



TORII LEGAL ASSISTANCE

OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE



News for Soldiers Filing Immigrant Visa Petitions

The purpose of this article is to inform Active Duty Soldiers of new and improved procedures for filing Immigrant Visa Petitions for their Immediate Family Membersⁱ Active Duty Soldiers can now file Immigrant Visa Petitions for their immediate Family Members **DIRECTLY** at the U.S. Consulate in Naha, Okinawa. This is a big change from the past as Soldiers were required to mail their petitions to a lockbox in Chicago, Illinois.

Members of the military legal community have been briefed at the U.S. Consulate about these new changes for Active Duty Soldiers. The big take away from the brief is that the U.S. Consulateⁱⁱ can “accept and adjudicate” Immigrant Visa Petitions:

- Filed by a qualified active duty Soldier assigned to a U.S. military base in Japan.ⁱⁱⁱ
- For an immediate relative (spouse, child, or parent).

To file an immigration visa petition (I-130), the U.S. Consulate in Naha recommends that you email them at NahaIV@state.gov and provide them with the following information:

- Full legal name of Active Duty Soldier (Petitioner)
- Full legal name of the immediate relative (Beneficiary)
- Full date of birth of Petitioner and Beneficiary
- The relationship of Petitioner to Beneficiary (husband, wife, child, step-child, parent)
- Proof of eligibility for the exception (scanned copy of Active Duty Soldier's orders to Japan.)
- Projected departure date to the United States.

The U.S. Consulate in Naha asserted that they are very good at answering emails, so you should receive a response from them within 24-48 hours.

Finally, the U.S. Consulate strongly recommends that Active Duty Soldiers file the I-130 petition as soon as they get married. They were quick to dispel any rumors that you should wait to file a visa petition. There have been cases where family members were unable to travel with their active duty Spouses because the I-130 petition was not filed in a timely manner.

The legal assistance office is located in Room 220, of Building 218 (across the street from the post office). If you would like an appointment to discuss immigration or another personal legal matter, please call 644-4332.

ⁱ If you are not an active duty Soldier and want to petition for an immediate relative, please contact the Torii Legal Assistance Office for the immigration visa procedures.

ⁱⁱ Actually, the Department of State was granted a “blanket exception.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Since the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) does not have a presence in Japan.