



August 24, 2018

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## Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Geographic Area of a Regional Center

### Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is updating guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) regarding a regional center's geographic area, requests to expand the geographic area, and how such requests impact the filing of Form I-526 petitions.

### Background

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) makes visas available to qualified foreign nationals who will contribute to the economic growth of the United States by investing in U.S. businesses and creating jobs for U.S. workers.<sup>1</sup> Congress created the Regional Center Program in 1992 to determine the viability of pooling investments in designated regional centers. The goal of the Regional Center Program is to stimulate economic growth in a specified geographic area.

This updated Policy Manual guidance is controlling and supersedes any prior guidance.

### Policy Highlights

- Clarifies that USCIS reviews whether an economic methodology is reasonable to demonstrate that a regional center's geographic area is limited, to include whether the multipliers and assumptions about a project's geographic impact are reasonable.
- Explains that a regional center's geographic area must be limited, contiguous, and consistent with the purpose of concentrating pooled investment in defined economic zones.
- Affirms that a Form I-924 amendment must be filed and approved in order to expand the regional center's geographic area for requests made on or after February 22, 2017.<sup>2</sup>
- Clarifies how USCIS adjudicates regional center-associated Form I-526 petitions where the regional center has requested an expansion of its geographic area.<sup>3</sup>
- Explains that USCIS considers a change in regional center affiliation a material change in cases where the change takes place after Form I-526 has been filed.

### Citation

Volume 6: Immigrants, Part G, Investors [[6 USCIS-PM G](#)].

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<sup>1</sup> See [INA 203\(b\)\(5\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [Form I-924](#), Application For Regional Center Designation Under the Immigrant Investor Program.

<sup>3</sup> See [Form I-526](#), Immigrant Petition by Alien Entrepreneur.