

“US Immigration Needs to Speed Up” by Adam Edward Rothwell, Esq.

For certain work-related applications, an expedite option known as premium processing exists. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) guarantees a response under most circumstances in 15 days for an extra fee (currently \$1225). This premium processing option is currently only available for temporary work related positions and almost all permanent work related petitions with the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Conversely, premium processing is not currently available for family related applications, applications with the US Department of State/US Consulates, applications with the US Department of Labor, student applications or tourist applications.

Premium processing is only an option for work-related applications with the USCIS, because years ago Americans advocated for limiting premium processing. Major concern existed that an option to pay more money for faster processing discriminated against individuals with less money. The thought was it would be unfair to enable a US Citizen for example to pay more money in an immigration application, so that his/her spouse would receive a quicker answer. This seemed unfair to individuals with less money.

Any required fee hurts individuals with less money more than individuals with considerable money. However, it has been my experience that foreign citizens are almost always willing to pay more money for a faster answer in immigration applications, regardless of their financial situation. I have never heard a US Citizen say, “I really wish my fiancé was here with me now rather than in 8-12 months, but not if it has to cost me an extra \$1225.”

What drives people crazy with immigration applications are unknowns. People hate not knowing where they stand. While a case is pending, life for the interested parties often needs to be put off until an answer is received or a result is provided. By extending premium processing so that more applications may be expedited, substantial stress currently inherent to immigration processes would be eliminated. Moreover, the added premium processing fees would enable the hiring of more federal workers on immigration applications, so more Americans would also be employed in gainful positions.

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