



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

April 04, 2019

NRC2018104570

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:

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)

Shirk, Georgette L

From: McKenzie, Patricia H (Trish)
Sent: Friday, August 10, 2018 3:35 PM
To: Levy, Jeffrey M (Jeffrey)
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

Finding some stuff

Trish McKenzie

Web Content Editor | *Office of Citizenship and Applicant Information Services*

Mobile: [REDACTED] (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:

<https://edit.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/asylum-division-training-programs>

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

Thanks,

GracielaThomen

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,

GracielaThomen

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 3:39 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?



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:

- [Corps Values and Goals \(PDF, 53 KB\)](#) (deleted by Greg during training 4/6/17)
- [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 \(PDF, 458 KB\)](#)
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- [Nexus and the Five Protected Characteristics \(PDF, 348 KB\)](#)
- [Burden of Proof Standards of Proof Evidence \(PDF, 136 KB\)](#)
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- [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 \(PDF, 105 KB\)](#)

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

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

Electronice Media Specialist | *OComm*

Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED] (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:** (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
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 \(PDF, 458 KB\)](#)
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- [Bars to Asylum and Discretion \(PDF, 242 KB\)](#)
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- [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.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/asylum-division-training-programs>

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: [REDACTED] (b)(6)



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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

Worley, Jordan P

From: Panter, Jarrod T
Sent: Monday, August 20, 2018 12:50 PM
To: Worley, Jordan P
Subject: FW: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

For case # **NRC2018104570**

Jarrold 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,

GracielaThomen

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

Electronic Media Specialist | OComm (b)(6)

Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED]

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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,

GracielaThomen

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?

PDFs ready to be deleted:

- International Religious Freedom ACT IRF and Religious Persecution Claims (PDF, 148 KB)
- Decision Writing Part 2 Legal Analysis (PDF, 90 KB)
- Interview Part 3 Eliciting Testimony (PDF, 94 KB)

PDFs appear to have been deleted. Good work.

- Corps Values and Goals (PDF, 53 KB) (deleted by Greg during training 4/6/17) -404
- Sources of Authority (PDF, 53 KB) -404
- Reading Case Law (PDF, 63 KB) -404
- International Human Rights Law (PDF, 81 KB) -404
- Credible Fear (PDF, 125 KB) -404
- Definition of Refugee; Definition of Persecution; Eligibility Based on Past Persecution (PDF, 458 KB) -404
- Well Founded Fear (PDF, 131 KB) -404
- Nexus and the Five Protected Characteristics (PDF, 348 KB) -404
- Burden of Proof Standards of Proof Evidence (PDF, 136 KB) -404
- Bars to Asylum and Discretion (PDF, 242 KB) -404
- Interview Part 1 Overview of Nonadversarial Asylum Interview (PDF, 98 KB) -404
- Interview Part 2 Note-Taking (PDF, 44 KB) -404
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- Interview Part 6 Working with an Interpreter (PDF, 86 KB) -404
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- Decision Writing Part 1 Overview and Components (PDF, 98 KB) -404
- One-Year Filing Deadline (PDF, 133 KB) -404
- NACARA (PDF, 319 KB) -404
- Female Asylum Applicants and Gender-Related Claims (PDF, 170 KB) -404
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- Guidelines for Children's Asylum Claims (PDF, 229 KB) -404
- UNHCR and Concepts of International Protection (PDF, 105 KB) -404

Myrna Mace

Electronic Media Specialist | OComm

Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED] (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: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

allison.r.winstead@uscis.dhs.gov

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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

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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.

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Andrea Sanchez

Web Content Editor

Office of Communications | **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**

Mobile: [REDACTED] Teleworking (b)(6)

Andrea.Sanchez@uscis.dhs.gov

USCIS Español - [USCIS.gov/ES](https://uscis.gov/ES) | Facebook: /USCIS.ES | Twitter: @USCIS_ES | Instagram: @USCIS_ES

USCIS English - [USCIS.gov](https://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

Electronice Media Specialist | OComm (b)(6)
Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED]
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: 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
(b)(6)

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.

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- [Sources of Authority \(PDF, 53 KB\)](#)
- [Reading Case Law \(PDF, 63 KB\)](#)
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- [Well Founded Fear \(PDF, 131 KB\)](#)
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- [Interview Part 1 Overview of Nonadversarial Asylum Interview \(PDF, 98 KB\)](#)
- [Interview Part 2 Note-Taking \(PDF, 44 KB\)](#)
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- [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.

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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.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/asylum-division-training-programs>

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: [REDACTED] (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:

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/minor-children-applying-asylum-themselves>

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 Mobile: [REDACTED] Fax: (202) 272-1548
(b)(6)

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
Cell: [REDACTED] (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

(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 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:

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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: [REDACTED] Fax: (202) 272-1548
(b)(6)

From: USCIS Web Publishing
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 10:09 AM
To: Defensor, Michael R
Cc: PLC_Drupal
Subject: RE: Needs Your Review: LPs on the public website

Good morning Michael,

We deleted the link and published the page.

Myrna Mace

Electronic Media Specialist | OComm

Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

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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

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?

