

## Immigration Petitions: Premium Processing vs. ‘Regular’ Adjudication



By [Elizabeth M. Klarin](#)

March 17, 2026 | **IMMIGRATION**

These days, to get a timely adjudication on any U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) petition, filers need to be looking at the possibility of paying the extra US\$2,965 to the U.S. government for expedited adjudication, under the agency’s “Premium Processing” option. This is because “regular” adjudication typically takes months — and in some cases, years — for most case types. This means your entire immigrant or nonimmigrant process, and accordant status, can be held up by lengthy adjudication times, limiting work options and/or the ability to travel in the meantime.

Premium processing a petition, where available as an option (not all case types can be “premium” processed), generally means there is a much shorter time to receive an answer from USCIS on your petition or application for an immigration benefit or to extend status, from the filing date. Normally, an answer comes in the form of either an approval, a request for additional evidence (RFE) or a denial.

Tracking your petition, under regular processing, is also more difficult than if you premium process the petition. The

USCIS Premium Processing service includes an email to the petitioner or their attorney confirming the receipt and acceptance of the petition for processing, with a unique “receipt number” that allows you to track the progress of the petition online. For those nervous about having filed things correctly, or eager to see the moment their case is approved, this can be worth the extra money. With regular processing, you might not receive a receipt notice confirming that the petition was sufficient for adjudication and the receipt number to track the case for a month or more. If there was an issue with the basic qualifying criteria for the petition (such as a missed signature, incorrect fee, missing form, etc.) resulting in the petition being rejected, it will likely be more than a month from the date you filed before you get that back in the mail, notifying you of the deficiency. This can add pressure to an already stressful situation, as the lost time can make it difficult, if not impossible, to get into status within the petitioner’s/applicant’s preferred time frame.

That said, there are some drawbacks to Premium Processing as well. Since USCIS only has 15 business days to adjudicate the petition, we have seen more push-back from the government on these types of petitions as compared to those filed for “regular” adjudication. While there is no official data supporting this observation, it is possible that a Premium Processing-filed petition will receive heightened scrutiny as compared to “regular” processing. Therefore, petitioners need to be extra careful to provide sufficient evidence to support all claims in the filing, to ensure the best chance of avoiding an RFE. If an RFE is issued on a case, the government gets a new 15 business days from the date it receives a response to the request from the petitioner/applicant — further pushing out the approval timeline and date one may start working in their newly approved or renewed status.

*If you have questions about whether or when to utilize Premium Processing for an immigration petition or application, please contact Lippes Mathias immigration team members Elizabeth M. Klarin ([eklarin@lippes.com](mailto:eklarin@lippes.com)) or Eileen M. Martin ([emartin@lippes.com](mailto:emartin@lippes.com)), who would be happy to offer assistance.*

*The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the author’s firm, its clients, LexisNexis Canada, Law360 Canada or any of its or their respective affiliates. This article is for general information purposes and is not intended to be and should not be taken as legal advice.*

# Related Team



**Elizabeth M. Klarin**

Partner



**Eileen M. Martin**

Partner | Team Co-  
Leader - Immigration  
| Team Leader -  
Canada-U.S. Cross  
Border

**Disclaimer:** *The information in this post is provided for general informational purposes only, and may not reflect the current law in your jurisdiction. No information contained in this post should be construed as legal advice from our firm or the individual author, nor is it intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter. No reader of this post should act or refrain from acting on the basis of any information included in, or accessible through, this post without seeking the appropriate legal or other professional advice on the particular facts and circumstances at issue from a lawyer licensed in the recipient's state, country or other appropriate licensing jurisdiction.*