



## Questions and Answers for Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Follow-to-Join Processing National Engagement

March 29, 2023

### Background

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) conducted a national stakeholder engagement on March 29, 2023, on Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Follow-to-Join Processing. Please note that some of the stakeholder questions below may have been revised for clarity.

### Case Processing Questions

- 1. Why does USCIS only publish case processing times for asylee-based Forms I-730 and not for refugee-based Forms I-730?**

#### **RESPONSE:**

In alignment with USCIS Director Ur Jaddou's agency-wide goal of 6-month processing times for Form I-730 petitions, USCIS is working to expand the information on processing times across the agency beyond the information that is currently on the Form I-730 processing times website, which presently only displays initial domestic processing times for asylum-based Form I-730 petitions at the Texas Service Center and the Nebraska Service Center. The expanded Form I-730 processing times will include information for each step of Form I-730 processing within USCIS (that is, initial domestic processing and interview and additional processing times for Service Center Operations Directorate; Field Operations Directorate; and Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate). The USCIS Office of Performance and Quality and operational directorates are currently working on the design and functionality to post the additional metrics. USCIS expects the expanded Form I-730 processing times, including case processing times for refugee-based Form I-730 petitions, will be released in late summer 2023. Note these anticipated processing times will only include USCIS processing times and not include DOS processing times.

- 2. We noticed the median processing time for Form I-730 in FY 2022 was 28.6 months and in FY 2023 thus far, it is 14 months ([according to this USCIS historic processing times site](#)). Please describe what efforts have contributed to this change.**



**RESPONSE:**

The COVID pandemic affected Form I-730 processing in Service Centers. USCIS and SCOPS had to rethink how we did business. At that time, Service Center staff were sometimes shifted to cover other emerging priorities, which affected Form I-730 processing time. We have since assigned additional staff to work the Form I-730 portfolio, and processing times have come down. Also, please note that the historical processing times site uses a median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) statistic, while the look-up tables on the main case processing time page use the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**3. What is USCIS doing to resolve the long delays and extended processing times for Forms I-730, and how can petitioners contact USCIS to resolve a long-pending Form I-730?**

**RESPONSE:**

As noted during the [July 2022 stakeholder engagement](#), RAIO conducted a resource review for Form I-730 processing, which included an assessment of pending Form I-730 workloads and areas requiring additional attention. In an effort to devote more resources to Form I-730 processing where possible, since November 2022, two teams of RAIO headquarters and division staff traveled to the Asylum Vetting Center, also known as ZGA, to conduct supervisory review of Form I-730 petitions to support increased case completions. Additionally, RAIO, with the assistance of other USCIS components, is working to facilitate remote review and processing of Form I-730 FTJ-R petitions pending at ZGA. RAIO plans to continue efforts to reduce the Form I-730 workload backlog at ZGA this fiscal year.

If your Form I-730 is outside normal processing time, you may call the Contact Center ([uscis.gov/ContactCenter](https://uscis.gov/ContactCenter)) or reach out online through e-request at <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>.

**4. Please share if the data from [the USCIS historic processing times site](#) is only for domestic processing or if it includes the entire adjudication timeline of a Form I-730?**

**RESPONSE:**

The data on the USCIS historic processing times site only reflects processing at the USCIS Service Center handling asylum-based Forms I-730. Also, please note that the historical processing times site uses a median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) statistic, while the look-up tables on the main case processing time page use the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile. It is also averaging the Service Center data over the course of the fiscal year, rather than providing a location-specific processing time for a specific time period covering 6 months of data.



