ls-visa.com](mailto:msoberalski@ls-visa.com)

Maria Lopez  
[mlopez@ls-visa.com](mailto:mlopez@ls-visa.com)

7. **Service Area:** The Chicago Asylum Office has jurisdiction over cases arising in Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

8. **Additional Information.**

- If an attorney is representing several family members, including multiple principal applicants and multiple derivatives, send a letter to the Chicago Asylum Office after filing the asylum applications to request that the principal applicants in the family be scheduled for asylum interviews on the same day. The Chicago Asylum Office will not otherwise know that the principal applicants are related and relying on similar evidence.
- Water is allowed in the Asylum Office. Food is not allowed.

**Houston, TX (ZHN)**

**Location and Contact Information.**

*Street Address:*

16630 Imperial Valley Drive, Suite 200  
Houston, TX 77060

*Mail Address:*

P.O. Box 670626  
Houston, TX 77267-0626

*Main Number:* 281-931-2100 (please send all inquiries to the e-mail address)

*Fax Number:* 281-931-1309 (please send all inquiries to the e-mail address)

*E-mail for inquiries:* [Houston.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Houston.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov)

Asylum Office Director: Marie Hummert, ext. 2174

Asylum Office Deputy Director: Jessica Walter, ext. 2172

AILA Liaison – Supervisory Asylum Officer (SAO): Will Bierman

Congressional Liaison: Mary Winkler: (714) 808-8203

Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

1. **Waiting Period:** Three to four weeks from filing to interview for cases interviewed at the Houston Office. The number and frequency of circuit rides (to Memphis, TN; Salt Lake City, UT; Denver, CO) was reduced in FY13. Accordingly, significant delays will likely accrue for those cases. Cases that would otherwise be interviewed in a circuit ride location will be interviewed in Houston at the request and expense of the applicant.
2. **Rescheduling Requests:** All requests to reschedule must be made by the applicant in writing by either mailing or faxing a letter to the Asylum Office, attention “Rescheduling”. In addition to the mail/fax request, attorneys and representatives may also submit an email to the email address noted above for inquiries, advising of the request for reschedule and identifying the date on which the request was mailed/faxed. Documentation must be submitted supporting the reason for the reschedule.
3. **Filing Documentation:** The Houston Asylum Office prefers documentation be filed with the asylum application at the Texas Service Center. In the event that supplemental documentation needs to be filed, Houston requests that it be filed with their office (not the Texas Service Center) well in advance of the interview. Houston would like to avoid large filings on the day of the interview. Day-of submissions may delay a decision in the case or necessitate a follow-up interview at a later date. Post-interview, any additional documentation may be faxed to the attention of the officer who conducted the interview.
4. **Liaison Committee Chairs:**  
Colorado:  
Suzan De Seguin-Hons  
2635 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Denver, CO 80211  
Phone: 303-442-8554  
Fax: 303-455-0858

[deseguinlaw@gmail.com](mailto:deseguinlaw@gmail.com)

Texas:

Paul Zoltan  
pzoltan@zoltanlaw.com

5. **Service Area and Circuit Rides:** The Houston Asylum Office serves the following states: Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

The office does circuit rides to Denver, CO; Salt Lake City, UT; and Memphis, TN. Depending on the applicant's location, the scheduled interview will be either at the Houston Asylum Office or circuit ride location nearest the applicant's address. If an applicant does not want to wait for the upcoming circuit ride, he/she can request to schedule an interview at the Houston Asylum Office, though travel costs will be at their own expense.

6. **Additional Information:**

- Photo identifications must be presented to be admitted to the office.
- Cell phones must be turned off when entering the waiting area. (Since every cell phone now has a camera function, the guards usually just say that cell phones are prohibited to avoid having to explore the functions of each phone.)
- Cameras (including camera phones) are not allowed in the waiting area and offices.
- Applicants must provide their own interpreters.
- If an applicant is attending an interview with children, it is requested that the applicant also bring someone (not the interpreter) who can monitor the children in the waiting area while the applicant's interview is conducted.
- Decisions will be scheduled for pick-up at the office, unless the applicant lives greater than 200 miles from the office, in which case a decision can be mailed. All decisions for circuit ride locations are mailed.
- If an applicant has special needs, it is recommended this be communicated to the asylum office once the applicant receives notice of the interview.
- Applicants should bring all original documents (passports, certificates, letters, etc.) in their possession for which copies have been submitted as part of the application or supplemental materials.

