E-Filing OAW Affirmative Asylum Applications: A Quick Guide

Afghan asylum applications (I-589) may be filed by paper or electronically via myUSCIS portal.

CLINIC advises filing OAW affirmative asylum applications electronically, given the long delays in issuing receipt notices for paper-filed cases.

VECINA offers simple instructions and practice pointers from USCIS and AILA on e-filing affirmative asylum applications on their E-Course, section: Submitting the Asylum Application Electronically (must be logged into VECINA’s course to view the page).

Key highlights from VECINA’s guidance on e-filing affirmative asylum applications:

- **Marking “OAW” for expedited processing (paper or e-filing):** It is very important to make it abundantly clear on your client’s application that he/she was an OAW (Operation Allies Welcome) parolee. This is what will make your client eligible for expedited processing, so it should be noted in giant bold letters on the top of your cover letter, cover sheet, etc.

- **VECINA states that they have been hearing that electronic submissions are being processed much more quickly than paper submissions,** and strongly recommends filing electronically unless there is a reason that you cannot.

- **AILA reports:** The system is buggy - attorneys report problems trying to upload items after submission and accessing correspondence from USCIS through myUSCIS - but overall, it is worth applying online because you get a receipt notice almost instantly upon submission. No waiting for months for a service center to process the filing. And USCIS will (hopefully) work out the system bugs over time.

- **Note:** While there's usually a receipt notice within 24 hours for online filing, that doesn't necessarily result in as immediate of an interview notice (which may still be subject to a general backlog for interview scheduling, particularly at Asylum/USCIS Field Offices with large demand).