- 5. We understand that as of Sept. 30, 2022, there were approximately 2,800 Form I-730 follow-to-join refugee petitions pending interview or additional processing abroad, and there were approximately 5,500 Form I-730 follow-to-join refugee petitions that had been received by USCIS and were pending initial domestic processing. What steps is USCIS taking to reduce processing times for follow-to-join refugees? We further understand that as of Nov. 30, 2022, Form I-730 follow-to-join asylee petitions being processed by the Nebraska Service Center are estimated to be processed in 13 months and Form I-730 follow-to-join asylee petitions being processed at the Texas Service Center are estimated to be processed in 22.5 months. What steps is USCIS taking to reduce processing times for follow-to-join asylee?**

**RESPONSE:**

RAIO conducted a resource review on Form I-730 processing in 2022, including an assessment of pending Form I-730 workloads and areas requiring additional attention. In an effort to devote more resources to Form I-730 processing where possible, since November 2022, two teams of RAIO headquarters and division staff traveled to the Asylum Vetting Center, also known as ZGA, to conduct supervisory review of Form I-730 petitions to support increased case completions. Additionally, RAIO, with the assistance of other USCIS components, is working to facilitate remote review and processing of Form I-730 FTJ-R petitions pending at the ZGA. RAIO plans to continue efforts to reduce the Form I-730 workload backlog at ZGA this fiscal year.

As of Jan. 1, all Forms I-730 are being mailed to the Texas Service Center. Overall processing times in SCOPS have fallen due to an increase in dedicated staff processing Form I-730. The posted times reflect Service Center processing only.

Processing times show the amount of time it took to complete 80% of adjudicated cases over the last six months. Processing time is defined as the number of days (or months) that have elapsed between the date USCIS received an application, petition, or request and the date USCIS completed the application, petition, or request (that is, approved or denied it) in a given six-month period. USCIS does not track or measure after completion the time to arrival in the United States.

USCIS monitors the number of pending cases in the agency's workload through a metric called "cycle times." A cycle time measures how many months' worth of pending cases for a particular form are awaiting a decision. For now, the posted location-specific times listed on the website for Forms I-730 are calculated using the cycle time method. However, USCIS has been shifting to the processing time method. In the near future, the Form I-730 will be calculated as a processing time, and this may cause numbers to



fluctuate. This will not be due to an operational change, but to a different calculation method.

- 6. Why is it not possible to check processing times for Forms I-730 pending with the National Benefits Center on the USCIS website (<https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>)?**

**RESEPNSE:**

Form I-730s are not adjudicated or pre-processes by the National Benefits Center (NBC) in Lee's Summit, Missouri. Form I-730s may have transited through the NBC but are routed onward (such as to a domestic field office).

**Asylum Vetting Center in Atlanta Questions**

- 7. How are cases being processed, for example, are Forms I-730 operating under a "first in, first out" rule? Are any specific types of cases being prioritized?**

**RESPONSE:**

Generally, each USCIS directorate and office sets priorities for specific form types and workloads, given the volume of petitions and applications that USCIS receives. In general, the Asylum Vetting Center is processing Form I-730 petitions first in, first out, with some exceptions. For example, currently USCIS is prioritizing processing of Form I-730 petitions for Afghan nationals.

- 7a. Will processing times for cases in Atlanta be made public?**

**RESPONSE:**

Please see response above for Form I-730 processing times.

- 7b. How many adjudicators are in the new Asylum Vetting Center unit?**

**RESPONSE:**

The Asylum Vetting Center has 20 asylum officer positions, including filled and vacant positions. Asylum officers are assigned to a variety of workloads, which may include Form I-730 processing.

- 7c. Please share any changes in policies or procedures that occurred in the shift to the Asylum Vetting Center.**



**RESPONSE:**

There have been no changes in Form I-730 domestic processing policies or procedures with the transfer of Form I-730 follow-to-join refugee (FTJ-R) petitions from the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Los Angeles Asylum Office to the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Asylum Vetting Center.

**7d. Can you share contact information for the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Atlanta Asylum Vetting Center so practitioners have a place to contact for troubleshooting?**

**RESPONSE:**

You may contact the Asylum Vetting Center in writing by mail.

**If sending correspondence via U.S. Postal Service (USPS), send it to:**

DHS/USCIS  
Form I-730 Processing Unit  
Asylum Vetting Center  
P.O. Box 57100  
Atlanta, GA 30308-0506

**If sending correspondence via FedEx, UPS or DHL, send it to:**

DHS/USCIS  
Form I-730 Processing Unit  
Asylum Vetting Center  
401 W. Peachtree St. NW, Suite 1000  
Atlanta, GA 30308

Please note that the Asylum Center is not a public-facing office and does not accept requests or inquiries made in person.

