



**Foreign National Initiative**  
***Immigration and Employment***  
**10/28/03 10:30AM – 12 PM at MSL Auditorium**

**1. Announcements (Camilla Lopez, OMBUDS)**

This is the fifth Brown Bag under the Foreign National Initiative. The previous four Brown Bags have been:

- The Foreign Nationals' Contribution to LANL and to the Scientific Community
- The 982 Form and the Badging Process
- Computer Access
- The Clearance Process

**2. Immigration and Employment. Introduction w. Rebecca LaFave (ISEC)**

Foreign nationals come to the U.S. for business, study, employment, and immigration purposes. For more the fifty years the U.S. has required a visa to enter the U.S. Every visa is issued for a specific activity. The Immigration Services Office at the Los Alamos National Laboratory provides a scope of immigration services predominately specific to professional employment or the payment of fees for services rendered to the Laboratory by foreign nationals. We work closely with the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to obtain appropriate visa documentation for admission to the U.S., authorization for employment, and maintenance of legal status for our foreign national employees and guests at the Laboratory.

The DOS governs the policy and procedures of the US Consulates and in turn affects the processing time of the Visa Stamp application abroad. The DOS through the Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs administers the Visitor Exchange J-1 Program. Under the Department of Homeland Security the USCIS through regional and sub offices administers a host of immigration services. The Texas Service Center in Mesquite, Texas processes the denials and approvals for the Laboratory's H-1B and the Immigrant petition for Alien Workers (Green Card/Lawful Permanent Residence).

Today we are very honored representatives from the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) and US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from the Albuquerque Sub Office have taken time out of their very busy and hectic schedules to visit us. They will present information regarding their services followed by a period of questions and answers.

The Foreign National employees here at the Laboratory would typically require the services of the Albuquerque Sub Office USCIS if they were applying for permanent residence through a family member, renewing a green card, an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card that did not arrive within 90 days, and Naturalization/Citizenship procedures just to name a few. The Albuquerque Sub Office has been very helpful to ISO at the Laboratory and assisted in a number of situations involving our foreign national community. The Laboratory is grateful for the prompt and accurate assistance you are always so willing to give. Thank you. We also have



representative from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Immigration Interior Enforcement from Albuquerque. Please ask questions pertaining to the material presented today. We are so happy to welcome our friends from Albuquerque.

**3. Ronald G. Parra, Resident Agent in Charge, United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Albuquerque Resident Office**

This is a follow-up to a meeting we had at the Lab two years ago. One of our new initiatives is that we have set up an e-mail box system and will ask you to please channel you questions and concerns via Internal Security (ISEC), Foreign Visits & Assignments (FV&A), Immigration Services Office (ISO). ISO will then channel the questions to USCIS.

You, LANL employees, work on behalf of the free world and the U.S. Being so, you fall into the category of expedited applicators. Working in the U.S. is a privilege.

We want to provide education so people can have compliance and so that we can avoid situations like the recent Walmart incident. The vast majority of the public will comply if they get the necessary information.

**General Business Hours**

When		What
Monday-Thursday	8 AM - 4 PM	Forms and Information
Monday-Thursday	8 AM - 2 PM	(by tickets)
Friday	8 AM-Noon	Appointments only, out of town, emergencies

Your cases are unique. When foreign nationals move, their case files may reside in different places. Let us know ahead of time if you are going to pay us a visit. This will give us time to locate your file. We don't want to give ill advice based on the wrong information and it is therefore important that we have time to pull up your file ahead of your visit. **Contact Rebecca LaFave (505 667 0874) or Grace Archuleta (505 667 0867), both from ISO to schedule an appointment or write an e-mail to [immigration@lanl.gov](mailto:immigration@lanl.gov).**

Give us some lead-time to work with your case. Every case is different. We had an example with a person who was upset that his case had been pending so long. He sent an e-mail to both senators and a couple of congressmen. All this just slows the response process because we have procedures for whom gets the answers first. So this individual ended up slowing down his process even more, rather than speeding it up. The example above is NOT an effective way of getting the answers! Going somewhere else is not going to speed up the process. The most effective way to get status reports and encourage timely processing is to channel your concerns through ISO. Again, what you need to do is contact ISO, explain the situation and ISO will then set up the appointment or request more information for you.

