April 04, 2019

Sara Creighton
American Oversight
1030 15th St., NW, Ste. B255
Washington, DC  20005

Dear Sara Creighton:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA/PA) request received in this office July 05, 2018 regarding the removal of 26 documents for Asylum Officer Training, which occurred between March and April 2017.

This constitutes a rolling release of records. We have identified 62 pages that are responsive to your request. Enclosed are 21 pages released in their entirety and 41 pages released in part. We have reviewed and have determined to release all information except those portions that are exempt pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6) of the FOIA.

Exemption (b)(6) permits the government to withhold all information about individuals in personnel, medical and similar files where the disclosure of such information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The types of documents and/or information we have withheld may consist of birth certificates, naturalization certificates, drivers’ licenses, social security numbers, home addresses, dates of birth, or various other documents and/or information belonging to a third party that are considered personal.

As a result of discussion between agency personnel and a member of our staff, as a matter of administrative discretion, we are releasing computer codes found on system screen prints previously withheld under exemption b(2). There may be additional documents that contain discretionary releases of exempt information. We will identify discretionary releases within the record. These discretionary releases do not waive our ability to invoke applicable FOIA exemptions for similar or related information in the future.

The enclosed record consists of the best reproducible copies available. Certain pages may contain marks that appear to be blacked-out information. Such black marks would have been present prior to our receipt of the file and are not information we have withheld under the provisions of the FOIA or PA.

You have the right to file an administrative appeal within 90 days of the date of this letter. By filing an appeal, you preserve your rights under FOIA and give the agency a chance to review and reconsider your request and the agency’s decision. You may file an administrative FOIA appeal to USCIS at: USCIS FOIA/PA Appeals Office, 150 Space Center Loop, Suite 500, Lee's Summit, MO 64064-2139. Both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked “Freedom of Information Act Appeal.”

If you would like to discuss our response before filing an appeal to attempt to resolve your dispute without going through the appeals process, you may contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Jill Eggleston, for assistance at:

www.uscis.gov
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
National Records Center, FOIA/PA Office  
P. O. Box 648010  
Lee’s Summit, MO 64064-8010  

Telephone: 1-800-375-5283  
E-Mail: FOIAPAQuestions@uscis.dhs.gov  

If you are unable to resolve your FOIA dispute through our FOIA Public Liaison, the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), the Federal FOIA Ombudsman’s office, offers mediation services to help resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal Agencies. The OGIS does not have the authority to handle requests made under the Privacy Act of 1974. The contact information for OGIS is:  

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
Telephone: 202-741-5770  
877-684-6448  
Email: OGIS@NARA.GOV  
Website: OGIS.ARCHIVES.GOV  

The National Records Center does not process petitions, applications or any other type of benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act. If you have questions or wish to submit documentation relating to a matter pending with the bureau, you must address these issues with your nearest District Office.  

All FOIA/PA related requests, including address changes, must be submitted in writing and be signed by the requester. Please include the control number listed above on all correspondence with this office. Requests may be mailed to the FOIA/PA Officer at the PO Box listed at the top of the letterhead, emailed to USCIS.FOIA@uscis.dhs.gov, or sent by fax to (816) 350-5785. You may also submit FOIA/PA related questions to our email address at FOIAPAQuestions@uscis.dhs.gov.  

Sincerely,  

Jill A. Eggleston  
Director, FOIA Operations  

Enclosure(s)
Finding some stuff

Trish McKenzie
Web Content Editor | Office of Citizenship and Applicant Information Services
Mobile: (b)(6)
Sent While Teleworking.

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 3:59 PM
To: Crist, Gregory M (Greg) (CTR); Cheung, Bin-Yong (CTR)
Cc: McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish)
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

This is about this page:

Adding Trish in case she wanted to check later. She is on training today...

Thanks,
Graciela Thomen
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
☎: 202.302.5495
graciela.m.thomen@uscis.dhs.gov

---

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 3:41 PM
To: Crist, Gregory M (Greg) (CTR); Cheung, Bin-Yong (CTR)
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Greg,
I am looking at the video tutorial and helping Andrea with the deletion of these files and every time I try to look behind the Asylum division training programs page, it gives me this error...
Is it because you are working on it? Someone is?
Or is it for another reason...

Thanks,
Graciela Thomen
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
☎: 202.302.5495
graciela.m.thomen@uscis.dhs.gov
Hello Dear Team
Is Drupal up? I am trying to work on this and this is the second time I get this error...is this for real?

The DHS web content platform is currently unavailable. Our systems should be back up shortly. Please come back and check again soon.

Team, can we get your help with this request of removing PDFs? The process is more involved than we’d like but we don’t have a choice at this time. Greg and the team was gracious enough to record a “how-to” session earlier today, please see the email attached to this for the steps and the link to the session.

Thank you and good night.

PDFs ready to be deleted:

- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB) (deleted by Greg during training 4/6/17)
- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB)
Andrea Sanchez
Web Content Editor
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Mobile: Teleworking (b)(6)
Andrea.Sanchez@uscis.dhs.gov
USCIS Español - USCIS.gov/ES | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS_ES | Instagram: @USCIS_ES
USCIS English - USCIS.gov | Facebook: USCIS | Twitter: @USCIS | Instagram: @USCIS

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 11:26 AM
To: Sanchez, Andrea
Cc: Bonilla Ward, Wilfride R (Willie); Santoni, Jean C; Fernandez, Victor A; Winstead, Allison R
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Andrea,

Please see the request below to publish pages. Also further below to delete pdfs, archiving has already been discussed and refused.