**Los Angeles, CA (ZLA):**

**Location and Contact Information:**

*Street Address:*

1585 South Manchester Avenue  
Anaheim, CA 92802

*Mailing Address:*

P.O. Box 65015  
Anaheim, CA 92802

*Main Number:* 714-808-8000  
*Fax Number:* 714-635-8707  
*Admin Fax Number:* 714-635-9136  
*APSO Fax Number:* 714-635-5611

The main phone number is typically only answered in the morning. Calling in the afternoon and reaching someone is generally only possible if you have the direct dial number of the person you need to reach. For a list of contact information for supervisory personnel, see the Los Angeles Asylum Office Contact list, AILA Infonet Doc. No: 14072944 (up to date as of July 2014).

*E-mail (general inquiries):* [losangeles.asylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:losangeles.asylum@uscis.dhs.gov)

Asylum Office Director: David Radel, [David.M.Radel@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:David.M.Radel@uscis.dhs.gov), 714-808-8206  
Acting Deputy Director: Marianne Hong, [Marianne.x.hong@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Marianne.x.hong@uscis.dhs.gov), 714-808-8205.  
Congressional Liaison: Mary Winkler, [Mary.L.Winkler@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Mary.L.Winkler@uscis.dhs.gov), 714-808-8203

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily

#### 1. **Waiting Period:**

**From Filing to Interview:** ZLA currently has a backlog of over 10,000 un-interviewed applications stretching back to FY2011. They are attempting to interview newly filed applications on a first-in, first-out basis in order to minimize the potential of people taking advantage of the backlog merely to obtain work authorization. However, the office continues to receive more new cases than it can schedule. As a result, if you file an application and you do not receive an interview notice within 3-4 weeks after filing, it is likely that your application has become part of the backlog. ZLA is unable to estimate how long a case that is part of the backlog will have to wait for interview.

**On the Day of the Interview:** The office reported in July 2014, that it has been able to improve the wait times to 1 hour or less on the day of the interview. In the past, it has been common to wait 2-3 hours or longer past the scheduled interview time to be called in by an officer. Morning cases still waiting at noon were told to go to lunch and come back. If you have a morning case and you have not been told to go to lunch by noon, you may inquire at the check-in window to see if your case has been assigned and, if so, whether the officer will be able to begin the interview soon or whether you should go to lunch. No food or drink is allowed in the waiting room. There is a water fountain.

**To Pick Up the Decision:** Out of status applicants return to the office two weeks after their interview to pick up the decision. Once there, ZLA reports that 80% of applicants wait 30 minutes or less to receive their decisions. Decisions that are mailed out, either because the applicant is in status or because processing (including background checks

and headquarters review, if necessary) has not been completed, can take significantly longer.

## 2. **Scheduling and Rescheduling Requests:**

**Getting an Application Out of the Backlog:** If you believe that extraordinary circumstances exist that warrant getting a case scheduled for interview earlier than it would otherwise, you can submit a written request for an expedited interview to Mary Winkler. Urgent requests can be sent to Marianne Hong or David Radel. Please include evidence of the extraordinary circumstance(s). Where possible given the office's limited ability to schedule and/or reschedule interviews, the office does attempt to prioritize scheduling requests in cases where the EAD clock has been stopped at less than 180 days.

**Rescheduling Requests:** All attorney inquiries and reschedule requests should be sent in writing to Mary Winkler via email at [Mary.L.Winkler@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Mary.L.Winkler@uscis.dhs.gov) or via fax to 714-254-4203. Reschedule requests should be sent in as early as possible in advance of the interview date and, at the very latest, must be received within 45 days after the interview date.