**Expedite Processing Questions**

**8. Is there any way for practitioners to expedite urgent cases?**

**RESPONSE:**

Form I-730 petitioners and attorneys of record may ask USCIS to expedite adjudication. For expedite requests, USCIS will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis; may require additional documentation to support a request; and has the sole discretion to decide whether to accommodate a request. Given that granting a Form I-730 expedite request means that USCIS would adjudicate the requestor's petition ahead of others who filed earlier, USCIS carefully weighs the urgency and merit of each expedite request.



## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS may consider an expedite request if it meets one or more of these criteria or circumstances:

- a. Severe financial loss to a company or person, provided that the need for urgent action is not the result of the petitioner's failure to:
  - i. File the benefit request or the expedite request in a reasonable time frame, or
  - ii. Respond to any requests for additional evidence in a timely manner.
- b. Emergencies and urgent humanitarian reasons;
- c. Nonprofit organizations (as designated by the Internal Revenue Service) whose request is in furtherance of the cultural or social interests of the United States;
- d. U.S. government interests (such as cases identified as urgent by federal agencies, or other public safety or national security interests); or
- e. Clear USCIS error.

For information on making an expedite request for USCIS processing, please refer to the USCIS How to Make an Expedite Request webpage ([uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request](https://uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request)), which includes information on expedite criteria. If your situation falls under any of the USCIS expedite criteria, you have already filed your Form I-730 petition with USCIS, and you would like to request expedited processing, please make the expedite request to the appropriate USCIS component processing your petition by referring to the most recent transfer or decision notice you have received.

For Form I-730 petitions at the Texas Service Center, contact the [USCIS Contact Center](#) to make an expedite request.

For Form I-730 petitions at the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Asylum Vetting Center, make expedite requests through the USCIS [Contact Center](#). You also can make expedite requests by mail:

Using the U.S. Postal Service:

Form I-730 Processing Unit  
Asylum Vetting Center  
P.O. Box 57100  
Atlanta, GA 30308-0506

Using FedEx, UPS, or DHL:

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Atlanta, GA 30308.

Please note that the Asylum Vetting Center is not a public-facing office and does not accept requests or inquiries made in person.

For Form I-730 petitions at a USCIS domestic field office, make expedite requests through the [Contact Center](#) or by U.S. Postal Service mail. Please refer to the mailing address for the USCIS domestic field office where we have transferred the Form I-730 petition.

For Form I-730 petitions at a USCIS international field office, make expedite requests to the international field office. Find contact information for the office at the [International Immigration Offices webpage](#).

- 9. After submitting a request for expedited treatment of a long-pending Form I-730 for a country where there is active armed conflict, the USCIS representative indicated that they are not providing expedited processing for Form I-730s. Please confirm if that is true, and if not, please clarify how I can submit an expedite request for Form I-730. Thank you.**

### **RESPONSE:**

USCIS does consider I-730 expedite requests on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons.

For information on making an expedite request for USCIS processing, please refer to the USCIS How to Make an Expedite Request webpage ([uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request](https://uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request)), which includes information on expedite criteria. If your situation falls under any of the USCIS expedite criteria, you have already filed your Form I-730 petition with USCIS, and you would like to request expedited processing, please make the expedite request to the appropriate USCIS component processing your petition by referring to the most recent transfer or decision notice you have received.

For Form I-730 petitions at the Texas Service Center, contact the [USCIS Contact Center](#) to make an expedite request.

For Form I-730 petitions at the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Asylum Vetting Center, make expedite requests through the USCIS [Contact Center](#). You also can make expedite requests by mail:

Using the U.S. Postal Service:



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Please note that the Asylum Vetting Center is not a public-facing office and does not accept requests or inquiries made in person.

For Form I-730 petitions at a USCIS domestic field office, make expedite requests through the [Contact Center](#) or by U.S. Postal Service mail. Please refer to the mailing address for the USCIS domestic field office where the Form I-730 petition has been transferred.

