



March 2017 Tip of the Month TRAVEL BAN UPDATE

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Most Recent Travel Ban

On March 6, 2017, President Trump signed a new executive order impacting visa issuance for travelers and immigrants from six countries (Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen) for 90 days and all refugee processing for 120 days. It would prevent citizens/nationals from the six countries from obtaining immigrant or non-immigrant visas to enter the United States. The executive order created a case-by-case waiver process to allow for visa issuance for citizens/nationals of the six impacted countries, but it was unclear what the standards would be and how those adjudications would be handled. Among other things, it also decreased the number of refugees the United States would accept for resettlement down to 50,000 from 110,000. The executive order was to be effective as of 12:01am on Thursday, March 16, 2017.

Current Status of the Travel Ban

On March 15, 2017, Judge Derrick Watson, a federal judge in Hawaii, issued a nationwide temporary restraining order preventing the parts of the executive order relating to visa issuance and refugee processing from moving forward. Judge Watson found the executive order disfavored a religion and that Hawaii would likely win a claim under the Establishment Clause. Judge Watson cited several statements made by President Trump and his advisors as evidence that the intent and context of the executive order was to ban Muslims from entering the United States. A second judge, Judge Theodore D. Chuang with the federal court in Maryland, also issued a nationwide temporary restraining order relating to the March 6 executive order.

What to Tell Clients with Questions

As of March 16, 2017, this executive order is effective, except for the parts relating to visa issuance and refugee processing. Because this situation is fluid and could change at any moment, it is advisable to:

- Have clients from the six countries refrain from leaving the United States until this executive order is clarified.
- If a client is overseas and is a citizen/national of one of the six countries, he or she may want to consider entering the United State while the TRO is in place.
- Inform clients that the situation is subject to change, so clients who are refugees or a citizen/national of one of the six countries should seek counsel before travel.

Where Clients May Seek More Information

There are several resources where clients may seek on-the-spot information about immigration matters, including:

- **VLN's Immigration Walk-in Legal Clinic Network.** VLN has different walk-in legal clinic sites in the Twin Cities where people may get on-the-spot free brief advice in immigration matters, brief service, and help with family preparedness planning. Help is generally provided first-come-first served. Legal Clinic locations and schedules include:
 - **Park Avenue Legal Clinic**-3400 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis, Thursdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
 - **Brooklyn Center Legal Clinic**-7200 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Center, first Friday of each month, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
 - **Waite House Legal Clinic**-2323 11th Ave So, Minneapolis, first and third Tuesday of each month, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
 - **Mexican Consulate Legal Clinic**-797 7th St. E., St. Paul, most Fridays at 10:00 a.m.
 - **Other legal clinics by appointment.** Call (612) 752-6605 for more information.
- **Minnesota Immigrant and Refugee Rights Helpline.** The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota's hotline, (651) 287-3715 (Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m. and Thursdays, 6:00-8:00 p.m.) is a free resource for immigrants and refugees living in Minnesota whose household income is below 250% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. It provides information on Know Your Rights, the Executive Orders related to immigration, travel ban questions, immigration court and detention information, and emergency family planning. It does not provide individual case advice in immigration matters.

VLN seeks volunteers to staff our legal clinics. If you practice immigration, family, employment, consumer or in other areas of law or can interpret or translate languages, we need you! Please contact Barb at barb@vlmn.org if you would like to volunteer.

This article was authored by Kara Lynum, an immigration attorney in private practice, and a VLN volunteer, and Colleen Beebe Purisaca, Director of VLN's Immigrant Legal Services Program.