Myrna Mace
Electronic Media Specialist | OComm
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: (b)(6)
From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:21 AM
To: USCIS Web Publishing
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hello,

Per the request below, I made the deletions to the Asylum Division Training Programs page and the About US – RAIO page and now Needs Your Review.

Here are the DRUPAL links:

https://edit.uscis.gov/node/46104/draft

https://edit.uscis.gov/node/41951/draft

Thanks

PS. Please delete all links (PDFs) below from DRUPAL so that they will not be searchable. Asylum does not want to Archived them.

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [Redacted] Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Alex,

Thanks for asking, but I would prefer that the items be deleted completely, rather than archived. All of the following should be removed from the Asylum Division Training Programs page:

**Asylum Officer Basic Training Course Lesson Modules**
The Asylum Officer Basic Training Course lesson modules are used to train Asylum Officers at the mandatory 5-week AOBTC.
The AOBTC lesson modules were developed and are updated by the Asylum Division following a standardized procedure for U.S. Government training initiatives. The materials used in the course have been reviewed by a number of subject matter experts, including Asylum Division staff, the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel, law professors, immigration attorneys in private practice, and practitioners working with refugees and asylees.
The lessons are updated as the need arises to address new case law, statutory requirements, and procedural directives. These lessons are not only used for the instruction of newly-hired Asylum Officers, but are also used to articulate and communicate Asylum Division guidance on the substantive adjudication of asylum cases, and the lesson modules are also used as a reference tool for Asylum Officers as they perform their duties.

- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB)
- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB)
- Reading Case Law (PDF, 63 KB)
- International Human Rights Law (PDF, 81 KB)
- Credible Fear (PDF, 125 KB)
- Definition of Refugee; Definition of Persecution; Eligibility Based on Past Persecution (PDF, 458 KB)
- Well Founded Fear (PDF, 131 KB)
- Nexus and the Five Protected Characteristics (PDF, 348 KB)
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- Interview Part 4 Inter-Cultural Communication (PDF, 74 KB)
- Interview Part 5 Interviewing Survivors (PDF, 143 KB)
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- NACARA (PDF, 319 KB)
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- Reasonable Fear of Persecution and Torture Determinations (PDF, 125 KB)
- International Religious Freedom ACT IRF and Religious Persecution Claims (PDF, 148 KB)
- Guidelines for Children’s Asylum Claims (PDF, 229 KB)
- UNHCR and Concepts of International Protection (PDF, 105 KB)

Also, this last sentence on the RAIO Directorate page should be removed:

“Most of the Asylum Division’s training materials are available to the public.”

I fully anticipate that the Lesson Plans are requested so often that they will end up in FOIA’s Electronic Reading Room.

Thanks!

John

From: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:59 AM
To: Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Just to verify, do you want this deleted completely from the site? As an alternative, we could archive the page, so it would still be available, but it would be located in a separate section of the web and have a banner that lets users know the information is out of date and not being updated.
From: Hale, Arthur A  
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 2:12 PM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)  
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E  
Subject: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Alex,

Per John’s direction, we request that the information on the Asylum Division Training Programs page of the USCIS website be removed as soon as is practicable, including all of the Asylum Lesson Plans on this public-facing website as well as any links to the materials currently presented there.


For now, we ask that the body of the page be replaced with a simple message and link redirecting visitors to the RAIO Training Materials page, which displays the RAIO Lesson Plans.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur Hale  
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch  
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor  
Washington DC 20529  
Tel: (202) 272-0972  
Cell: (b)(6)
Asylum Division Training Programs

The USCIS Asylum Division’s Training Section provides training on a national level as well as on a local level in the field offices.

All Asylum Officers are required to attend and complete the Asylum Officer Basic Training Course (AOBTC), which is a national training course that is specific to asylum adjudications. Instructors for this course are from HQ Asylum Division and field Asylum offices, as well as non-governmental organizations, law schools, and the UNHCR.

The training course includes topics such as international refugee law and the U.S. Asylum Program’s role in world-wide refugee protection, U.S. asylum law and its interpretation by the Board of Immigration Appeals and federal appellate courts, interviewing techniques, researching country of origin information, and decision-making/writing. Separate training sessions address interviewing survivors of torture, identifying possible cases of victims of trafficking, handling cases of children, and handling claims that may be specific to women. The training course also includes lessons regarding the Asylum Program’s history, organizational structure, mission, goals, and values, ethics, and an overview of the Asylum Program’s process and procedures. Other topics covered include fraud identification and evaluation techniques, and national security concerns.

Supervisory Asylum Officers are also required to attend a two-week asylum-specific training that updates supervisors’ knowledge of asylum-related case law and improves their case law application skills. The training also focuses on achieving greater consistency and effectiveness in evaluating asylum officers’ interviews and written work, and strengthening feedback skills, interpersonal skills, and workload management skills.