If Mary Winkler is out of the office, you may send interview reschedule requests to Lead Supervisory CIS Assistant Kristi Cottrell via email at [Kristi.L.Cottrell@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Kristi.L.Cottrell@uscis.dhs.gov) or via fax at 714-635-8707.

For urgent requests, you may contact Deputy Director Marianne Hong or Director David Radel via email at [Marianne.x.hong@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Marianne.x.hong@uscis.dhs.gov) or [David.M.Radel@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:David.M.Radel@uscis.dhs.gov) or via fax at (714) 635-9136.

Any inquiries about whether the request has been granted or not should be directed to Mary Winkler. In cases where there has been no reply, contact Director Radel or Deputy Director Hong directly at their numbers above.

Note that a request to reschedule stops the asylum processing KLOK until the applicant appears for the rescheduled interview. Due to the backlog, ZLA's ability to reschedule interviews is extremely limited. Thus, making a rescheduling request risks having the case go into the backlog with a stopped KLOK, making it impossible for the applicant to apply for work authorization no matter how long it takes to get the case rescheduled.

**Stand-By List:** Applicants in the backlog may request to be placed on a "stand-by" list to be called if a regularly scheduled case does not appear for interview. Standby calls require the applicant to arrive at the office within a short period of time, usually within an hour. If you would like your case to be included on the standby list, please contact Supervisory CIS Assistant Carlos Mejia via email at: [Carlos.E.Mejia@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Carlos.E.Mejia@uscis.dhs.gov) or request at window 1 to have your client placed on the standby list.

## 3. **Filing Documentation:** Any supplementary documents must be received by the asylum office *in triplicate* at least one week prior to the date of interview. They must be sent to



the attention of Kristi Cotrell by mail or fax (619-635-9136), or delivered in person. If you are sending fewer than 5 pages, you can email them to [losangelesasylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:losangelesasylum@uscis.dhs.gov). Please label the documents with the applicant's name, A-number, and interview time and date (if applicable).

Applicants who submit documentation on the day of the interview, either to the officer or at the window, risk having their interview rescheduled and their EAD clock stopped. Limited exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, but only with the approval of the duty officer. Applicants will need to show good cause for the untimely submission and that the same-day review of the documents will not significantly burden the interviewing officer. An exception to this is a case called from the stand-by list.

#### 4. **Liaison Committee Chairs:**

##### Southern California:

(This chapter has a cooperative liaison with the Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA)).

Kristen Jackson (LACBA)  
Senior Staff Attorney, Public Counsel Law Center  
610 South Ardmore Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90005  
Phone: (213) 385-2977 ext. 157  
Fax: (213) 385-9089  
[kjackson@publiccounsel.org](mailto:kjackson@publiccounsel.org)

Margarita Manduley (AILA)  
International Legal Alliance Group, Inc.  
Suite 555  
3575 Cahuenga Blvd. West  
Los Angeles, CA 90068  
Phone: (818) 506-0070  
Fax: (818) 5060660  
[llagusa.mm@gmail.com](mailto:llagusa.mm@gmail.com)

Monica Mansouri (AILA)  
Monica Mansouri, APLC  
Suite 400  
16601 Ventura Blvd.  
Encino, CA 91436  
Phone: (818) 986-1079  
Fax: (818) 986-1202  
[Monica.mansouri@gmail.com](mailto:Monica.mansouri@gmail.com)

##### San Diego:

Tatyana A. Edwards-Behar

Law Offices of Tatyana A. Edwards, APC  
Suite 770  
402 W. Broadway  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Phone: (619) 699-5875  
Fax: (619) 231-1775  
[tatedwards@gmail.com](mailto:tatedwards@gmail.com)

Krishma Parsad  
ABA Immigration Justice Project  
Suite 1700  
401 B Street  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Phone: (619) 699-2930  
Fax: (619) 568-3674  
[krishma.parsad@americanbar.org](mailto:krishma.parsad@americanbar.org)

Arizona:

Katharine E. Ruhl  
Ruhl Immigration P.L.L.C.  
PO Box 43261  
Tucson, AZ 85733  
[katharine@ruhlimmigration.com](mailto:katharine@ruhlimmigration.com)

5. **Service Area and Circuit Rides:** The Los Angeles Asylum Office has jurisdiction over cases arising out of Arizona, Hawaii, the Territory of Guam, select California counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura) and select Nevada counties (Clark, Esmerelda, Lincoln, and Nye).

