



Hot Tips for Using Service Center Hotlines and Supplementing Pending Petitions

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This practice pointer synthesizes the current recommendations for using USCIS “hotline emails” for customer service inquiries on cases protected by 8 USC § 1367 privacy requirements, i.e., survivor-based relief applications. It also discusses how to supplement pending survivor-based petitions via mail, with the hotlines as a backup paper trail. As noted throughout, the information is accurate up to the publication date, but should always be cross-checked with information on USCIS’s website for the most up-to-date government provisions.

Ensure you have the correct contact information

Some practitioners are still using an old, incorrect version of the USCIS “hotline” emails. For example, some practitioners are still sending emails to, e.g., hotlinefollowupi918i914.vsc@dhs.gov, and “@dhs.gov” is the wrong domain. When you reach out to an @dhs.gov email, you may still receive an auto-response that your message has been received, but technically this is an incorrect address that is not monitored, and no response will be forthcoming. ASISTA let USCIS know about the confusion, but still receives reports from members who did not realize they were using the incorrect address.

The correct email addresses for the hotlines is found on the USCIS website at <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/contact-us>, under “Inquiries for VAWA, T, and U Filings.” Please always refer to that page for the most up-to-date contact information. Please also note that the hotlines are for use by authorized representatives only, and not for clients or pro-se applicants, who must contact the processing location by mail.

As of the date of this publication, correct information is as appears below.

- **VAWA self-petition**, located **at any filing location**:
HotlineFollowUp1360.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov

- **U nonimmigrant petition, U derivative petitions, and U adjustment of status**, located at **Vermont Service Center**: HotlineFollowUpI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov
- **U nonimmigrant petition, U derivative petitions, and U adjustment of status**, located at **Nebraska Service Center**: nsc.i-918inquiries@uscis.dhs.gov
- **T nonimmigrant petition, T derivative petitions, and T adjustment of status**, located at **any filing location**: HotlineFollowUpI918I914.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov
- **I-751 petition to remove conditions on residence, waiving joint filing based on battery or extreme cruelty**: see the following paragraphs

As of the date of this publication, the USCIS website directs both pro-se applicants and attorneys/DOJ accredited representatives with pending **I-751 Petitions to Remove Conditions on Residence, seeking to waive the joint filing requirement based on battery or extreme cruelty** to contact the appropriate service center by paper correspondence only. However, at this time, despite the website's instruction, the traditional I-751 email hotline is also functional for I-751 waivers based on spousal abuse, though apparently *only* for those I-751s located at the Vermont Service Center.¹ Accordingly, ASISTA recommends submitting inquiries for the **Vermont Service Center** by email first, to hotlinefollowupi751ef.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov, and potentially simultaneously submitting or following up with a mailed, paper correspondence, depending on the type of correspondence and its urgency. Inquiries on I-751 battery waivers located at any other service center can be directed, via mail, to:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
California Service Center
ATTN: WS 13057
P.O. Box 10751
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1075
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Nebraska Service Center
P.O. Box 87918
Lincoln, NE 68501-7918
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Potomac Service Center
2200 Potomac Center Drive, MS 2425
Arlington, VA 20598-2425
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Texas Service Center
ATTN: SRMT/COA or SRMT/IRT

¹ ASISTA verified this with hotline personnel on Jan. 9, 2024.

6046 N Belt Line Rd. STE 751
Irving, TX 75038-0020

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
ATTN: Humanitarian Division
38 River Road
Essex Junction, VT 05479-0001
hotlinefollowupi751ef.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov

Unfortunately, as of the date of this writing, the old phone number for the VSC VAWA **phone Hotline is no longer in use**. Practitioners should select a contact method above or write to the relevant adjudicative location on paper.

USCIS has stated that, as it continues to increase digitization of its filing systems, it will continue updating its methods of contact. It will especially train its eye toward improved ease of use while maintaining confidentiality protections for survivor-based applications. Please follow official USCIS website instructions for the latest methods of contact, or reach out to ASISTA through a TA appointment with any specific questions.