The Asylum Division also requires that regular training be conducted in each of the field offices. There are up to two Quality Assurance and Training Officers (QA/Ts) in each of the eight field Asylum Offices. QA/Ts are responsible for coordinating weekly training sessions and training new Asylum Officers. QA/Ts are required to attend a two-week instructor training course to learn methodologies for student-centered instruction and to improve their skills as training coordinators for the field offices. The Asylum Division requires that each field Asylum Office hold a weekly training session of up to four hours. The topics are determined by the needs of the particular office and include the same variety of topics as listed above. Also, headquarters may request that training on a particular issue, such as new case law or new procedures, be conducted in all Asylum Offices.

All asylum office staff are also required to attend USCIS trainings that are mandatory for USCIS employees and which are offered through the USCIS Academy. This includes the 5½-week BASIC training required of all USCIS immigration officers.

The Asylum Division also provides support and encourages staff to attend professional and/or career development training activities available to all USCIS employees through the USCIS Academy, from non-governmental organizations and government offices.
outside the Asylum Division. Asylum Officers may also receive permission from their local office management to attend related local training classes or professional conferences sponsored by sources other than the Asylum Division or USCIS Academy. In addition, the Asylum Division has arranged for several special asylum-related professional development opportunities for its senior staff, including participation in the following:

- Certificate in Refugees & Humanitarian Emergencies, Georgetown University, Washington, DC
- Summer School in Forced Migration, Oxford University, Oxford, England

These various training opportunities contribute to enhancing the skills, knowledge, and professionalism of the Asylum Division staff.

Last Reviewed/Updated: 12/19/2016
For case # NRC2018104570

Jarrod Panter, CIPP/G
Senior Government Information Specialist
Significant Interest Group
National Records Center
United States Citizenship and Immigration Service
Jarrod.t.panter@uscis.dhs.gov
Office: 816-350-5514

From: McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish)
Sent: Thursday, August 16, 2018 1:08 PM
To: Panter, Jarrod T
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Jarrod,

I think this may be all from my office.

This person would know much more:

Arthur Hale
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: [Redacted] (b)(6)

Talk to you at 3:30 my time.
Thanks,
Trish McKenzie
Web Content Editor | Office of Citizenship and Applicant Information Services
Mobile: [Redacted] (b)(6)

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 5:24 PM
To: USCIS Web Publishing
Cc: Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish)
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Myrna
The PDFs should be checked tomorrow morning. In the tutorial Bin says it may need 12 hours to be out of the server for good, so perhaps it is better not to click on the links. But when you do tomorrow morning, let me know if they are not 404 yet.

Thanks!

Thanks,
Graciela Thomen
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
☎: 202.302.5495
graciela.m.thomen@uscis.dhs.gov

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 4:41 PM
To: Thomen, Graciela M
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Great, thank you.

Myrna Mace
Electronics Media Specialist | OComm
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile
USCIS English - USCIS.gov | Facebook: /USCIS | Twitter: @USCIS | Instagram: @USCIS
USCIS Español - USCIS.gov/ES | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS_ES | Instagram: @USCIS_ES

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 1:40 PM
To: USCIS Web Publishing; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: Winstead, Allison R; Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Myrna,

Last week I worked on this, so I will do those 3 that are left.

Thanks,
Graciela Thomen
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
☎: 202.302.5495
graciela.m.thomen@uscis.dhs.gov

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 2:03 PM
To: Thomen, Graciela M; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: Winstead, Allison R; Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Team,

Following up on this request. I have checked each link and placed 404 next to the ones that appear to have been deleted; they open to page not found. Looks like just a few left, does this look right?
Myrna Mace
Electronice Media Specialist | OComm
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: (b)(6)

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USCIS Español - USCIS.gov/ES | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS_ES | Instagram: @USCIS_ES

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 12:58 PM
To: Winstead, Allison R; Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary; Mace, Myrna R; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: USCIS Web Publishing
Subject: RE: Asylum LPS on the USCIS Public Website

Ok. I sent the error to Greg and Bin. And other stuff for them to check...

From: Winstead, Allison R
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 3:48 PM
To: Thomen, Graciela M; Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary; Mace, Myrna R; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: USCIS Web Publishing
Subject: RE: Asylum LPS on the USCIS Public Website
I'm trying to get and it's been churning for about 4 mins, incredibly slow

Allison Winstead
E-Communications
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Mass. Ave., NW, Suite 3100 | Washington, DC 20529
Office: 202-272-1298 Mobile (b)(6)
allison.r.winstead@uscis.dhs.gov

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USCIS Español - USCIS.gov/ES | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS.ES | Instagram: @USCIS.ES

Currently teleworking

From: Thomen, Graciela M
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 3:39 PM
To: Sanchez, Andrea; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary; Mace, Myrna R; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: Winstead, Allison R; USCIS Web Publishing
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hello Dear Team
Is Drupal up? I am trying to work on this and this is the second time I get this error...is this for real?

Department of Homeland Security

The DHS web content platform is currently unavailable. Our systems should be back up shortly. Please come back and check again soon.

From: Sanchez, Andrea
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 3:49 PM
To: Thomen, Graciela M; McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish); Drake, Raymond A; Suarez, Limary; Mace, Myrna R; Robinson, Rebecca
Cc: Winstead, Allison R; USCIS Web Publishing
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website
Team, can we get your help with this request of removing PDFs? The process is more involved than we’d like but we don’t have a choice at this time. Greg and the team was gracious enough to record a “how-to” session earlier today, please see the email attached to this for the steps and the link to the session.

