

**OFFICE OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES
OMBUDSMAN
FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Government and Stakeholders Working Together to Improve Immigration Services

November 5, 2015

*National Archives
Washington, D.C.*

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Registration**
Lobby of William McGowan Theater
- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. **Welcome from Maria Odom, CIS Ombudsman**
William McGowan Theater
- 9:15 – 10:00 a.m. **Keynote Remarks from the Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson**
William McGowan Theater
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. **Remarks from USCIS Director León Rodríguez**
- 10:45 – 12:00 p.m. **Morning Plenary – Executive Action, One Year Later**
Location: William McGowan Theater
Moderator: Maria Odom, CIS Ombudsman
Panelists: David Shahoulian, DHS, Deputy General Counsel
Mary Giovagnoli, DHS, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy
Jennifer B. Higgins, USCIS, Senior Advisor, Office of the Director
- 12:00 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch (on your own)

Ask the Experts – Questions and Answers with the Ombudsman and Staff

Location: Washington Conference Room

Drop in during the lunch hour to meet the Ombudsman and our experts. Bring your lunch and your (non-case specific) questions and comments on immigration benefits topics.

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. **Simultaneous Roundtables – Session I**

Panel: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – Where are We Now?

Location: Washington Conference Room

Moderator: Allison Posner

Panelists: Mesay Berhanu (CIS Ombudsman), Greisa Martinez (United We Dream), Patrick Taurel (Benach Ragland LLP), and Mariela Melero (USCIS)

Practitioners, advocates and DHS representatives will share the latest on the DACA program. Speakers will discuss initial and renewal applications, application data, and USCIS processing times, as well as issues related to employment and travel.

Panel: Employment Hot Topics – Year in Review

Location: William McGowan Theater

Moderator: Elissa McGovern

Panelists: Frederick Troncone (CIS Ombudsman), Marcine A. Seid (Seid Law Group), Peter Schiron, Jr. (Deloitte LLP), Sharvari Dalal-Dheini (USCIS), Alexandra P. Haskell (USCIS), Kevin Cummings (USCIS), and Ciro Parascandola (USCIS)

In the past year, USCIS has adopted precedent decisions, proposed new regulations, and issued new guidance in several employment categories. Panelists will analyze this new era in employment immigration, focusing on the impact these changes have had on the way that employers petition for needed workers before USCIS.

Panel: The Changing Landscape of Parole

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

Moderator: Margaret Gleason

Panelists: Steve Thal (Steven C. Thal, PC), Margaret Stock (Cascadia Law Group), Joanna Ruppel (USCIS), and Todd Young (USCIS)

The panelists will discuss eligibility for advance parole, parole in place, and humanitarian parole. Emerging issues and recent changes in these areas will be described.

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. Networking Break

3:15 – 4:30 p.m. **Simultaneous Roundtables – Session II**

Panel: I-765 EAD Adjudications – Eligibility Issues, Processing Times and Challenges

Location: William McGowan Theater

Moderator: Carrie Anderson

Panelists: Palma Yanni (Palma Yanni, PC), Emmett Soper (Department of Justice), and Deepa Bijpuria (Tahirih Justice Center)

This panel will explore temporary work authorization, including eligibility determinations, common processing challenges and resources available when applications go awry. Although USCIS adjudicates a vast majority of employment authorization applications within the 90-day regulatory processing timeframe, every year thousands of eligible individuals encounter delays. Panelists will lend their expertise on topics including the asylum clock, processing delays, and the collateral effects of work authorization expiration.

Panel: I-601A Provisional Waivers – Program in Review

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

Moderator: Lana Khoury

Panelists: Jason Mills (Law Office of Jason C. Mills) and Roselyn Brown-Frei (USCIS)

This panel will cover issues in the Provisional Unlawful Presence Waiver program, including concerns with “reason to believe” summary denials, generalized Requests for Evidence (RFEs), the extreme hardship standard, and the lack of any administrative appeal. The panel will also explore developments by USCIS that address Secretary Johnson’s memorandum instructing the agency to expand the Provisional Unlawful Presence program and clarify the factors contemplated in determining extreme hardship.

Panel: Humanitarian Hot Topics – Year in Review

Location: Washington Conference Room

Moderator: Allison Posner

Panelists: Jason Boyd (CIS Ombudsman), Melanie Nezer (HIAS), Vanessa Allyn (Human Rights First), and Ted Kim (USCIS)

Advocates and DHS representatives will explain the developments over the past year in asylum, including changes in the scheduling of credible and reasonable fear interviews. Speakers will also explore the Central American Minors (CAM) Program.