

Visa Data Reporting: Updating the Methodology

- I. Overview:** The Visa Services Office publishes immigrant visa (IV) and nonimmigrant visa (NIV) data in the annual *Report of the Visa Office*. Beginning with fiscal year (FY) 2019, the annual report has adopted an application-centric methodology in the counting and reporting of all IV and NIV visa data, which replaces an earlier transaction-based methodology.
 - II. New methodology:** The new application-centric methodology (new methodology), applicable to both IV and NIV data, considers the final adjudication of a visa application at the end of a specific reporting period for counting purposes. If an adjudication of a visa application changes in the reporting period, the final or the latest adjudication status is used for counting purposes.
- Application vs. applicant:** The new methodology considers the total number of visa issuances or visa refusals in a particular scenario as the sum of all applications issued or refused, respectively, in a specific reporting period. This method accounts for the total number of *applications* and not the total number of applicants.
- III. The transaction-based methodology:** This methodology counts the number of instances of visas issued, refused, and overcome/waived in specific reporting periods. This methodology is representative of visa workload, which adheres to internal visa adjudication regulations. This method may not necessarily track any changes in the adjudication status for an application or an applicant in a reporting period.
 - IV. An example of differences in visa counts when comparing the old and the new methodologies:**

To illustrate how each methodology calculates specific visa counts for an FY, consider the following example adjudication scenario of 100 visa applications in the FY. The 100 applications are divided into four groups (A, B, C, and D) with 85, 5, 9, and 1 application(s), respectively.

- A. Group A: 85 applications are initially issued visas, with no refusals. Only one transaction (an issuance) occurs for each application.
- B. Group B: 5 applications are initially refused visas. These 5 refusals are subsequently overcome or waived during the FY, and the visas are issued. Three transactions (a refusal, an overcome or waiver, and an issuance) occur for each application. The latest transaction is the issuance.
- C. Group C: 9 applications are initially refused visas. The refusals are not subsequently overcome or waived. Only one transaction (a refusal) occurs for each application.
- D. Group D: 1 application is adjudicated twice on two different dates during the FY. Both adjudications result in refusals. Neither refusal is subsequently overcome or waived. Two transactions (both refusals) occur for this 1 application.

Visa Counts Using the New and Old Methodologies

| Group | New methodology (application-based) | Old methodology (transaction-based) |
|--------------|---|---|
| A. | 85 issuances | 85 issuances |
| B. | 0 refusals, 0 overcomes/waivers, 5 issuances | 5 refusals, 5 overcomes/waivers, 5 issuances |
| C. | 9 refusals | 9 refusals |
| D. | 1 refusal | 2 refusals |
| Grand Totals | 90 issuances 10 refusals <u>0 overcomes/waivers</u> 100 applications | 90 issuances 16 refusals <u>5 overcome/waivers (O/W's)</u> 111 transactions (including O/W's), or 106 transactions (omitting O/W's) |
| | (Equals the application count) | (Differs from the application count) |

Note: The above example illustrates a specific scenario. There can be other scenarios where an application can be refused a visa more than once in a fiscal year. The number of ineligibilities involved in each of these adjudications can be one or more. An application can overcome one or more ineligibilities, but the application is issued a visa only after all ineligibilities are either overcome or waived. The details of how the methodologies count the number of refusals, overcomes, and issuances associated with an application in such a case are not illustrated in the above example. These details are governed by internal regulations.

- V. Summary:** Although there can be other instances where the two methodologies provide different counts for visa data, the discrepancies between the methodologies are minor. The important difference between the two methodologies: the new methodology is application-centric. It considers the final adjudication of a visa application in a specific reporting period for counting purposes. This differs from the transaction-based methodology, which considers the number of adjudication transactions in a specific reporting period for counting purposes.