Thank you and good night.

PDFs ready to be deleted:

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- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB)
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- UNHCR and Concepts of International Protection (PDF, 105 KB)

Andrea Sanchez
Web Content Editor
Office of Communications | U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Mobile: [Redacted] Teleworking (b)(6)
Andrea.Sanchez@uscis.dhs.gov
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USCIS English - USCIS.gov | Facebook: USCIS | Twitter: @USCIS | Instagram: @USCIS
Andrea,

Please see the request below to publish pages. Also further below to delete pdfs, archiving has already been discussed and refused.

Myrna Mace  
Electronics Media Specialist | OComm  
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile:  
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From: Defensor, Michael R  
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:21 AM  
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Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

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Thanks

PS. Please delete all links (PDFs) below from DRUPAL so that they will not be searchable. Asylum does not want to Archived them.

Michael R. Defensor  
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch  
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529  
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile:  
Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L  
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Alex,

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Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
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If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur

Arthur Hale
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: (b)(6)
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Endy, Julie A  
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 10:17 AM  
To: Defensor, Michael R  
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Stadnick, Joyce A; Joseph, Matthew; Gill, Lori R  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Thanks for the quick response, Michael!!

From: Defensor, Michael R  
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 10:15 AM  
To: Endy, Julie A  
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Stadnick, Joyce A; Joseph, Matthew  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hi Julie,

Done; please give it a few hours to cycle through.

Michael R. Defensor  
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch  
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529  
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [redacted] Fax: (202) 272-1548

(b)(6)

From: Endy, Julie A  
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 9:15 AM  
To: Defensor, Michael R  
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Stadnick, Joyce A; Joseph, Matthew  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hi Michael,

I'm sorry to bother you about this again, but Lori asked us to confirm that the links to the Lesson Plans have been removed from the RAIO public site and in clicking around I found two more links to outdated Lesson Plans in a couple of random places (not listed under training materials, but linked from other sections of the RAIO public site). Would you be able to remove these links as well?

1) There is another link to the LGBTI Lesson Plan on the right-hand side of the following page under “Other USCIS Links”:

https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum

2) There is a link to a very outdated AOBTC Lesson Plan entitled Guidelines for Children’s Asylum Claims at the very bottom of this page:

Thank you! I hope this is it, but if you happen to notice any other LP links on the public site then please go ahead and remove them as well.

Best,
Julie

From: Defensor, Michael R  
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2017 4:10 PM  
To: Endy, Julie A; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)  
Cc: Joseph, Matthew; Stadnick, Joyce A; Gill, Lori R  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hi Julie,

I just deleted the link; please give it a couple of hours for the browser to cycle through before the changes go public.

Michael R. Defensor  
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch  
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529  
Phone: (202) 272-0989  
Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Endy, Julie A  
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2017 4:04 PM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)  
Cc: Joseph, Matthew; Stadnick, Joyce A; Defensor, Michael R; Gill, Lori R  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hi Alex,

Thanks to you and your team for following up on this! It looks like the large FOIA response has been posted on the Electronic Reading Room site and the RAIO Training Lesson Plans have been taken down from the public website.

I have one additional favor to ask you. It appears that RAD’s public website still has a link posted to an outdated RAIO Lesson Plan. If you click on the URL below, you will see a link titled “RAIO CT Guidance for Adjudicating LGBTI Refugee and Asylum Claims” on the right-hand side, under “Other USCIS Links.” The material posted at this link is an outdated version of our LGBTI Lesson Plan. Would it be possible for someone on your team to have this link taken down as well?

https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees

Best,
Julie

From: Endy, Julie A  
Sent: Thursday, August 03, 2017 6:43 PM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)  
Cc: Joseph, Matthew; Stadnick, Joyce A; Defensor, Michael R; Gill, Lori R  
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website  
Importance: High

Hi Alex,
I have two more follow-up questions for you about this.

1. URGENT!— We received a request to help draft some language for the August 11, 2017 Quarterly Asylum Stakeholder’s Meeting about the availability of our training materials to the public. As part of our response, we would like to be able to provide a time frame of when these materials will be available to the public. Do you know (or can you find out) when our FOIA response to COW2016000495 will be posted to the electronic reading room? If you find out that it’s going to be a long time, Lori suggested that we might want to ask Jennifer H. to raise it with the head of FOIA and see if we can get it done sooner.

FYI, it looks like the response to two other recent FOIA requests, COW2016000870 and COW2017000273, which specifically asked for materials that mentioned FGM, has already been posted, but that response only contains a few of our current LPs. COW2016000495 was the more comprehensive one that included all of the training materials. I sent an email to the FOIA office back in May in response to their proposed FOIA release detailing additional redactions that we thought were necessary and we have not heard anything since.

2. I noticed that in addition to the FOIA releases, the Electronic Reading Room also includes links to some other sections of the USCIS public website. Under the “RAIO” section there is a link titled “RAIO Training Materials” which links back to the outdated LPs on the public site that we plan to remove. Can you or Michael make sure that that link is also taken down when the associated files are deleted?