The Los Angeles Asylum Office does circuit rides in Arizona, Hawaii, and the Territory of Guam. It does not do circuit rides in Nevada; those cases are interviewed in the Los Angeles Asylum Office.

An asylum officer is sent on a “circuit ride” detail to either Phoenix, Hawaii, or Guam on a periodic basis. The frequency and length of such details largely depends on the number of filings in a given area. The circuit rides take place at a USCIS facility.

Under ordinary circumstances, Phoenix rides occur each quarter, and Hawaii and Guam circuit rides occur once or twice a year. No circuit rides to Guam or Hawaii were conducted in fiscal year 2013, but circuit rides resumed to Phoenix, Hawaii and Guam in FY2014 and are expected to continue through FY2015.

An applicant who resides in a circuit ride location who can present proof of extraordinary circumstances can request to be interviewed at ZLA. However, due to the backlog, ZLA

may not be able to honor the request. The procedure for making such a request is the same as for scheduling/ rescheduling above.

**6. Additional Information:**

- Visitors to the Los Angeles Asylum Office are permitted to take cell phones, laptops, PDAs, and other electronic devices onto the premises. Audio and video recording devices must not be used on the premises. Attorneys are allowed to take notes on a laptop during interview.
- Cell phones must be silenced (vibrate or low volume) while in the waiting area. Cell phones must be completely turned off during interviews.
- Detailed information on other topics, including ABC/NACARA, reinstatement, credible & reasonable fear interviews, work authorization issues, as well as a list of contact information for supervisory personnel can be found in the AILA/ LACBA Liaison Meeting Notes from July 16, 2014, AILA Infonet Doc. No.: 14072942.

## **Miami, FL (ZMI)**

### **Location and Contact Information:**

99 Southeast 5th Street  
3rd Floor  
Miami, FL 33131

*Main Number:* (305) 960-8600

*Fax Number:* (305) 530-6071

Asylum Office Director: Varsenik Papazian  
Asylum Office Deputy Director: Kimberly M. Aguilar

Hours of Operation: 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Thursday

1. **Waiting Period:** On the day of the interview, the waiting period is less than 1 hour.
2. **Rescheduling Requests:** If applicants or their attorneys need to reschedule an interview, they should send a fax. The first request is generally honored, as long as it states a reason for the reschedule and is signed by the applicant or the attorney/representative. A second request is generally granted as long as it states a good cause for inability to appear with supporting documentation. After two reschedules, the applicant may receive a “final reschedule” notice.
3. **Filing Documentation:** The Asylum Office would like to have all documents filed together at the same time. It is possible to supplement, but they prefer one complete filing including application and all supporting documentation.

4. **Liaison Committee Chairs:**

South Florida:

Andrea Cole

Law Offices of Carlos M. Duque, P.A.

800 Brickell Ave Ste 1400

Miami, FL 33131

Phone: [\(305\) 436-0155](tel:(305)436-0155)

[andreacole@duqueimmigration.com](mailto:andreacole@duqueimmigration.com)

Claudia Del Castillo-Hronsky

Immigration Counsels LLC

14221 SW 120th Street, Suite 128

Miami, Florida 33186

Phone: (305) 720-2937

Fax: (305) 675-0806

[cdelcastillo@immigrationcounselllc.com](mailto:cdelcastillo@immigrationcounselllc.com)

5. **Circuit Rides:** The Miami Asylum Office does circuit rides in Jacksonville, Florida, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands.

