

13. BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION

The incumbent is responsible for U.S. Immigrant Visa processing for New Zealand, Independent Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands and Niue. Handles procedural and legal inquiries for individual cases. Provides mandated services for U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service/Department of Homeland Security (USCSI/DHS). Handles procedural and legal inquiries for individual cases. Performs sensitive and difficult cases including complex cases related to adoptions, waivers of ineligibility, refugees/asylees, and fraudulent applications. Prepares statistical and procedural reports, monitoring changes in procedures as advised by VO/CIS. Responds to wide range of verbal and written inquiries/correspondence. Drafts correspondence on more complex inquiries and congressional inquiries for consular officer. Processes and issues immigrant visas according to law, procedures and policy. Monitors work and leave assignments for Section. Serve as back up to American Citizen Services and NIV section, giving advice in those areas when needed. Can advise officers on procedures and precedents.

14. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. IMMIGRANT VISAS

a) Appointments and Case Processing/adjudication 40% of time

Processes the full range of immigrant and fiancé visas in accordance with Immigration and Nationality Act, 9 FAM, and any other applicable guidelines.

Shares caseloads with Immigrant Visa Assistant. Downloads electronically transmitted immigrant visa cases from National Visa Center (NVC) into computer system, checking for accuracy of details and particularly case classifications. Maintains individual applicant's computer records and hard files, updating as necessary. Enters new locally qualified immigrant visa applicants' cases into the system, prepares case files/folders.

Reviews case files upon receipt from NVC and advises applicants of the status of their application(s). Schedules appointments, advising of fees and procedures for obtaining medical and police clearances. Reviews individual files for eligibility, accuracy and completeness in preparation for adjudication by Consular Officer interview. Undertakes immigrants' initial interviews, capturing biometrics/fingerprints, and visa issuance procedure. Advises consular officer of any eligibility and waiver situations. Keeps track of cases to ensure their timely resolution.

Processes N.Z. police clearance applications for all immigrant visa applicants, including those from other visa issuing posts worldwide, and adjustment of status applications through CIS/DHS offices in the U.S.

Advises new officers on visa procedures, and applicable law if required. Functions as the principal advisor on visa and immigration issues to the consular officer in charge. Maintains precedent and subject files.

b) Inquiries/Correspondence/DV lottery **35% of time**

Principal contact for telephone, written or personal inquiries regarding U.S. immigration law and procedures, and immigration visa processing for cases M-Z. [Individual cases /enquiries divided into two sections by alphabet A-L and M-Z. IV assistant handles A – L.]

Independently prepares a wide range of correspondence, responding to wide range of verbal, personal, and written inquiries related to immigrant processing. Provides advice on immigrant visa requirements (e.g. family re-unification, diversity visas, employment-based visas, etc.) in addition to more complex cases such as adoptions, orphans, religious ministry, returning residents, or any other special programs, such as Iraqi or Afghan former USG employees, and asylees. Drafts correspondence on more complex inquiries and congressional inquiries for consular officer.

Prepares Memorandums to the National Visa Center and the Citizenship & Immigration Service USCIS/DHS) and private attorneys on specific cases when necessary. Drafts visa denial letters, detailing reasons for denial and advising of future application options/requirements.

DV LOTTERY: Prepares any local press releases/information advisories on DV Lottery of procedures to follow, and forwards to Public Affairs Office to release to media. Shares with IV assistant, in downloading DV case winners received monthly from NVC as well as checking eligibility of winning applicants on basis of education or work experience, using Department of Labor manuals to determine applicant's correct category. Maintains and monitors all files and documentation of cases. Provides information year round in response to public inquiries.

c) Consular Trips (Samoa)/Fraud Checks **2% of time**

Reviews and assembles any case files such as orphan investigations, for consular staff/officer's consular trips to Samoa, and prepares interview checklist. Checks cases for possible fraudulent applications, especially with regard to -some family-based applications. When officer returns case files to Post, processes individual files according to interview notes.

As 40% of Post's immigrant visa workload now involves Third Country National cases, incumbent examines cases closely for possible fraudulent applications/documents.

d) Administrative Processing **8% of time**

Prepares statistical and procedural reports, monitoring changes in procedures as advised by VO/CIS. Plans short-term and long-term work and leave schedules. Ensures that files and records are maintained as per regulations, that required reports are submitted in a timely

manner, and that –customer service is responsive, prompt and courteous. Co-ordinates with Systems and General Service’s staff to ensure supplies and computer equipment and support are adequate.

Advises IT at Post on amendments/updates to Embassy website concerning immigrant visa regulations. Trains and advises staff as required, on the entire range of immigrant visa matters, including on the application of regulations and laws. Performs updates to IV standard operating procedures and relevant IV technical computer procedures on the IVO automated system. Ensures staff members are aware of latest changes and developments in law and procedures. Prepares statistical and procedural reports, monitoring changes in procedures as advised by VO/CIS.