Include your G-28

ASISTA recommends including your G-28 and identifying case information (A-number, receipt-number, and date of birth) in all hotline inquiries. As digitization progresses, it will become increasingly important to have all G-28 data perfectly match any online attorney account information, so you should begin checking for precision in that information if you do not already do so. Pay close attention to things like your middle name or initial, how you spell out or abbreviate your state licensure information and address information, and your bar number. Make sure your abbreviations are identical every time. Wherever possible, type your G28s instead of hand writing them.

How to supplement evidence or update pending applications:

It is important to know and follow the guidelines for submitting supplementary evidence or form updates and corrections in pending applications, to ensure the materials properly find their way to the A file. At a [December 2023 ASISTA conference panel](#), USCIS representatives emphatically recommended the following:

1. Submit all supplementary evidence and form updates via paper. Hotline emails are **not** generally the proper way to submit new evidence.

2. Form updates can be made on the version that was valid and submitted upon initial filing, or the most updated version, and they do not need to be signed.² Include a copy of the underlying receipt, and all available identifying information of the applicant(s), such as full name, date of birth, and receipt number. Top the packet with a cover letter explaining the changes or supplements enclosed. Mail this to the location that is currently processing the case.
3. Scan the packet you mailed, and send the scan as an attachment to the relevant hotline email, if there is one. The body of the email should state that this is a mere scan of an item sent by mail, and that the purpose of the email is to ensure USCIS is on the lookout for the mailing so that it can be properly connected to the A file. This will help USCIS and also give you an additional paper trail of what you have submitted.

Make good use of subject lines

USCIS has stated that its hotlines receive high volumes of inquiries. Subject lines are one method staff use to quickly filter which messages to prioritize. Accordingly, it is recommended to use subject lines with intention. Indicate, for instance, where your email contains an expedite request, request for supervisory review, or a second or third iteration of a question that has been previously submitted but never answered. Although many practitioners do not report seeing noticeably faster responses, this is a frequent recommendation from USCIS representatives and certainly cannot hurt.

Timeline for Response

The official estimates of how long a correspondent can wait for a response from a hotline are generally between 14-30 days, depending on the hotline. However, ASISTA members frequently report waiting significantly longer or receiving no response at all to their initial inquiries. If you have an urgent matter to address, you can send follow-up emails, with appropriate subject lines as noted above, after about 14 days. However, be mindful that this will increase the overall volume of inquiries and consider not following up quite as quickly or frequently where your question is not urgent: ASISTA recommends closer to 30 or 45 days.

One factor that can speed up or slow down response times from a hotline is whether the information required to address the inquiry is available in the hotline attendant's electronic database(s). If it is, the response is likely to come sooner; if the

² Although not addressed in the December 2023 panel discussion, current best practice for form updates calls for practitioners to submit only the pages being updated, not the full form. If the full form is submitted, mailroom attendants can become confused and interpret the submission as a new filing that requires a fee, instead of an update that does not, and they may reject the update and return it. ASISTA recommends using a red pen to cross out the incorrect information and/or add the updated information; but cleanly-typed new versions of the affected pages, and addendums noting the changes are also acceptable. For any technique you use, it is critical to include a cover letter that explains all updates.

attendant must pull the physical A file to investigate the query, the response is likely to be delayed.

If your inquiry is not answered in a reasonable time given its urgency, you may consider submitting a [request for assistance to the Congressional representative](#) for your client's state or district. ASISTA members and recipients of LAV or STOP funds from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) whose hotline inquiries do not receive answers but require action may also consider setting a [technical assistance appointment with ASISTA](#) to learn if we can escalate the inquiry as well.

Because of the apparent disconnect between officially-reported hotline response times and what members report to ASISTA in practice, **ASISTA and its partners may periodically send out calls for examples of real life wait-times. Please keep your eyes out for these on ASISTA's Experts listserv and in your other immigration law-related networks.** Consider adding your experiences so that our data collection can be as likely as possible to be complete, accurate, and actionable on a large scale by the agency.

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