Thank you,

Julie

From: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Sent: Thursday, August 03, 2017 10:49 AM
To: Endy, Julie A
Cc: Joseph, Matthew; Stadnick, Joyce A; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hello Julie,

This is good news because it puts closure to this issue.

Michael can take care of this when he returns on Aug 7th, if that works for you. He will update the actual pages, and then will ask the Office of Communications to delete the PDFs from the online repository.

From: Endy, Julie A
Sent: Thursday, August 03, 2017 10:46 AM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Cc: Joseph, Matthew; Stadnick, Joyce A
Subject: LPs on the public website

Hi Alex,

Jennifer H. has given us the go-ahead to remove all of the remaining Lesson Plans that are currently posted on the RAIO public website. Is that something you can help us with or do you know whom we can follow up with to get this page removed?

We will also need to change the language below from the main RAIO page:
RAIO Training Programs and Materials

Our success depends on a well-trained workforce. With this goal in mind, RAIO has developed comprehensive training programs for its officer staff. The RAIO Directorate-level training branch develops materials and conducts training for all new RAIO officers. Most of the lesson plans used at the RAIO Combined Training are available to the public.

In addition, each RAIO division has its own training section that is responsible for job-specific training for their officers.

We should perhaps meet to discuss what language we want to go here instead of the current link to the page with the Lesson Plans. Should we remove all references to the training materials on this site? Or replace the current link with a link to the USCIS Electronic Reading Room?

Thanks in advance for your assistance with this.

Best,

Julie A. Endy
DHS | USCIS | RAIO
Adjudications Officer, RAIO Training
20 Massachusetts Ave NW, Ste 3200
Washington, DC 20529
Ph: (202) 272-1324 (b)(6)
Cell: (b)(6)
julie.a.endy@uscis.dhs.gov

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 9:44 AM
To: USCIS Web Publishing
Cc: PLC_Drupal
Subject: Needs Your Review: LPs on the public website

Hello,

I put the accordions on the page, but was not able to delete the link to the outdated lesson that Julie mentions below.

Can you delete the link? Here is the Drupal link: https://edit.uscis.gov/node/43536/draft

thanks

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile
Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Endy, Julie A
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 9:15 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Stadnick, Joyce A; Joseph, Matthew
Subject: RE: LPs on the public website

Hi Michael,
I'm sorry to bother you about this again, but Lori asked us to confirm that the links to the Lesson Plans have been removed from the RAIO public site and in clicking around I found one more link to outdated Lesson Plans in a couple of random places (not listed under training materials, but linked from other sections of the RAIO public site). Would you be able to remove this link as well?

1) There is a link to a very outdated AOBTC Lesson Plan entitled Guidelines for Children
<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Humanitarian/Refugees%20%26%20Asylum/Asylum/AOBTC%20Lesson29_Guide_Children%27s_Asylum_Claims.pdf> 's Asylum Claims at the very bottom of this page:


Thank you! I hope this is it, but if you happen to notice any other LP links on the public site then please go ahead and remove them as well.

Best,

Julie
Thanks!

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: Fax: (202) 272-1548

Good morning Michael,

We deleted the link and published the page.

Myrna Mace
Electronic Media Specialist | OComm
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: (b)(6)

From: Defensor, Michael R  
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 6:44 AM  
To: USCIS Web Publishing  
Cc: PLC_Drupal  
Subject: Needs Your Review: LPs on the public website

Hello,

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Michael R. Defensor  
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch  
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529  
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [redacted] Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Endy, Julie A  
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Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Stadnick, Joyce A; Joseph, Matthew  
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Thank you! I hope this is it, but if you happen to notice any other LP links on the public site then please go ahead and remove them as well.

Best,

Julie
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Hale, Arthur A  
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 1:28 PM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Defensor, Michael R  
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Alex,

You have correctly identified the main issue, that most of these are seriously obsolete. This page on the public website does not accurately represent the current state of our program.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional info or background on this.

Thanks,

Arthur Hale

Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 1:03 PM  
To: Hale, Arthur A; Defensor, Michael R  
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Arthur,

Hope you are doing well. The office of communications wants some background on this change. I realize that these lesson plans are completely obsolete, so that should be enough justification. It is particularly confusing that the 2006 CF plan is posted and it completely contradicts the newest one, which has already been reported in the media.

Is there anything else that has spurred us to make this change now?

USCIS Web Publishing

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:48 PM  
To: Defensor, Michael R  
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L  
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Michael,

The pages have been published. The PDFs will take some time to remove and update the cache for each URL.

Thanks,

Rebecca N. Robinson  
Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)  
Social Media Team | Teleworkings  
Rebecca.Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

Defensor, Michael R

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:21 AM  
To: USCIS Web Publishing

DHS-USCIS-18-0389-A-000026
Hello,

Per the request below, I made the deletions to the Asylum Division Training Programs page and the About US – RAIO page and now Needs Your Review.

Here are the DRUPAL links:

https://edit.uscis.gov/node/46104/draft

https://edit.uscis.gov/node/41951/draft

Thanks

PS. Please delete all links (PDFs) below from DRUPAL so that they will not be searchable. Asylum does not want to Archived them.

