

## PREPARATION FOR US CITIZEN AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS) APPOINTMENTS

Appointments in South Portland office: Biometrics (finger prints) and other routine matters. More information at [Welcoming the Stranger](#)

Appointments in Boston include: The first interview for asylum, the Master Calendar meeting (in preparation of court hearing, and Immigration Court hearing (before a judge).

NOTE: Anytime an asylum seeker gets a notice for an appointment of any kind, they get an "I-797 Receipt Form" – in a half-page self-contained envelope. The receipt letter contains a unique 13-digit **receipt number**. Also known as a **case number**, it's a very important number to help track the progress of their case or identify a particular immigration filing. It is VERY important they keep every receipt. The 13-digit number is unique to the action. For example, when filing for asylum, the first I-797 will contain their A-number, which is THE most important identifier and used in every correspondence to and from USCIS (similar to our Social Security number). Every future receipt will have their A-number AND the receipt number for the action pending (biometrics, first interview, master calendar, etc.

### Before the appointment

1. Which appointment is coming up (be sure to look at the family's receipt to verify the type of action and details, including date & time of appointment)
2. What is the relationship of each family member in the application:
3. Is an interpreter needed? Determine if parent(s) are fluent in English? How confident are they in English? (some appointments, like the 1st Interview or Immigration Court are important to ascertain how fluent they are in English – even with decent conversational skills they may need an interpreter to be certain they understand the proceedings). If an interpreter is coming from Portland it adds an additional person to the trip.
4. What is their primary/preferred language?
5. Is an attorney attending the appointment? If so, do they need transportation?
6. What is the current plan for travel? Talk thru the logistics so they can think about whether they can do the bus, the cab to the Federal Building, getting lunch and snacks for children.
7. If they need to be accompanied or if it appears driving them is a better plan, decide if you want to do it and collect cars eats etc. for the trip and/or contact WTS for help.
8. If they are traveling to Boston alone, give them a written card with directions to:  
JFK Federal Building, 15 New Sudbury Street, Boston, MA 02203, # 617-565-3080 and back to South Station.

### **For all Appointments – general information**

1. If possible, go online to make sure appointment isn't cancelled. Call 1-800- 898-7180, press 1 for English then you'll be asked to Enter A#. If they have your name in the system – Press 1 for information on your next hearing date; Press 2 for case processing information; Press 3 for decision information; Press 4 for case appeal information. Or you can go to the USCIS InfoPass link: <https://my.uscis.gov/appointment/v2> You will need the primary applicant's A-number and Receipt number.
2. If driving the family make sure to leave extra time for traffic in Boston, parking (need to park in lot), walking and getting through security. Add an extra 1 ½ hours.
3. Make sure a round trip bus or train ticket is purchased and they have money for a cab (around \$15 each way).
4. Tell everyone to dress comfortably for walking and sitting – they do not have to dress up!

### **For all Appointments – things to take:**

1. Passport – everyone's including all children
2. Visa, if they have one. (usually attached in the Passport)
3. Birth certificates (they are critical, so if they don't have them, ask them if there is any way they can get them, even if it won't be in time for the interview. They need to be able to tell USCIS what they are doing to acquire them.)
4. Appointment Receipt
5. Copy of Asylum Application (for themselves to refer to)
6. Any supporting documents and pictures (and copies to leave with USCIS, clearly labeled and mounted on paper if they are smaller than letter-sized – like ID cards or pictures)
7. They should take all original documents to SHOW USCIS, **but have copies in both original language and translated in to English by a certified translator** to leave.
8. Make sure they leave copies and take originals back with them. Make sure they have a packet of copies of everything they hand USCIS.

### **For Appointments - what you may need to assist them with:**

1. Identifying an interpreter – they are not given one for the 1<sup>st</sup> interview, but it is very important they have one if they will not understand completely the questions asked. They need to be very fluent to get through the interview without one.
2. Getting an attorney – most important for Immigration Court, if asylum is not granted after the 1<sup>st</sup> interview, and they are referred to Immigration Court. (being granted asylum at the 1<sup>st</sup> interview is increasingly rare).

### **Things to be certain to check:**

1. Do they need interpreter for Interview? Master Calendar? Immigration Court hearing (they can ask if they will be given an interpreter for the Court hearing).
2. Do they need Attorney for Master Calendar? Hearing?
3. Attorneys are difficult to get, and usually cost money. Ask WTS to assist.

CHECK LIST: A tool to help be sure you've covered the information.

Name of family members:

1. Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of people attending the appointment: # \_\_\_\_\_
3. Interpreter Needed? \_\_\_\_\_ Ride Needed for Interpreter? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is their primary/preferred language? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is an attorney attending the appointment? If so, do they need transportation? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is their current plan for travel? Driving, bus, train? Do they need assistance? If so, what do they need? \_\_\_\_\_
7. If they are traveling to Boston alone, have you given them a card with the addresses and directions to: JFK Federal Building and back to South Station? \_\_\_\_\_