### **Newark, NJ (ZNK)**

#### **Location and Contact Information:**

1200 Wall Street West  
4th Floor  
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

*Main Number:* (201) 508-6100

*Fax Number:* (201) 531-1877

Asylum Office Director: Susan Raufer, [susan.raufer@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:susan.raufer@uscis.dhs.gov)

Asylum Office Deputy Director: Lorie Heinrich, [lorie.heinrich@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:lorie.heinrich@uscis.dhs.gov)

Congressional Liaison: *Vacant*

Hours of Operation: Monday – Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (appointment only)  
Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (walk-in hours)

The building has public parking. There is a cafeteria on the first floor of the building.

1. **Waiting Periods:** Asylum applicants are usually called in for a scheduled interview relatively promptly (within an hour of checking in with the front desk).
2. **Rescheduling Requests:** Rescheduling requests must be submitted by hand or faxed as soon as possible. They must include the applicant's name, alien number, Form G-28, date of scheduled interview, and reasons behind the rescheduling request. The requests should be directed to Acting Support Unit Supervisor, Estela Carr, for all interview locations.

Rescheduling requests made by the applicant will be randomly rescheduled by a computer. On occasions where the asylum office is the reason for rescheduling, the office will manually set the date to accommodate the attorney's schedule.

The new rescheduled date is generally between three weeks and a year, or longer, due to current backlogs.

The first rescheduling request is honored without an explanation, but subsequent requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a no-show, please contact the office no more than two weeks after the scheduled date to request the interview be rescheduled, and be prepared to provide a reason for the no-show.

- Filing Supporting Documentation:** The Newark Asylum Office pre-assigns cases several days prior to the interview. Additional supplementary documents should be submitted to the office at least one week prior to the interview. Submitting supporting material on the date of the interview may cause the case to be rescheduled. Materials can be dropped off at the front desk or mailed directly to the Asylum Office, and should be tabbed and indexed.

To make a specific request for a special accommodation (female interviewer, handicap accessibility, presence of student observers or witnesses, etc.), please contact the office ahead of time.

- Liaison Committee Chairs:**

New England

Rosanne Milano  
Barker, Epstein & Loscocco  
10 Winthrop Square, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
Phone: (617) 482-4900 ext. 213  
[rmilano@barkerloscocco.com](mailto:rmilano@barkerloscocco.com)

Anita P. Sharma  
PAIR Project  
98 North Washington St., Suite 106  
Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: (617) 742-9296  
Fax: (617) 742-9385  
[asharma@pairproject.org](mailto:asharma@pairproject.org)

Upstate New York

Walter Ruehle  
The Legal Aid Society of Rochester  
Room 800  
1 West Main Street  
Rochester, NY 14614  
Phone: (585) 295-5761  
Fax: (585) 232-2352  
[wruehle@lasroc.org](mailto:wruehle@lasroc.org)

New York

Randall Chamberlain  
Law Office of Randall Chamberlain, PLLC  
348 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street #5  
New York, NY 10065  
Phone: (212) 988-5806  
Fax: (646) 349-1675

[randall@RCImmigrationLaw.com](mailto:randall@RCImmigrationLaw.com)

Jennifer Chung  
Christophe Law Group, PC  
2 Wall Street, Suite 303  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: (212) 344-3800  
Fax: (212) 344-3212  
[chungjenn@aol.com](mailto:chungjenn@aol.com)

Philadelphia  
Ayodelle Gansallo  
HIAS & Council Migration Service  
3rd Floor  
2100 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Phone: (215) 832-0900 5911  
Fax: (215) 832-0919  
[agansallo@hiaspa.org](mailto:agansallo@hiaspa.org)

Andrew Mahon  
Law Office of Troy J. Mattes, PC  
132 East Chestnut Street  
Lancaster, PA 17602  
Phone: (717) 208-2481  
Fax: (717) 299-1535  
[amahon.matteslaw@gmail.com](mailto:amahon.matteslaw@gmail.com)

5. **Service Area and Circuit Rides:** This Asylum Office serves the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont; as well as certain counties in New York and Pennsylvania.

