

## **USCIS to Restore Partial Live Assistance at the Regional Service Centers**

---

**November 6, 2003**

USCIS Headquarters recently advised that the USCIS is planning to return some live assistance back to the Service Centers in the near future. The extent of the reversion to Service Center assistance is not yet determined, but should be solidified within the next several weeks. In that time, the USCIS will solicit from AILA and other organizations, subsequently draft a plan for the reversion of some live assistance at the Service Centers. Changes are not expected until January, due to cost and timing considerations.

As many individuals have experienced since the cessation of live Service Center Assistance, the National Customer Service Center is ill-equipped to deal with problems experienced by petitioners and beneficiaries. The time and effort required to resolve petition problems (including Service Center errors) has been extended since the implementation of a centralized customer service number. Prior to the centralized customer service approach, petition problems could often be resolved in just a few minutes with a simple telephone call to the Service Center where the petition was pending. After customer service was centralized to a single 800 number, problem resolution has slowed to crawl, often requiring several months of time, multiple telephone calls, as well as written requests that must be mailed to the Regional Service Centers.

A return to direct contact with the Regional Service Centers will be a welcome relief. We can only hope that the scope of the return to direct Service Center contact will be significant.