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [Redacted] Fax: (202) 272-1548

(b)(6)

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C; Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Alex,

Thanks for asking, but I would prefer that the items be deleted completely, rather than archived. All of the following should be removed from the Asylum Division Training Programs page:

Asylum Officer Basic Training Course Lesson Modules
The Asylum Officer Basic Training Course lesson modules are used to train Asylum Officers at the mandatory 5-week AOBTC.
The AOBTC lesson modules were developed and are updated by the Asylum Division following a standardized procedure for U.S. Government training initiatives. The materials used in the course have been reviewed by a number of subject matter experts, including Asylum Division staff, the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel, law professors, immigration attorneys in private practice, and practitioners working with refugees and asylees.
The lessons are updated as the need arises to address new case law, statutory requirements, and procedural directives. These lessons are not only used for the instruction of newly-hired Asylum Officers, but are also used to articulate and communicate Asylum Division guidance on the substantive adjudication of asylum cases, and the lesson modules are also used as a reference tool for Asylum Officers as they perform their duties.

- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB)
Also, this last sentence on the RAIO Directorate page should be removed:

"Most of the Asylum Division’s training materials are available to the public."

I fully anticipate that the Lesson Plans are requested so often that they will end up in FOIA’s Electronic Reading Room.

Thanks!

John

From: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:59 AM
To: Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Just to verify, do you want this deleted completely from the site? As an alternative, we could archive the page, so it would still be available, but it would be located in a separate section of the web and have a banner that lets users know the information is out of date and not being updated.

From: Hale, Arthur A
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 2:12 PM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website
Hi Alex,

Per John’s direction, we request that the information on the Asylum Division Training Programs page of the USCIS website be removed as soon as is practicable, including all of the Asylum Lesson Plans on this public-facing website as well as any links to the materials currently presented there.


For now, we ask that the body of the page be replaced with a simple message and link redirecting visitors to the RAIO Training Materials page, which displays the RAIO Lesson Plans.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur

Arthur Hale  
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch  
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor  
Washington DC 20529  
Tel: (202) 272-0972  
Cell: (b)(6)
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 9:47 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Good morning,

The PDFs have been deleted. This request is complete.

Thank you.
Myrna Mace
Program & Media Specialist, OCenm
Ph. (202) 512-4250, Mobile (619) 885-0066

USCIS English - USCIS.gov | Facebook: /USCIS | Twitter: @USCIS | Instagram: @USCIS
USCIS Español - USCIS.gov/ES | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS_ES | Instagram: @USCIS_ES

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:48 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Michael,

The pages have been published. The PDFs will take some time to remove and update the cache for each URL.

Thanks,
Rebecca N. Robinson
Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)
Social Media Team | Teleworking: (619) 885-0066
Rebecca. Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:21 AM
To: USCIS Web Publishing
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hello,

Per the request below, I made the deletions to the Asylum Division Training Programs page and the About US – RAIO page and now Needs Your Review.

Here are the DRUPAL links:

https://edit.uscis.gov/node/46104/draft
Thanks

PS. Please delete all links (PDFs) below from DRUPAL so that they will not be searchable. Asylum does not want to Archived them.

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Alex,

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- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB)
- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB)
- Reading Case Law (PDF, 63 KB)
- International Human Rights Law (PDF, 81 KB)
- Credible Fear (PDF, 125 KB)
- Definition of Refugee; Definition of Persecution; Eligibility Based on Past Persecution (PDF, 458 KB)
- Well Founded Fear (PDF, 131 KB)
- Nexus and the Five Protected Characteristics (PDF, 348 KB)
- Burden of Proof Standards of Proof Evidence (PDF, 136 KB)
- Bars to Asylum and Discretion (PDF, 242 KB)
- Interview Part 1 Overview of Nonadversarial Asylum Interview (PDF, 98 KB)
- Interview Part 2 Note-Taking (PDF, 44 KB)
- Interview Part 3 Eliciting Testimony (PDF, 94 KB)
• Interview Part 4 Inter-Cultural Communication (PDF, 74 KB)
• Interview Part 5 Interviewing Survivors (PDF, 143 KB)
• Interview Part 6 Working with an Interpreter (PDF, 86 KB)
• Making an Asylum Decision (PDF, 60 KB)
• Decision Writing Part 1 Overview and Components (PDF, 98 KB)
• Decision Writing Part 2 Legal Analysis (PDF, 90 KB)
• One-Year Filing Deadline (PDF, 133 KB)
• NACARA (PDF, 319 KB)
• Female Asylum Applicants and Gender-Related Claims (PDF, 170 KB)
• Reasonable Fear of Persecution and Torture Determinations (PDF, 125 KB)
• International Religious Freedom ACT IRF and Religious Persecution Claims (PDF, 148 KB)
• Guidelines for Children’s Asylum Claims (PDF, 229 KB)
• UNHCR and Concepts of International Protection (PDF, 105 KB)

Also, this last sentence on the RAIO Directorate page should be removed:

"Most of the Asylum Division’s training materials are available to the public."

I fully anticipate that the Lesson Plans are requested so often that they will end up in FOIA’s Electronic Reading Room.

Thanks!

John

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Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:59 AM
To: Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Just to verify, do you want this deleted completely from the site? As an alternative, we could archive the page, so it would still be available, but it would be located in a separate section of the web and have a banner that lets users know the information is out of date and not being updated.

