



*Providing Help. Creating Hope.*

## **Know Your Rights (KYR) Amidst the Coronavirus Pandemic**

### **I. The Effect of Coronavirus on Federal Government Immigration Offices**

#### **United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

**USCIS offices will be closed to the public until May 3, 2020.** If you have received an appointment notice for an interview with USCIS or for any other reason (biometrics, for instance) that take place between today and May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 you should receive a notice cancelling that appointment shortly. New appointments will be rescheduled once normal operations are resumed. For more information, please see <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-coronavirus-2019-covid-19>. If you have moved, please file a change of address form. You can do it online here <https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do>.

**\*USCIS will continue processing employment authorization document renewals during its closure. Please, continue sending out your applications to renew those documents in a timely fashion.**

#### **United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ICE will not carry out enforcement operations at or near health care facilities, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, accredited health clinics, and emergent or urgent care facilities, except in the most extraordinary of circumstances. Individuals should not avoid seeking medical care because they fear civil immigration enforcement. All **ICE offices are closed** to the public until **April 14, 2020**. This will affect routine check-ins with ICE officers, for people who have to comply with that requirement.

#### **United States Department of State (DOS)**

The Department of State is working with reduced personnel as a result of the COVID-19 global outbreak, the NVC has had to temporarily reduce its staffing footprint. According to the NVC, this reduction impacts its ability to respond to inquiries made via the "Ask NVC" form found here: <https://nvc.state.gov/inquiry>

#### **Executive Office for Immigration Review (Immigration Court)**

All **non-detained immigration court hearings** that were scheduled until **May 1, 2020** have been cancelled. Notifications for new court hearings will be issued shortly. If you have moved since you last appeared in court, please contact your immigration attorney or representative to notify immigration court of your new address. People in removal proceedings have the duty to file a change of address with immigration court. If you do not get a notification for a new hearing, as a result of which you fail to appear in court you can be issued a removal (deportation) order. To change your address, file Form EOIR-33. For more information, please see <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/form-eoir-33-eoir-immigration-court-listing>

## II. Public Charge Rule and COVID-19

**If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, please do not hesitate to seek testing and medical attention.** The following means-tested benefits is NOT going to count against applicants for immigrant visas or immigration benefits:

- (a) USCIS will NOT include testing, treatment, or preventative care (including vaccines if one becomes available) related to COVID-19 as part of its public charge analysis even if such treatment is paid for by one or more public benefits (for example, federally funded Medicaid)
- (b) Using means-tested benefits (such as SNAP, i.e. food stamps) for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak/recovery period due to having lower income as a result of loss or reduced employment, having to take care of children as a result of school closings or quarantine measures WILL NOT be counted against applicants for immigration benefits.

**CAVEAT:** If you have to apply for public benefits as a result of any measures related to COVID-19 as described above, please document everything: Save your medical records showing that the medical attention you sought was related to the pandemic, save any communications from your employer regarding adverse actions regarding your salary, hours or employment. Save your paychecks showing a reduction in income. For more information, please see <https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>

## III. Filing for Unemployment Benefits

People who are working legally in the United States, can apply for unemployment benefits. In Iowa, you can file your claim for unemployment benefits online. Some regulations related to filing for unemployment insurance benefits have changed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. These changes vary from state to state. For information regarding Iowa's unemployment insurance benefits, please visit: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19>.

## IV. Resources for Immigrants/Refugees about COVID-19

- **Coronavirus Language Resources:**  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2680ec7c93271f5ecdddb9/t/5e8cd8511a21470c9a665a4f/1586288739836/Language+Resource+Project+04072020.pdf>
- **EMBARC- Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy Resource Center**  
<http://www.embarciowa.org/> and  
<https://sites.google.com/embarciowa.org/embarc-crisis-response/home>
- **Informed Immigrant Guide**  
<https://www.informedimmigrant.com/guides/daca-coronavirus/#>
- **Iowa Department of Public Health:**  
<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/ELL>
- **Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa**  
<https://www.refugeeallianceofcentraliowa.org/covid19-information>