For Form I-730 petitions at a USCIS international field office, make expedite requests to the international field office. Find contact information for the office at the [International Immigration Offices webpage](#).

Please note, once a Form I-730 petition is transferred to the Department of State, individuals must follow DOS' expedite request procedures.

### **10. Is there a way to expedite a Form I-730 for overseas derivatives if they are in danger?**

#### **RESPONSE:**

Form I-730 petitioners and attorneys of record may ask USCIS to expedite adjudication. For expedite requests, USCIS will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis; may require additional documentation to support a request; and has the sole discretion to decide whether to accommodate a request. Given that granting a Form I-730 expedite request means that USCIS would adjudicate the requestor's petition ahead of others who filed earlier, USCIS carefully weighs the urgency and merit of each expedite request. USCIS may consider an expedite request if it meets one or more of these criteria or circumstances:

- a. Severe financial loss to a company or person, provided that the need for urgent action is not the result of the petitioner's failure to:
  - i. File the benefit request or the expedite request in a reasonable time frame, or



- ii. Respond to any requests for additional evidence in a timely manner.
- b. Emergencies and urgent humanitarian reasons;
- c. Nonprofit organizations (as designated by the Internal Revenue Service) whose request is in furtherance of the cultural or social interests of the United States;
- d. U.S. government interests (such as cases identified as urgent by federal agencies or other public safety or national security interests); or
- e. Clear USCIS error.

**11. Are there any special accommodations being made for processing an approved Afghan Form I-730? Are they going to be processed alongside other Afghan family reunification efforts?**

**RESPONSE:**

Currently, USCIS and DOS are prioritizing the processing of Form I-730 petitions for Afghan nationals. USCIS is working closely with DOS to identify how to process Form I-730 petitions in locations abroad where there is no U.S. embassy or consular presence, including whether beneficiaries can be processed in another country. If the Form I-730 beneficiary has moved, we ask that the Form I-730 petitioner provide updated address information for the beneficiary, using the instructions on the USCIS Form I-730 website. Please check the USCIS and DOS websites for updates on any new information that might be available for Form I-730 processing for Afghan nationals.

**Data Request**

**12. Please provide the current number of pending Form I-730 petitions broken down by:**

- Type (that is, refugee or asylee);
- Nationality; and
- Processing stage (such as domestic processing, pre-interview, re-interview needed, security checks, etc.).

**RESPONSE:**

As of March 6, 2023, there are approximately 20,000 Form I-730 petitions pending initial domestic processing with USCIS and approximately 9,500 Form I-730 petitions pending interview and additional processing with USCIS. Additionally, there are approximately 16,000 Form I-730 petitions pending interview and additional processing with DOS.

The following statistics were pulled on March 6, 2023, and are current only as of March 6, 2023. Of the approximately 20,000 Form I-730 petitions pending initial domestic



processing with USCIS, approximately 5,500 are pending following-to-join refugee petitions and approximately 14,500 are pending following-to-join asylee petitions.

Of the approximately 9,500 Form I-730 petitions pending interview and additional processing with USCIS, approximately 1,000 are following-to-join refugee petitions and approximately 8,500 are following-to-join asylee petitions.

**13. Please share the top geographic locations where follow-to-join refugee cases are pending an interview.**

**RESPONSE:**

Depending on the beneficiary's location abroad, a USCIS international office or DOS will interview Form I-730 beneficiaries and complete additional processing. As of March 6, 2023, the following are the top geographic locations with pending Form I-730 FTJ-R petitions:

- Nairobi, Kenya
- Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Rangoon, Myanmar
- Baghdad, Iraq
- Khartoum, Sudan

**14. USCIS publishes overall approval rates for Form I-730 adjudications but does not break them out between asylee and refugee adjudications. Why not?**

**RESPONSE:**

USCIS continually assesses the data we publish to the website to ensure that stakeholders and the general public have access to USCIS data that are accurate, complete, reliable, relevant, and timely. We will consider what additional data we can publish on our website related to the I-730, including consideration of disaggregating I-730 asylee and refugee data in public reporting.