From: Hale, Arthur A
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 2:12 PM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Alex,

Per John’s direction, we request that the information on the Asylum Division Training Programs page of the USCIS website be removed as soon as is practicable, including all of the Asylum Lesson Plans on this public-facing website as well as any links to the materials currently presented there.


For now, we ask that the body of the page be replaced with a simple message and link redirecting visitors to the RAIO Training Materials page, which displays the RAIO Lesson Plans.

If you have any questions, please let us know.
Thank you,

Arthur

Arthur Hale
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: (b)(6)
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 11:06 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Michael,

This looks perfect. Thanks!!

John

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 10:25 AM
To: Lafferty, John L; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi All,

I have deleted the section as indicated by John (as well as the last sentence of the About Us – RAIO page) from the Asylum Division Training Programs page.

It will look like this once it is published:
Asylum Division Training Programs

The USCIS Asylum Division's training system provides training to new and existing Asylum Officers, as well as Asylum Division field offices. The training system is designed to provide new Asylum Officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively handle asylum cases. Training is conducted at a variety of locations, including USCIS offices, governmental organizations, and institutions.

The training curriculum includes courses such as immigration law and policy, asylum and refugee process, U.S. asylum law, and the role of the Board of Immigration Appeals and the federal appellate courts. The training also includes practice in preparing asylum cases, interviewing applicants, and making asylum determinations. Separate training sessions are provided for those who have handled large numbers of asylum cases, and training is specifically designed for women. The training is conducted at various locations, including the Washington, DC, field office, and is designed to provide training that is specific to the needs of the Asylum Division.

The training system is designed to ensure that new Asylum Officers are fully trained and prepared to handle asylum cases. The training includes a combination of classroom instruction, practical exercises, and hands-on experience. The training is designed to provide new Asylum Officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively handle asylum cases.

Let me know if there is anything else before I ask OCOMM to publish it.

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L
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To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
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Thanks!

John

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Subject: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

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If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur

Arthur Hale
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: (b)(6)
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:48 PM
To: Defensor, Michael R
Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Michael,

The pages have been published. The PDFs will take some time to remove and update the cache for each URL.

Thanks,
Rebecca N. Robinson
Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)
Social Media Team | Teleworking
Rebecca.Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

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Thanks

PS. Please delete all links (PDFs) below from DRUPAL so that they will not be searchable. Asylum does not want to Archived them.

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: (b)(6) Fax: (202) 272-1548
From: Lafferty, John L  
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM  
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A  
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R  
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DHS-USCIS-18-0389-A-000039
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Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 1:03 PM
To: Hale, Arthur A; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Arthur,

Hope you are doing well. The office of communications wants some background on this change. I realize that these lesson plans are completely obsolete, so that should be enough justification. It is particularly confusing that the 2006 CF plan is posted and it completely contradicts the newest one, which has already been reported in the media.

Is there anything else that has spurred us to make this change now?

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Arthur

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USCIS - Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: [blank]

(b)(6)
Will do John - Michael's got this one. He will work with OCOMM today on it.

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Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 10:54 AM
To: Lafferty, John L
Cc: Hale, Arthur A; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Mura, Elizabeth E; Roberts, Rhonda J
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

FYI

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Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile Fax: (202) 272-1548

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Good morning,

The PDFs have been deleted. This request is complete.

Thank you,
Myrna Mace
Electronics Media Specialist  OComm
Office: (202) 512-4250 | Mobile: (b)(6)

USCIS English: USCIS.gov | Facebook: /USCIS | Twitter: @USCIS | Instagram: @USCIS
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Per John’s direction, we request that the information on the Asylum Division Training Programs page of the USCIS website be removed as soon as is practicable, including all of the Asylum Lesson Plans on this public-facing website as well as any links to the materials currently presented there.


For now, we ask that the body of the page be replaced with a simple message and link redirecting visitors to the RAIO Training Materials page, which displays the RAIO Lesson Plans.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur

Arthur Hale
USCIS – Asylum Division, Training Branch
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: 
(b)(6)
Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 11:08 AM
To: Lafferty, John L; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

I will ask OCOMM to publish

Michael R. Defensor
Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [ redacted ] Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 11:06 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Michael,

This looks perfect. Thanks!!

John

From: Defensor, Michael R
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 10:25 AM
To: Lafferty, John L; Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi All,

I have deleted the section as indicated by John (as well as the last sentence of the About Us – RAIO page) from the Asylum Division Training Programs page.

It will look like this once it is published:
Asylum Division Training Programs

The U.S. Asylum Division training seeks to provide training to a skilled and knowledgeable workforce and is located in the Field Offices.

- Asylum Officers are responsible for determining the eligibility of asylum applicants, based on the factors provided by the Asylum Division and the Office of the Attorney General, as well as the terms of the Asylum Division and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as the USCIS.
- The training program includes a series of training modules that cover a wide range of topics, including the history of the United States, immigration laws, and the role of the Asylum Division in the Foreigners’ Division.

- The Asylum Division Training Program is designed to provide comprehensive training to new Asylum Officers, including training on the rules and regulations that govern the U.S. immigration system, as well as the role of the Asylum Division in the Foreigners’ Division.

- The training program includes a series of training modules that cover a wide range of topics, including the history of the United States, immigration laws, and the role of the Asylum Division in the Foreigners’ Division.

Let me know if there is anything else before I ask OCOMM to publish it.