The Newark Asylum Office does circuit rides throughout Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Asylum Officers currently do circuit rides to Boston, MA, at irregular intervals of 1 to 3 months, to conduct interviews for one week, generally from Monday afternoon through Friday morning. The front desk will be setup on Monday morning for the week of interviews.

In early 2015, the Newark Asylum Office is planning to establish a permanent sub-office in Boston, MA, that will have regular business hours and policies similar to the Newark Asylum Office. Additional details will become available once the sub-office is established.

The interviews in Boston, MA, are currently conducted at:  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Room 605  
Government Center  
15 New Sudbury Street  
Boston, MA 02203-0002  
Phone: (617) 565-9030

Asylum Officers travel to St. Albans, VT periodically.  
The interviews are conducted at:  
St. Albans Field Office  
64 Gricebrook Road  
St. Albans, VT 05478

Asylum Officers travel to Buffalo, NY periodically.  
The interviews are conducted at:  
Buffalo District Office  
130 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14202

6. **Additional Information:** The deputy director and the director will respond to emails and will reply to letter or phone follow-ups as necessary. Emails should contain contact and reply information, but should not contain any confidential information.

A detailed list of asylum officers and supervisors and designated support staff is provided by the asylum office to local asylum office liaisons.

There is an expedite procedure in place to obtain interviews at the Newark Asylum Office for cases which present exigent or humanitarian concerns. Please contact your local liaison for further details.

## **New York City (ZNY)**

### **Location and Contact Information:**

#### *Physical Address:*

One Cross Island Plaza  
133-33 Brookville Blvd, 3rd Floor  
Rosedale, NY 11422

#### *Mailing Address:*

One Cross Island Plaza, 3rd Floor  
Rosedale, NY 11422

*Main Number:* (718) 723-5954

*Fax Number:* (718) 723-1121



Asylum Office Director: Patricia Menges, ext. 1002, [patricia.menges@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:patricia.menges@uscis.dhs.gov)  
Asylum Office Deputy Director: Ashley Caudill-Mirillo, ext. 1004,  
[ashley.caudill.mirillo@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:ashley.caudill.mirillo@uscis.dhs.gov)

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Case inquiries and questions regarding agency / office policy and procedure can be submitted via mail, in-person, fax, telephone, or e-mail.

**Mail:** Send correspondence to the attention of the Immigration Analysts using the mailing address listed above.

**Fax:** Send the correspondence to the attention of the Immigration Analysts using the fax number listed above.

**Telephone:** Dial (718) 723-5954 and ask to speak to an Immigration Analyst.

**E-mail:** Send the correspondence to the attention of the Immigration Analyst at [NewYork.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:NewYork.Asylum@uscis.dhs.gov).

**In-person:** Visit the office and indicate that you wish to make an inquiry. Walk-in hours are between 7:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m.

Please direct complaints or concerns to the Director or Deputy Director via mail or fax. In addition, if you submit a case inquiry or pose a question to the Immigration Analysts and do not receive a response within 3 weeks, please send a letter to the Director or Deputy Director via mail or fax. The Director and Deputy Director will not respond to phone calls or e-mails.

The building has no parking, but there is parking on the street nearby. There is a cafeteria on the first floor.

1. **Waiting Period:** Occasionally, you may experience waiting room delays. Interview times are staggered to minimize delays. To minimize the inconvenience to visitors, the office has adopted a pager system that allows applicants, interpreters, and attorneys to exit the secure waiting room while they are waiting, enabling them to use electronic devices and patronize the café downstairs. The office will send a signal to the pager approximately 15 minutes before the AO will call the case. This provides the applicant with plenty of time to return to the waiting room and pass through security. Pagers can be obtained from the front desk. The office also has a Children's Corner with books, toys, and games. There are also two computers with children's games located in the waiting room. This is to make the waiting room more family-friendly.
2. **Rescheduling Requests:** To reschedule, send in a written request via mail, hand-delivery, or fax, prior to the date of the interview. A first request is normally granted without explanation. Subsequent requests may require an explanation and will be determined on a

case-by-case basis. Follow-ups on reschedule requests should be submitted if a response is not received within 30 days.