**Staffing & Resources Questions**

**15. At the Form I-730 stakeholder engagement in July 2022, you mentioned conducting a resource review for Form I-730 processing. Have you completed that review, and if so, what was the outcome?**



**RESPONSE:**

RAIO conducted a resource review on Form I-730 processing in 2022, including an assessment of pending Form I-730 workloads and areas requiring additional attention. In an effort to devote more resources to Form I-730 processing where possible, since November 2022, two teams of RAIO headquarters and division staff traveled to the Atlanta Vetting Center (ZGA) to conduct supervisory review of Form I-730 petitions to support increased case completions. Additionally, RAIO, with the assistance of other USCIS components, initiated an effort to facilitate remote review and processing of Form I-730 FTJ-R petitions pending at ZGA. RAIO plans to continue efforts to reduce the Form I-730 workload backlog at ZGA this fiscal year.

**FY 2023 Plans**

**16. Please describe your plans to adjudicate Form I-730 cases over the remainder of FY 2023, including scheduled or projected circuit rides and plans to reduce certain pre- or post-interview backlogs.**

**RESPONSE:**

RAIO conducted a resource review on Form I-730 processing in 2022, including an assessment of pending Form I-730 workloads and areas requiring additional attention. In an effort to devote more resources to Form I-730 processing where possible, since November 2022, two teams of RAIO headquarters and division staff traveled to the Atlanta Vetting Center (ZGA) to conduct supervisory review of Form I-730 petitions to support increased case completions. Additionally, RAIO, with the assistance of other USCIS components, initiated an effort to facilitate remote review and processing of Form I-730 FTJ-R petitions pending at ZGA. RAIO plans to continue efforts to reduce the Form I-730 workload backlog at ZGA this fiscal year.

Interviews of Form I-730 beneficiaries residing outside of the United States are conducted by USCIS if the beneficiary resides in a country where USCIS has an international field office. In other locations, USCIS partners with DOS, through an Interagency Agreement, to have DOS consular officers conduct interviews. Currently, there are only two international locations in Africa where USCIS conducts interviews on a circuit ride model. However, there are presently no scheduled circuit rides in those locations due to the limited number of pending cases ready for interview.

**17. What technological improvements is the agency employing to increase efficiency in processing Forms I-730?**



**RESPONSE:**

Currently, USCIS is undertaking an effort to consolidate processing and case management of newly filed Form I-730 petitions into a single system with the goal of increasing efficiency. The single case management system will streamline many aspects of Form I-730 processing across the agency, simplify administrative and adjudicative actions for USCIS staff working on different processing steps, and reduce administrative and logistical burdens of transferring Form I-730 petitions across USCIS components and external partners. Form I-730 subject matter experts across the agency are working closely with development staff to thoroughly assess system needs and mitigate potential challenges.

**Backlog Questions**

**18. When will the Form I-730 processing time meet USCIS' 6-month target?**

**RESPONSE:**

Additional staff have been assigned to work the Form I-730 portfolio within SCOPS, and processing times have come down accordingly. At this time, we are unable to estimate when the 6-month cycle time target date will be met. Please note that the target goals set by USCIS Director Jaddou are not measured as processing times, but cycle times.

Processing times show the amount of time it took us to complete 80% of adjudicated cases over the last 6 months – from when the agency received the application until a decision was made on the case. Internally, USCIS monitors the number of pending cases in the agency's workload through a metric called "cycle times." Cycle time measures how many months' worth of pending cases for a particular form are awaiting a decision. As an internal management metric, cycle times are generally comparable to the agency's publicly posted median processing times. Cycle times are what the operational divisions of USCIS use to gauge how much progress the agency is, or is not, making on reducing our backlog and overall case processing times.

