

May 23, 2022



How To Best Communicate With USCIS Right Now

Dear Stakeholder,

We are sending this message to share some updates and best practices for communicating with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as we have heard from you about concerns regarding the USCIS Contact Center.

USCIS is actively recruiting to fill approximately 4,400 vacancies agencywide, including at the Contact Center. Given the current shortage of representatives, including those who are Spanish-speaking, Spanish speakers should consider calling with an English interpreter, if feasible, to minimize wait times.

Best Practices

- 1. Online tools:** Always start by reviewing publicly available immigration information on the USCIS website. Many questions can be answered by the online FAQs and specific web pages addressing the various benefit types. In addition, individuals can reach out to USCIS through [online tools](#), such as [e-Request](#). e-Request is available anytime for you to ask a question about your case and saves you from having to wait on the phone. If you have a [USCIS online account](#), you can use secure messaging to ask questions about forms filed online or linked to your account. A USCIS Contact Center representative will review your message.
- 2. Ask Emma:** You can also ask [Emma](#), USCIS' online virtual assistant, for help. If she cannot answer your questions, she may connect you to a live chat representative to assist with more complex inquiries, including scheduling an in-person appointment at the local field office if necessary. Please note Emma will not connect you to a live representative just because you state that you want to speak with someone. You must establish a need to speak with a representative; that is determined by the information you seek.
- 3. USCIS Contact Center:** When calling the USCIS Contact Center, you will be connected to an interactive voice response (IVR) system, which can answer many of your questions. If the IVR determines you need to speak with a live representative, it may connect you immediately or you may have to wait, depending on the time of day, the call volume, and the availability of USCIS representatives.

If USCIS schedules a callback, it will text and/or email you one to two days before the call. Check your email and text messages for these notices as it will help you prepare for your callback. Once the text and/or email is received, we suggest adding this number to your cell phone so you recognize the incoming call is from USCIS. If you don't pick up the first call, USCIS will call one more time. Please note that USCIS connects with 88%-90% of people during the first callback.

In fiscal year 2021, the USCIS Contact Center received 14.6 million calls and conducted 852,000 live chats. Twelve million people asked Emma questions and 211,000 people scheduled appointments.

For more suggestions on how to contact USCIS, read our [USCIS Contact Center Tip Sheet](#).

The CIS Ombudsman is dedicated to assisting individuals and employers seeking to resolve problems with USCIS whenever possible. For more information on our office, please visit www.dhs.gov/cisombudsman or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Please complete the [CIS Ombudsman Customer Satisfaction Survey](#). We appreciate your feedback.