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Communications and Operational Readiness Branch
Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529
Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website
Alex,

Thanks for asking, but I would prefer that the items be deleted completely, rather than archived. All of the following should be removed from the Asylum Division Training Programs page:

**Asylum Officer Basic Training Course Lesson Modules**
The Asylum Officer Basic Training Course lesson modules are used to train Asylum Officers at the mandatory 5-week AOBTC.

The AOBTC lesson modules were developed and are updated by the Asylum Division following a standardized procedure for U.S. Government training initiatives. The materials used in the course have been reviewed by a number of subject matter experts, including Asylum Division staff, the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel, law professors, immigration attorneys in private practice, and practitioners working with refugees and asylees. The lessons are updated as the need arises to address new case law, statutory requirements, and procedural directives. These lessons are not only used for the instruction of newly hired Asylum Officers, but are also used to articulate and communicate Asylum Division guidance on the substantive adjudication of asylum cases, and the lesson modules are also used as a reference tool for Asylum Officers as they perform their duties.

- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB)
- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB)
- Reading Case Law (PDF, 63 KB)
- International Human Rights Law (PDF, 81 KB)
- Credible Fear (PDF, 125 KB)
- Definition of Refugee; Definition of Persecution; Eligibility Based on Past Persecution (PDF, 458 KB)
- Well Founded Fear (PDF, 131 KB)
- Nexus and the Five Protected Characteristics (PDF, 348 KB)
- Burden of Proof Standards of Proof Evidence (PDF, 136 KB)
- Bars to Asylum and Discretion (PDF, 242 KB)
- Interview Part 1 Overview of Nonadversarial Asylum Interview (PDF, 98 KB)
- Interview Part 2 Note-Taking (PDF, 44 KB)
- Interview Part 3 Eliciting Testimony (PDF, 94 KB)
- Interview Part 4 Inter-Cultural Communication (PDF, 74 KB)
- Interview Part 5 Interviewing Survivors (PDF, 143 KB)
- Interview Part 6 Working with an Interpreter (PDF, 86 KB)
- Making an Asylum Decision (PDF, 60 KB)
- Decision Writing Part 1 Overview and Components (PDF, 98 KB)
- Decision Writing Part 2 Legal Analysis (PDF, 90 KB)
- One-Year Filing Deadline (PDF, 133 KB)
- NACARA (PDF, 319 KB)
- Female Asylum Applicants and Gender-Related Claims (PDF, 170 KB)
- Reasonable Fear of Persecution and Torture Determinations (PDF, 125 KB)
- International Religious Freedom ACT IRF and Religious Persecution Claims (PDF, 148 KB)
- Guidelines for Children’s Asylum Claims (PDF, 229 KB)
- UNHCR and Concepts of International Protection (PDF, 105 KB)

Also, this last sentence on the RAIO Directorate page should be removed:

“Most of the Asylum Division’s training materials are available to the public.”

I fully anticipate that the Lesson Plans are requested so often that they will end up in FOIA’s Electronic Reading Room.
Thanks!

John

From: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:59 AM
To: Hale, Arthur A
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Just to verify, do you want this deleted completely from the site? As an alternative, we could archive the page, so it would still be available, but it would be located in a separate section of the web and have a banner that lets users know the information is out of date and not being updated.

From: Hale, Arthur A
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 2:12 PM
To: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex)
Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E
Subject: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Hi Alex,

Per John's direction, we request that the information on the Asylum Division Training Programs page of the USCIS website be removed as soon as is practicable, including all of the Asylum Lesson Plans on this public-facing website as well as any links to the materials currently presented there.


For now, we ask that the body of the page be replaced with a simple message and link redirecting visitors to the RAIO Training Materials page, which displays the RAIO Lesson Plans.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,

Arthur

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Hi All,

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It will look like this once it is published:

Asylum Division Training Programs

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Training and Technical Support Branch is one of the training branches that provide training to personnel working in the field.

- Asylum Officers are required to attend and complete the Asylum Officer Basic Training course (AOBTC), which covers a broad range of topics that are specific to asylum adjudicators. Instructions for the course can be found in the Office of Policy, which provides guidance.
- The training course includes topics such as interviewing techniques, legal research, and understanding the role of the asylum officer. It is designed to prepare officers for their role in the field.
- The program also includes case processing training, which focuses on identifying and processing cases of asylum seekers, refugees, and their derivatives. The training is intended to provide officers with the skills necessary to make decisions on asylum cases.

Supervising Asylum Officers are responsible for reviewing and approving cases and providing guidance and support to lower-level officers.

- Asylum Officers are responsible for interviewing applicants and making decisions on whether they are eligible for asylum.
- They also oversee the work of lower-level officers and provide guidance and support.

The Asylum Division requires that all Asylum Officers be able to think critically and make sound decisions in high-stress situations.

- Asylum Officers must be able to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- They must be able to work independently and as part of a team.

In order to be considered for the Asylum Division, applicants must have a minimum of two years of professional experience in fields related to immigration law and policies.

The program is open to individuals who have a bachelor’s degree in a relevant field and who meet the eligibility requirements.

- For more information, please visit the USCIS website or contact the Office of Training and Technical Support.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Michael R. Defensor
Let me know if there is anything else before I ask OCOMM to publish it.

Michael R. Defensor
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