*Q. What is the turnaround time for questions?*



A. It depends on the complexity of the case and where the file is located. We would rather take a little more time up front in order to give the right answer.

*Q. It seems like each year the process takes longer and longer for visas. The Philippines is one example of very long processing times. What are the prospects for the future?*

A. You contribute your problems to INS, when the problem is limited resources and the sheer volume of nonimmigrant and immigrant visa applications. USCIS doesn't deal with you until you are on shore. What is important is visa availability and this is set up by the State Department. It is true that some countries like the Philippines have very long waiting lists for visas because only a certain number of visas are allotted for each country for each year. No country has opened their doors completely to immigration. The US is not alone here. I don't know if it is going to get better. We only have so much time allotted to deal with the applications, limited staff, and many requests.

Our commitment to you is that when you come to the interview, we are ready to make you a citizen; all the background checks have taken place. When you are called in for the interview, you have to be prepared to take a civic test and a language test.

See more about the formal rules for immigration at this web site:  
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm> or call 1-800-378 2283 or 241 3850 ext. 227.  
National Customer Service 1-800 375 5283

The information you find on the Internet is the information that is most current.

#### **4. Betty A. Garcia, Interim Officer in Charge, Citizenship & Immigration Services, Albuquerque Sub Office**

I function as the conduit between you and the Texas Service Center when petitions have taken longer than current published processing times. At the Albuquerque Service Center we deal with general information, citizenship and naturalization, family based lawful permanent residence, employment and travel documents for cases pending with our office, and EAD cards taking over 90 days for the Texas Service Center to process. The turnaround time at the Albuquerque Service Center is good compared with Service Centers elsewhere in the nation.

Some types of petitions may be filed directly with the Albuquerque USCIS. We conduct Naturalizations and Oath Ceremonies every month. We try to keep families together at the Oath Ceremonies.

My experience is that you are in good hands with ISO. They are very knowledgeable and articulate and handle their job in a very professional manner.

With regards to processing times, we will start sending ISO "aging reports" covering the different processing times for the different types of applications. ISO will forward the aging report via [intersci@lanl.gov](mailto:intersci@lanl.gov)). The aging reports will tell you when a naturalization case, for example, will be called in for interviews.



Possible reasons for delays are incomplete or incorrect forms, national security checks, or backlogs in various offices.

*Q. What determines how long the processing times take?*

A. The processing times are usually the same for everybody, since everybody has to go through the same checks. Only if something shows up in the checks, will it take longer. If your case is pending in the Texas Service Center, we have to wait for that. I want to reiterate that you have to go through ISO before you contact the Albuquerque Sub Office.

It takes more time to find out where your file is if you have moved around before you came to the Lab.

*Q. What kind of filing system do you use – paper or electronic filing?*

A. We have not yet taken the step into the electronic age so we still work with paper files.

#### **4. Marcia Youanis, Port Director, U.S. Customs and Border Protection.**

Let me give you some important information if you consider shipping your furniture etc. to the US: The cheapest way to ship your personal goods is via ship and here it is important that you fill out a **32-99 form**. This form allows you to bring in household goods duty-free. Please make sure that you get this paperwork done. If the paperwork is not in order, the seaport will charge you \$150 pr. day in storage until the paperwork is in order. Albuquerque is a smaller port and the processing time is quicker. If you need more information, please call **505 346 6992 for questions on shipping**.

*Q. What is covered under personal goods? I have a wine collection of 500+ bottles. Would that be considered household goods?*

A. There is a weight limit when shipping. However, as a rule of thumb volume is more expensive to ship than weight when shipping via sea. As far as your wine collection, I am sorry to tell you that a few bottles would be fine, but that your 500+ bottles probably will be charged state tax, which is \$3 per bottle. Again, for specific questions about shipping, please refer to the telephone number above.

*Q. What are the rules concerning dual citizenship?*

A. US does not allow dual citizenship. If your country of origin allows you to keep your passport when you become a US citizen, do so, but you will only be able to use it when you are in that country.