

Cast



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION



May 16, 2024

Ur M. Jaddou, Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20529

Re: Request for USCIS to Accept Prior Edition of I-914 Forms Through
March 31, 2025

Dear Director Jaddou:

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), and Freedom Network USA write to you regarding USCIS's recent issuance of a new version of Form I-914 and related forms, updated in connection with the new fee rule effective April 1, 2024.¹ We are grateful for the fee exemptions that went into effect on April 1, 2024, and believe this change will reduce barriers to protection faced by trafficking survivors and their families. As part of this change, USCIS indicated that starting June 3, 2024, the agency will only accept the April 1, 2024 edition of Form I-914. For the reasons articulated below, we are writing to request a form grace period longer than two months, through March 31, 2025, or at least until the final T visa rule goes into effect on August 28, 2024.

An extended grace period would reduce barriers for trafficking survivors while still meeting agency needs. It regularly takes several meetings—often over the course of a few months—to prepare T visa applications for survivors and their eligible family members. Trafficking survivors are often indigent and represented by pro bono counsel, who in turn often have high caseloads to meet the need for affordable legal representation. A short grace period further burdens survivors—who often already struggle to obtain counsel and prepare their applications while meeting other basic needs and recovering from trafficking-related trauma—and causes undue stress for both survivors and those helping them, including counsel.

Aside from reducing barriers for trafficking survivors, a grace period of longer than two months is pragmatic given the lack of substantive changes in the new editions of forms I-914, I-914B, and I-914A. Given that the new forms collect the same information as the prior forms, USCIS would

¹ USCIS, *Forms Updates*, available at <https://www.uscis.gov/forms-updates>.

still be assured that it is receiving full and complete information that it needs to adequately and thoroughly review applicant eligibility. Furthermore, the I-914 and related forms are already pending an additional revision in connection with the final rule published on April 30, 2024 and could be substantially revised during the public comment period closing July 1st.² We believe it would be pragmatic, efficient, and less confusing for all parties, including law enforcement I-914B signatories, if the required forms were not revised multiple times within a short period.

Extending the transition period would also further the dual goals articulated by Congress in creating the T visa: to strengthen law enforcement ability to investigate and prosecute trafficking in persons while protecting trafficking survivors.³ We therefore respectfully request that USCIS extend the grace period and accept the December 6, 2021 edition of forms I-914, I-914B, and I-914A through March 31, 2025, or at least until after the final T visa regulations go into effect August 28, 2024, to avoid creating unnecessary hardship for trafficking survivors, their families, and those who assist them.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Carson Osberg at <mailto:carson@castla.org> or Amy Grenier at agrenier@aila.org.

Sincerely,

American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)
Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)
Freedom Network USA
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)

cc: Avidah Moussavian, Chief, Office of Policy and Strategy, USCIS
Rená Cutlip-Mason, Chief, Humanitarian Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, USCIS
Sarah Krieger, Policy Analyst, Office of Policy and Strategy, USCIS
Sarah Pierce, Policy Analyst, Office of Policy and Strategy, USCIS
Nathan Stiefel, Acting CIS Ombudsman
Elissa McGovern, Chief of Policy, Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman

² With the publication of the T Visa Final Rule on April 30, 2024, DHS announced an open comment period on Form I-914 and related forms, due July 1, 2024. Classification for Victims of Severe Forms of Trafficking in Persons; Eligibility for “T” Nonimmigrant Status, 89 Fed. Reg. 34864, [34915](#) (April 30, 2024) (announcing the T nonimmigrant status final rule). The [draft I-914](#) shared in connection with the open comment period has an edition date of August 1, 2024.

³ See, e.g., [3 USCIS-PM B.1.A](#); Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (“TVPA”), [Public Law No. 106-386](#) § 102(a).