TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
      DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
      FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS

FROM: KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA
      DENISE MAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GSA

RE: EXPEDITED NATURALIZATION

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, TEMPORARY CASH
      ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

SUMMARY

Governor Glendening is concerned that some immigrants who have applied for naturalization, but
have not yet completed all the requirements, may not be able to meet their food needs because
they are ineligible for food stamps. Some of these legal immigrants have completed all of the
citizenship requirements except for the test and the oath. The Immigration and Naturalization
Service (INS) can consider loss or threat of loss of federal benefits as a valid reason for expediting
naturalization if the loss of benefits results in extreme hardship.

Recently, staff from the Maryland Office of New Americans (MONA) and FIA met with
representatives of the Baltimore District INS to discuss the possibility of establishing a procedure
for expediting naturalization of immigrants whose loss or threat of loss of food stamp benefits due
to their immigration status will result in hardship. Although the District Director is willing to help
us, there are limits to what they can do at the district level. Initially, citizenship applications are
now processed from one national location. It can take several months before the application gets
to the district level where the test and oath of citizenship are administered. At this point, the
district INS can expedite naturalization.

The Baltimore District INS has already made efforts to streamline its naturalization procedures.
For example, it is possible for persons to be interviewed and, if and they pass the interview,
receive the oath on the same day.
We have also developed a referral procedure to allow us to notify INS of situations that would meet the criteria for expedited naturalization. To meet the criteria, the individual must:

- Provide verification of his or her application for citizenship, and
- Meet all eligibility requirements for food stamps, except for immigration status.

**ACTION REQUIRED**

When a case manager becomes aware of individuals who fit the criteria, refer the case to Kay Finegan, Office of Policy and Research, using the attached form. You may fax the form to (410) 333-6581 or mail it to the following address:

Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201
Attn: Kay Finegan

Upon receipt of the form, we will screen it and if appropriate forward it to the District INS office. When we are notified of their decision, we will contact the case manager.

This procedure should ensure that needy legal immigrants who are about to become citizens have their basic food needs met. This procedure is the result of the close cooperation of the Governor’s Office, the Department of Human Resources and our local Immigration and Naturalization Office District Office. We are always interested in improving on it. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions about this procedure or individual case situations, please contact Kay Finegan at (410) 767-7939

**ACTION DUE**

This transmittal is effective upon receipt.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
    FIA Management Staff
    Constituent Services
    CTF
    OIM Help Desk
FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION

To: Immigration and Naturalization Service
   Baltimore District Office

Thru: Kay Finegan, Office of Policy and Research
      Telephone: (410) 767-7939
      Fax: (410) 333-6581

From: ___________________ Department of Social Services

Case Manager:
Telephone:

Re: REQUEST FOR EXPEDITED NATURALIZATION

Please request expedited naturalization for the following individual:

Name:
Customer IRN:
Address:

Date of Application for Citizenship:
Alien Registration Number:
Nationality:
Date of Birth:
Social Security Number:

Hardship Reason (Explain how loss of benefits causes extreme hardship i.e. food stamp ineligibility, low income, expenses exceed income.):

To be completed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service:

Expedited Naturalization _____ Approved _____ Denied

By_________________________ Date__________

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
211 W. Saratoga Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3002