



USCIS Update

July 11, 2008

USCIS Extends Validity Period of Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) for Refugees *Initial Document Will Be Good for Two Years Upon Admission to the U.S.*

WASHINGTON—In an effort to provide better customer service to refugees, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently announced that it would extend the validity of initial work authorization documents for refugees to two years after arrival in the United States. Previous policy required renewal of the Employment Authorization Document ([EAD](#)) after one year.

The new policy will reduce the financial burden on refugees by eliminating the need for many refugees to apply for renewal of work documents before they are able to adjust status to permanent residency. While there is no fee for the initial application for a refugee EAD, applicants incur a \$340 fee for renewals.

USCIS estimated that a refugee would request, at minimum, one EAD renewal prior to adjustment of status if the EAD validity period was not extended to two years.

By extending the work authorization validity period, USCIS can increase Agency efficiency by reallocating resources from adjudication of refugee EAD renewals to other immigration benefit services. Finally, the policy change ensures consistency in the validity periods for initial EADs issued to both refugees and asylees (USCIS began issuing two-year initial EADs to asylees in 2006).

For more information on EADs, please contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283.