3. **Filing Documentation:** The New York Asylum Office does not pre-assign cases. Supporting materials can be submitted prior to the interview or with the front desk on the morning of the interview when the applicant checks in. You should not wait to give this documentation to the officer at the commencement of the interview.

4. **Liaison Committee Chairs:**

Randall Chamberlain  
Law Office of Randall Chamberlain, PLLC  
348 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street #5  
New York, NY 10065  
Phone: (212) 988-5806  
Fax: (646) 349-1675  
[randall@RCImmigrationLaw.com](mailto:randall@RCImmigrationLaw.com)

Jennifer Chung  
Chistophe Law Group, PC  
2 Wall Street, Suite 303  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: (212) 344-3800  
Fax: (212) 344-3212  
[chungjenn@aol.com](mailto:chungjenn@aol.com)

5. **Additional Information.**

- No water or food is allowed in the secure waiting area.
- All electronic devices (including but not limited to cellular telephones, laptops, iPads, etc.) must be turned off while you are inside the secure waiting area.
- **The New York Asylum Office is very strict about time. Applicants, attorneys, and interpreters must check in no later than 30 minutes beyond the appointment time. Any cases that are not prepared to check in and move forward within 30 minutes of their appointment time will be rescheduled unless they can show emergent or extenuating circumstances.**

**San Francisco, CA (ZSF)**

**Location and Contact Information:**

*Street Address:*

75 Hawthorne Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Room 303 S

San Francisco, CA 94105

The reception area and waiting room are on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. When the officer is ready to begin the interview, the applicant (and attorney and/or interpreter) will proceed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

*Mailing Address:*

P.O. Box 77530  
San Francisco, CA 94107

Main Number: 415-293-1234

Fax Number: 415-293-1269

Asylum Office Director: Emilia Bardini, [emilia.m.bardini@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:emilia.m.bardini@uscis.dhs.gov)

Asylum Office Deputy Director: Calton Yue, [Calton.Yue@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Calton.Yue@uscis.dhs.gov)

Congressional Liaison: Michelle Henderson: [SanFranciscoAsylum@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:SanFranciscoAsylum@uscis.dhs.gov).

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, by appointment only. Public window open for inquiries Friday morning 8-12pm, documents may be dropped off on Mondays 12 noon-2pm.

1. **Waiting Period:** Interviews take place Mondays through Thursdays, at 8:30am or 10:15am. Officers have two interviews daily (back-to-back interviews). The 8:30 interview usually begins around 9:00am, and the 10:15 interview usually starts around 11:00am, sometimes later. Interviews take an average of two hours.
- 2.
3. **Rescheduling Requests:** The asylum office will take reschedule requests before the interview or the day of the interview. Requests before the interview date must be in writing, via fax or mail. Special requests may be made directly to the Director or Deputy Director in cases of medical urgency. The office also accepts “short notice requests;” if the attorney and client can come in for an interview on short notice, usually around two or three days before an open interview slot, they can sign up with the Director.

The scheduler generally cannot be contacted directly, and therefore it is recommended to include in the request any potential upcoming conflicts.

Although confirmation of a reschedule request by mail or fax should be provided, attorneys should not expect anyone to contact him or her to confirm the new date. If the new interview is approved, attorneys or applicants should expect a new interview notice by mail. In UAC cases interview scheduling can be arranged with the scheduler working through Supervisor Vincent Ferri, [Vincent.Ferri@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:Vincent.Ferri@uscis.dhs.gov). Given the current backlogs, an applicant should not expect a rescheduled interview for six months or more. Also, reschedule requests sometimes fall through the cracks. If you feel that this has happened, it is recommended to email the director or deputy director.

4. **Filing Documentation:** The San Francisco Asylum Office accepts filings at the front window on Monday afternoon between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm. They also accept documentation by mail, however many attorneys have noted that mailed documents do

not reach the file by the time of the interview, or are lost. If you mail documents, definitely get a tracking number. Hand-delivery of the documents to the front window is a common method to make sure the documents reach the file. The San Francisco Asylum Office considers timely submission of documents to be by Monday of the week before the interview.

