

What to Expect Next: After Mailing Your Asylum Application to USCIS (Affirmative Asylum Process)

Step 1: Receipt Notice (Form I-797C)

- Within a few weeks, USCIS will mail you a receipt notice confirming they received your Form I-589. Keep this notice safe. It proves your application was submitted and starts your case clock.

Step 2: Biometrics Appointment

- USCIS will schedule you for a biometrics (fingerprinting) appointment at a local Application Support Center. You'll receive a letter with the date, time, and location.
- Bring the letter and a valid photo ID (like your passport or work permit, if you have one).

Step 3: Interview Scheduling

- USCIS will schedule you for an asylum interview at a local asylum office. In most cases, interviews are scheduled in the order applications are received (first in, first out), though this can vary. You will receive a notice in the mail with the interview details. This may take months or years to happen.

Step 4: The Asylum Interview

- Bring original documents, your receipt notice, and any additional evidence or updates to your application. You can bring an attorney or accredited representative, and an interpreter if needed (USCIS does not provide one for affirmative interviews).
- The officer will ask questions about your application, your reasons for seeking asylum, and your background.

Step 5: Decision

- After the interview, you may be asked to return in about 2 weeks to receive a decision in person—or USCIS may mail it to you. Possible outcomes include: a grant of asylum, a referral to immigration court (if not granted and you are out of status), or continued review.

Step 6: Work Authorization Eligibility

- You may apply for a work permit (Form I-765) 150 days after USCIS receives your asylum application, as long as no delays were caused by you.
- You can file the work permit 150 days after receipt, but USCIS will not approve it until 180 days have passed.

Step 7: If Your Case is Referred to Court

- If your asylum is not granted and you are not in valid immigration status, USCIS will refer your case to immigration court (EOIR).