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: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

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,

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<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: Fax: (202) 272-1548

From: Lafferty, John L

(b)(6)

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

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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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Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R
Subject: RE: Asylum LPs on the USCIS Public Website

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<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/asylum-division-training-programs>

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: [REDACTED] (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

Electronic Media Specialist - OComm

Office: (520) 512-4250, Mobile: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

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Michael,

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Thanks,

Rebecca N. Robinson

Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)

Social Media Team | Teleworking: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

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,

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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: [REDACTED] Fax: (202) 272-1548

(b)(6)

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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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

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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: [REDACTED] (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:

Humanitarian

Asylum Division Training Programs

Asylum Officer Basic Training

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

Asylum Officer Advanced Training

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

Asylum Officer Continuing Education

- ▼ The training course includes topics such as international refugee law and the U.S. Asylum Program's role in worldwide refugee protection, U.S. asylum law and its interpretation by the Board of Immigration Appeals and federal appellate courts.

Asylum Officer Interviewing

- ▼ Interviewing techniques, researching country of origin information, and decision making/writing. Separate training sessions address interviewing various types of claimants: 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 detection and evaluation techniques, and national security concerns.

Supervisors

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 addressing problem conduct and effective supervising Asylum Officers, interviewing and writing, and strengthening interviewing skills, interpretation skills, and workload management skills.

Asylum Officer Quality Improvement

- ▼ 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 (QATOs) in each of the eight field Asylum Offices. QATOs are responsible for coordinating weekly training questions and training new Asylum Officers. QATOs 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 six-week BASC training required of all USCIS immigration officers.

The Asylum Division also provides support and encourages staff to attend professional and 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 Refugee & Humanitarian Emergency Issues, Georgetown University, Washington, DC
- Refugee Studies and Forced Migration, Oxford University, Oxford, England

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

For more information, please contact the Training Section.

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 International Operations Directorate

20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529

Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [REDACTED] Fax: (202) 272-1548

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Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:47 AM

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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
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If you have any questions, please let us know.

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Arthur

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20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, 6th Floor
Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: [REDACTED]

(b)(6)

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Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)

Social Media Team | Teleworking: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Rebecca.Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

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Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

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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Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:48 PM
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Cc: Grammer, Alexandra C (Alex); PLC_Drupal; Chen, Alice C; Buchan, Lesley L
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Social Media, E-Communications (Detail Assignment)
Social Media Team | Teleworking [REDACTED] (b)(6)
Rebecca.Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

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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.

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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.

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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: 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

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: 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

Electronic Media Specialist OComm

Office: (520) 512-4250 | Mobile: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

USCIS English - [USCIS.gov](https://uscis.gov) | Facebook: [/USCIS](https://www.facebook.com/uscis) | Twitter: [@USCIS](https://twitter.com/USCIS) | Instagram: [@USCIS](https://www.instagram.com/uscis)

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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: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Rebecca.Robinson2@uscis.dhs.gov

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Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 8:21 AM
To: USCIS Web Publishing
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Here are the DRUPAL links:

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<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.

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Cell: [REDACTED] (b)(6)*

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Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate
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Phone: (202) 272-0989 **Mobile:** [REDACTED] **Fax:** (202) 272-1548

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Cc: Lafferty, John L; Roberts, Rhonda J; Mura, Elizabeth E; Defensor, Michael R

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Washington DC 20529
Tel: (202) 272-0972
Cell: [REDACTED]

(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

(b)(6)
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:

Humanitarian

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

Asylum Officer Field & Offices

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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 INSPIR.

- ▼ The training course includes topics such as information of religion, and the U.S. Asylum Program's role in worldwide refugee protection, U.S. asylum law and its interpretation by the Board of Immigration Appeals and federal appellate courts, interviewing techniques, recognizing country of origin persecution, 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 provides 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 detection and evaluation techniques, and national security concerns.

Supervisory Asylum Officers are also required to attend a two-week specialty specific training that updates, perfects, and expands knowledge of asylum related case law and improves the case law application skills. The training also focuses on interviewing, quality control, and effective writing, including Asylum Officers' interview notes and written work, and strengthening both oral skills, interpersonal skills, and work and management skills.

- ▼ The Asylum Division also requires that regular training be conducted in each of the field offices. This is done up to two Quality Assurance and Training Officers (QATOs) in each of the eight field Asylum Offices. QATOs are responsible for conducting weekly training sessions and training new Asylum Officers. QATOs are required to attend a two-week national 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 topic, such as new case law or new procedures, be conducted in all Asylum Offices.

All Asylum Office staff are also required to attend USCIS training that are mandatory for USCIS employees and which are offered through the USCIS Academy. This includes the 6-week BASIS 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 programs 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 Refugee Asylum Information in Emergency, Georgetown University, Washington, DC
- Summer School on Forced Migration, Oxford University, Oxford, England

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

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 International Operations Directorate

20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20529

Phone: (202) 272-0989 Mobile: [REDACTED] Fax: (202) 272-1548

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<div>Humanitarian</div> <div>Asylum Division Training Programs</div>				
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 information of 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 detection and evaluation techniques, and national security concerns.				
Supervisory Asylum Officers are also required to attend a two-week asylum specific training that updates supervisory knowledge of asylum-related case law and improves the case law application skills. The training also focuses on achieving greater consistency and effectiveness in evaluating asylum officers' interview notes and written work, and strengthening feedback skills, interpersonal skills, and workload management skills.				
The Asylum Division also requires that regional 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 institute for training course to learn methodologies for student-centered instruction and to improve their skills as training course leaders 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 51-week BASIS training required of all USCIS immigration officers.				
The Asylum Division also provides support and encourages staff to attend professional and 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:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Refugee & Humanitarian Emergency, Georgetown University, Washington, DC• Summer School for Civil Migration, Oxford University, Oxford, England				
These various training opportunities contribute to enhancing the skills, knowledge, and professionalism of the Asylum Division staff.				

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 International Operations Directorate

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(b)(6)

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.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/asylum-division-training-programs>

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

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