When an applicant arrives to an interview with additional documents, the front desk will take them and add them to the file. However, they will most likely reschedule the interview.

**5. Liaison Committee Chairs:**

Northern California:

Grace Alano

Alan Bennett

[asylum@ailanorcal.com](mailto:asylum@ailanorcal.com)

For updates and AILA NorCal Liaison Meetings' minutes, check [www.ailanorcal.com](http://www.ailanorcal.com).

Oregon:

Chris Anders

PARKER BUTTE & LANE, PC

1336 East Burnside Street, Suite 200

Portland, OR 97214

Phone: (503) 241-1320

Fax: (503) 323-9058

[cca@pbl.net](mailto:cca@pbl.net)

Santa Clara:

Yemi Getachew

Law Office of Yemi Getachew

Suite 170

255 N. Market Street

San Jose, CA 95110

Phone: (408) 292-7995

Fax: (408) 292-5799

[yemi@ethiopianattorney.com](mailto:yemi@ethiopianattorney.com)

Washington:

John L. Wheaton

1001 4th Ave., Suite 3200

Seattle, WA 98154

(206) 829-8214

[jlwheaton@gmail.com](mailto:jlwheaton@gmail.com)

Maggie Cheng

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

615 2nd Ave., Suite 400

Seattle, WA 91804  
Phone: (206) 957-8642  
Fax: (206) 587-4025  
[maggie@nwirp.org](mailto:maggie@nwirp.org)

6. **Service Area and Circuit Rides:** The San Francisco Asylum Office does circuit rides in Alaska, Oregon, and Washington.

The San Francisco Asylum Office serves the following counties in the state of California: Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba.

The San Francisco Asylum Office serves the following counties in the state of Nevada: Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Storey, Wash, and White Pine.

7. **Additional Information:**

**I. The Interview Day:**

1. Parking can be tricky, although there are several paid lots in the area. If taking BART, the office is a 10-minute walk from the Montgomery station. It is advisable to arrive *at least* 15 minutes before the appointment time. There are two metal detector stations that everyone must pass through before getting to the appointment window. The San Francisco Asylum Office also maintains the right to consider the applicant a “no-show” if he or she is more than 15 minutes late. Public transportation delays (which do happen) are generally not an excuse for late arrivals.
2. At the conclusion of the interview, attorneys are allowed follow-up or the opportunity to make a closing statement. However, SF Asylum Officers are specifically trained not to provide any indication of how they will decide the case. So after the applicant finishes the interview portion, if attorneys ask questions of the officer, such as “do you have any concerns about the case that I can help you answer,” asylum officers generally say something like, “I’ve heard all the facts and will be making my decision based on those.” It is difficult to engage the officer in any kind of discussion, but with some officers it can be done.
3. If there is a problem with an asylum officer during the interview, it is recommended to speak to his or her supervisor.
4. Interviews take an average of 2 hours.

**II. Notice pick-up:**

Applicants are required to pick up their decision letters approximately 15 days after the interview. If at the time of the pick-up the letter is not ready, the person at the front desk advises that an applicant can return on a subsequent Friday to check on the status of the decision, or that it will be mailed to them.

**III. After final denial of an in-status applicant:**

- a. If someone was denied by the asylum office while in status and would like to re-apply for asylum, mail a copy of the I-589 and the decision letter directly to the SF asylum office and state in a cover letter that you are re-applying. However, do not expect to be rescheduled for a new interview until the director or assistant director has been contacted; the SF office deals with this so infrequently, they do not have a procedure for re-filed applications. Additionally, in the interview, the asylum officer may not understand what is going on, so the attorney may have to explain.
- b. If the client prefers to go to court after a final denial, then a request for an NTA should be mailed or faxed. In that correspondence, the client should also provide proof that the applicant is no longer in status (such as an expired I-94). The SF office cannot estimate when an NTA will be produced, but anecdotal evidence suggests it usually takes many months. If it takes months, contact the director or assistant director.