In conjunction with Consular officer, selects Consular Panel Physicians and keeps them informed of any changes in medical examination regulations, including updates and changes received from CDC. Liaises with Communicable Disease Center of CDC Atlanta on complex medical cases.

e) CIS/DHS Servicing/Liaison

10% of time

Forwards requests for humanitarian consular processing of I-130 petitions to USCIS regional office in Bangkok. Provides follow up service, pending Bangkok approval, by sending Adam Walsh Act (AWA) paperwork to NVC.

Checks incoming cases from NVC for accuracy and returns any wrongly classified files to NVC/CIS for re-adjudication. Consults with CIS/CBP for advice when required. Advises CIS/NVC of retirement, or revocation of petition(s).

Maintains file of personal point of contact for USCIS/CBP offices. Advises U.S. citizens on process for filing Immediate Relative petitions for spouses directly with USCIS, and for expeditious citizenship of children under Section 322 of INA, and the N-600 or N-600K citizenship application process.

When necessary, contacts State Department Officers in the Legal and Procedural Section of the Visa Office and National Visa Centre to ensure that all regulations are being interpreted correctly, and that post is kept up to date on new regulations.

Liaises when required, with outside agencies such as New Zealand Police, N.Z. Passport Office, N.Z. Immigration Service, Department of Courts, Children and Young Persons Agency re Hague Convention, and occasionally travel agencies and airlines to share information and travel and immigration issues.

f) Statistics/Reports/General

2.5% of time

Jointly prepares regular weekly, monthly, annual and periodic reports, providing summary statistics of immigrant visa services performed for Consular Package Report. Prepares any other reports as may be required.

g) Miscellaneous

2.5% of time

Performs other related duties as assigned, such as assisting other sections (American Citizen and Non-Immigrant Visa Sections) when required.

15. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

- a) **Education:** Completion of secondary school.
- b) **Prior Work Experience:** Two years of progressively responsible experience in work involving the application of relatively complex regulatory material along with extensive public contact or other closely related experience.
- c) **Post Entry Training:** FSI correspondence course, on-the-job training, regional workshops (when available), computerized training for specialized software.
- d) **Language Proficiency:** Excellent knowledge of the English language, both oral and written.
- e) **Skills and Abilities:** Must be able to work independently and organize and prioritize time; be able to evaluate documents. Must have the ability to communicate effectively in person, on the telephone, and in writing. Be able to analyze case situations, apply law and procedures. Have the ability to prioritize conflicting demands, work under pressure, delegate work tasks, work with minimal or no supervision, advise/direct other visa section employees, as well as staff at Embassy Apia, on immigrant visa enquiries received at that office. Conceptualize work flows, and anticipate work needs. Keep accurate records; use computers systems, and data processing. Must be able to interact successfully with the public, exercising tact and diplomacy, sometimes under extremely difficult circumstances.

16. POSITION ELEMENTS

- a) **Supervision Received:** Immediate supervisor of the position is the Vice Consul for Visas.
- b) **Supervision Exercised:** Provides input to staff at American Embassy Apia on visa requirements/ regulations for cases being processed for residents of Samoa.

- c) **Available Guidelines:** Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual, Immigration & Nationality Act, departmental and cables, correspondence handbook, PC manual, post memoranda and standard operating procedures. Referral may also be made to Consular Officers, both at the post or regional experts. Precedent actions may also be used as guides.
- d) **Exercise of Judgment:** Incumbent acts independently to make daily assignments for self and staff according to needs of the day. Makes fairly complete evaluations and recommendations to consular officers on the adequacy of documentation and evidence supporting a wide variety of complex visa and waiver situations. Handles difficult public complaints, deciding how issues can be resolved or require referral to an Officer. Accepts and refuses applications for expeditious processing. Personal judgment used in determining appropriate course of action, managing case load and being alert to potential fraud or problems. Uses own discretion in determining need for guidance from higher authorities.
- e) **Authority to Make Commitments:** Has authority to schedule appointments for Consular Offices and to provide responses to complex correspondence/inquiries. Also to advise IT on amendments to Embassy website concerning immigrant visa regulations. Although subject to an Officer's confirmation, incumbent can commit Consulate to particular courses of action on individual cases, schedule appointments, and accept applications for expeditious processing.
- f) **Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts:** Frequent contact with New Zealand police, N.Z. immigration Department, courts, consular panel physicians, other U.S. consular posts; Staff at American Embassy Apia, USCIS offices, immigration lawyers, and Congressional offices. Regular contact with staff at Embassy Apia to advise procedures for immigrant visas cases, or resolve problems with immigrant visa applicants. Share information on relevant visa and immigration issues, work with other employees in other parts of the Mission. Daily contact with other consular office personnel.
- g) **Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties after Entry into the Position:** 1 year.