


# 5 Top-of-Mind Challenges in the Immigration Space

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services anticipates that it will distribute more employment-based green cards than usual in the fiscal year 2023<sup>1</sup> — and both companies and individuals are taking advantage of these updates. After pandemic slow-downs in visa processing, the U.S. is now prepared to push visa applications forward faster and more efficiently,<sup>2</sup> giving immigration professionals the impetus to streamline operations.

However, as policies continue to shift, increasing caseloads and relentless form updates persist. With lean operations and a focus on strategic investment, immigration professionals will face five top-of-mind challenges in the foreseeable future.



## 01 Ensuring Accurate & Timely Forms

Did you know that more than ¾ of paper I-9s have at least one fineable error? When forms have missing or incorrect information (usually a result of manual entry, or the “human error” component), both employers and employees are put at risk. And to that end, these errors are expensive.

To avoid errors in I-9s, employers must take a two-pronged approach: first, by digitizing the process so that each field is confirmed; then, by submitting the I-9 records automatically to E-Verify® software to ensure on-time processing.

Each I-9 form is likely to contain at least one fineable error, and penalties range from \$252 to \$2,507 per form.<sup>3</sup>



## 02 Preparing for an ICE Audit

Not only do companies need to ensure complete compliance with Form I-9s, but they also need to stay up to date on evolving policies in every region where they have employees (which tend to change every few years!).

By using software to digitize forms and securely store them, companies gain peace of mind in knowing that they are prepared for a Notice of Inspection should one arrive.

Did you know that a new version of the Form I-9 — required for all new hires and rehires — went live November 1, 2022?<sup>4</sup>



## 03 Providing Visibility into Case Management for Immigration Management Clients

Many immigration lawyers and legal professionals organize their cases on spreadsheets or paper files. As a result, client calls and inquiries regarding case status bottleneck quickly, especially after unexpected events (think: the pandemic). Without a central repository and easy access to case status, it's too easy for deadlines to get dropped, cases to fall through the cracks, or immigration professionals to spend far too much time chasing down case details. Dealing with the American legal system and your international clients means that your record systems need to be secure, automated, accessible, and organized.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated wait times for immigration cases, creating a backlog that continues to slow down applications today. The current average wait time for naturalization is 11 months.<sup>5</sup>



## 04 Keeping Data Secure

Managers lose valuable time and open their company to possible non-compliance by keeping their data on spreadsheets that they email back and forth. In addition, with a rise in remote work and a global client base, managers find themselves collaborating across time zones, causing not only delays, but also fertile ground for form update errors and security issues.

The best platforms will provide accessible, yet strongly-permissioned systems so that collaborators are appropriately authorized and empowered to work across time zones and access levels.

With 61% of employees preferring to work fully remote,<sup>6</sup> it's more important than ever to use a system that empowers collaboration while keeping data secure.



## 05 Managing Visa Delays

Visa processing can take months, not days or weeks. And the processes are getting longer and more tedious. Work permits, for example, took 3.2 months to be processed in 2020 — a timeframe that increased to 4.3 months in 2022.<sup>7</sup>

Understanding when a visa is taking a long time on account of a short-term, expected delay — like a short-staffed consulate — or because something is wrong requires constant vigilance. In other words, it requires automation. By using a case management system, you ensure that your clients' visas are filed before the deadlines, that errors are flagged, and that appropriate follow-ups are sent out if and when needed.

Automation mitigates the anxieties caused by visa delays, replacing ad-hoc follow ups with orchestrated, automated reviews while streamlining case creation and management.

One of the nation's most-trusted immigration law firms, VisaWolf, has saved roughly 1/3 of effort and time in generating new cases since implementing INSZoom, Mitratesch's global immigration case management platform.

[Read the VisaWolf Story](#)



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. 17 November, 2022. "Fiscal Year 2023 Employment-Based Adjustment of Status FAQs." Fiscal Year 2023 Employment-Based Adjustment of Status FAQs | USCIS

<sup>2</sup> The Economic Times. 18 November, 2022. "Visa processing expected to reach pre-pandemic levels in FY 2023: US." Visa processing expected to reach pre-pandemic levels in FY 2023: US - The Economic Times (indiatimes.com)

<sup>3</sup> Morais, Manuela. 17 October 2022. "Form I-9 Flexibilities Extended to 2023 and New I-9 Form Details." <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/form-i-9-flexibilities-extended-to-2023-4093595/>

<sup>4</sup> Morais, Manuela. (17 Oct 2022). "Form I-9 Flexibilities Extended to 2023 and New I-9 Form Details." <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/form-i-9-flexibilities-extended-to-2023-4093595/>

<sup>5</sup> Boundless. (Accessed November 2022). "The Latest USCIS Processing Times." <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/uscis-processing-times/>

<sup>6</sup> Prossack, Ashira. "5 Statistics Employers Need To Know About The Remote Workforce," Forbes, (Feb 10, 2021); <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashiraprossack1/2021/02/10/5-statistics-employers-need-to-know-about-the-remote-workforce/#:~:text=61%25%20of%20employees%20prefer%20being%20fully%20remote%20More,to%20be%20examined%20in%20the%20future%20of%20work>

<sup>7</sup> Boundless. (Accessed November 2022). "The Latest USCIS Processing Times." <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/uscis-processing-times/>