**Afghan Questions**

**19. Could you please share details about planned processing for Afghans going through the I-730 process, particularly where the beneficiary resides in Afghanistan?**

**RESPONSE:**

Currently, USCIS is prioritizing the processing of Form I-730 petitions for Afghan nationals in accordance with USCIS expedite policy criteria to expedite petitions that involve U.S. government interests. As of March 1, 2023, there are 545 Form I-730 petitions filed on behalf of Afghan beneficiaries pending with USCIS. These beneficiaries may be located



both inside and outside the United States, including individuals who may be located outside of Afghanistan. USCIS is working closely with DOS to identify how to process Form I-730 petitions in locations abroad where there is no U.S. embassy or consular presence, including whether beneficiaries can be processed in another country. If the Form I-730 beneficiary moved, we ask that the Form I-730 petitioner provide updated address information for the beneficiary, using the instructions on the USCIS Form I-730 website. Please check the USCIS and DOS websites for updates on any new information that might be available for Form I-730 processing for Afghan nationals.

### **Misc. Questions**

#### **20. What is the estimated date the new Form I-730 will be available? Will stakeholders be allowed to provide feedback on the updated form before it is finalized?**

##### **RESPONSE:**

USCIS estimates we will update the Form I-730 in the next year. Yes, the public will be allowed to provide comments or feedback during the 60- and 30-day comment periods for the revision action. We will publish 60- and 30-day Federal Register notices, which will provide guidance to the public on how to submit comments via regulations.gov. The new Form I-730 will include instructions on questions related to inadmissibility and bars, when applicable, for each beneficiary.

#### **21. Please describe the process advocates should use to ensure proper adjudication when an asylee or refugee has filed a Form I-730 for a derivative who is outside the United States, and while that application is pending, the family member enters the United States. This issue could result from the beneficiary entering as a non-immigrant, being paroled in (including under the new parole process for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans), being processed as an unaccompanied minor at the border, or entering without inspection. It is currently very difficult for advocates to reach someone at USCIS to update the beneficiary's address and ensure that the application is adjudicated by the correct agency within the United States.**

##### **RESPONSE:**

It is important to notify USCIS or DOS if the contact information for you or your beneficiary changes. To update your or your beneficiary's address in the United States, submit a Form AR-11 online. Find contact information for USCIS domestic field offices on the [USCIS Field Offices](#) webpage. If your beneficiary is located outside of the United States and is being interviewed and processed by a USCIS international field office, you can find contact information at the USCIS [International Immigration Offices](#) webpage. If your



beneficiary is located outside of the United States and is being interviewed and processed by DOS, you should also contact the [National Visa Center](#) and the U.S. embassy or consulate. Find contact information for U.S. embassies and consulates at the DOS U.S. Embassy Locator webpage at [usembassy.gov](http://usembassy.gov).

- 22. Has USCIS changed its policy from the past such that potential beneficiaries who have removal orders against them that are amenable to reinstatement, will have the Form I-730 petitions filed on their behalf denied? If so, what is the reason for this change? Wouldn't it make more sense to adjudicate the Form I-730 first, giving the beneficiary a ground to seek reopening of the removal order? Has anything changed with processing Forms I-730 for beneficiaries who have unexecuted immigration court removal orders?**

**RESPONSE:**

There has been no change in policy. If Immigration and Customs Enforcement reinstates the removal order, USCIS will deny the Form I-730.

- 23. Will adjudicators stop sending Requests for Evidence asking to explain different spellings of a beneficiary's name when it is clearly a transliteration inconsistency from another language into English?**

**SCOPS Response:** If the issue is clearly a transliteration inconsistency, adjudicators do not send Requests for Evidence.

**RESPONSE:**

The Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate (RAIO) uses a standardized Request for Evidence notice to request additional information from petitioners when we need it. This notice explains what evidence we need, why we need it, and when we need it. If the requested evidence or document is not available, we ask that the petitioner or attorney of record, if applicable, provide an explanation.

- 24. Is a Tazkira enough to show proof of relationship between parent and child?**

**APC Response:**

For information on evidentiary requirements for USCIS benefit applications, including Form I-730 petitions, please refer to the [USCIS Policy Manual \(https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-e-chapter-6\)](https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-e-chapter-6). If a document is unavailable or if there is inconsistent or unclear information in the document, please provide a written explanation.



### **Contact Center Questions**

**25. How can we inquire on the status of pending Forms I-730? When I call USCIS customer service, they advise me that they have no access to Form I-730 cases.**

**RESPONSE:**

Due to confidentiality concerns, USCIS currently does not have the capability to provide specific case status updates for Form I-730 petitions from the Contact Center. The Contact Center can send an internal inquiry (called an SRMT) to the office processing your petition. However, please visit [uscis.gov/i-730](https://uscis.gov/i-730) for more information about USCIS' Form I-730 expanded processing times, how to make an outside of normal processing times request, and how to make an expedite request if the Form I-730 petition meets USCIS expedite criteria.

**26. In Form I-730 asylee follow-to join cases, I sometimes receive a Notice of Transfer instead of an approval notice, once domestic processing is complete. Why does USCIS sometimes issue a Notice of Transfer and sometimes issue an approval notice?**

**RESPONSE:**

Generally, a Form I-730 Transfer Notice indicates the Texas Service Center (for follow-to-join asylee petitions) or the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Asylum Vetting Center (for follow-to-join refugee petitions) has completed initial domestic processing and has transferred the Form I-730 petition to a USCIS domestic or international field office, depending on the beneficiary's location, for the beneficiary interview, additional processing, and adjudication of the Form I-730 petition. Initial domestic processing includes a review of the Form I-730 petition to determine petitioner and beneficiary eligibility. In general, a Form I-730 approval notice indicates the Texas Service Center or the Form I-730 Processing Unit at the Asylum Vetting Center has adjudicated the Form I-730 and, due to the beneficiary's location within a DOS jurisdiction outside the United States, has forwarded the Form I-730 petition to the DOS embassy or consulate to interview the beneficiary and complete additional processing. By regulation, all Form I-730 petitions must be filed with and adjudicated by USCIS. In locations outside the United States where USCIS does not have a presence, USCIS partners with DOS, through an interagency agreement, to have DOS consular officers interview the beneficiary and determine their eligibility to travel to the United States after USCIS has adjudicated the petition.

**27. Why is it no longer possible to get information about pending Forms I-730 by calling the USCIS Contact Center? What is the best way to obtain information for pending Forms I-730?**



**RESPONSE:**

The Form I-730 petition serves as a crucial tool for family reunification for principal asylees and refugees. USCIS is invested in providing timely and responsive customer service for those petitioning for their family members. Based on stakeholder feedback, we understand that information provided by the USCIS Contact Center regarding Form I-730 petitions may not always be accurate or clearly indicate the processing steps or actions needed from petitioners. To provide more accurate and clearer information to petitioners, USCIS has reviewed and edited guidance for Contact Center staff related to responding to Form I-730 questions and directing customers. The Form I-730 guidance has been updated to provide clearer information on processing steps and specific actions needed by petitioners for expedite requests and other status inquiries. We look forward to continued feedback from stakeholders about the information provided by the USCIS Contact Center on Form I-730 processing.

**28. Would USCIS consider not interviewing Form I-730 beneficiaries if there are no red flags in the case? (That used to be USCIS' procedure, and USCIS has begun approving some other case types, for example, marriage-based adjustment cases, if the case is clearly approvable based on the paperwork).**

**RESPONSE:**

From November 2020 until December 2021, a USCIS policy was in effect that required interview of both Form I-730 beneficiaries and petitioners, beginning with those beneficiaries who were present in the United States. As of December 2021, this policy was rescinded, and the agency returned to its previous policy of only interviewing Form I-730 petitioners on a case-by-case basis.

USCIS currently interviews all Form I-730 beneficiaries whether they are located inside or outside the United States. This policy is consistent with DOS policy for following- to- join asylum and refugee interviews conducted at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The Form I-730 beneficiary interview serves to confirm the beneficiary's identity and relationship to the Form I-730 petitioner, as well as to determine that the beneficiary is admissible and not barred. We welcome feedback, but at this time, USCIS is not considering changing this policy.