

Vol. 22 No. 11 · September 2023

Business Journal

Employers: A new I-9 Form is out; required use Nov. 1

By MELISSA CROCKETT MESKE macmeske@ibjonline.com

A new version of the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 was rolled out on Aug. 1, 2023, by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for implementation by employers.

And while the former version, dated 10/19/2019, can continue to be used for a short time longer, this newer version of the I-9 Form will be the only one accepted starting November 1.

Employers can find their version's date by looking at the lower left corner of the form they have in their files.

"SHRM enthusiastically welcomes this new development, as we have been advocating for a remote Form I-9 verification process for years, particularly over the last three years with the implementation of the COVID-19 flexibilities," said Emily Dickens, SHRM's chief of staff, head of public affairs and corporate secretary, in a story published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) on Aug. 1.

"The Remote Form I-9 Alternative Procedure reflects the modern reality of the American workforce and HR processes and takes account of current and emerging technology – all while investing in the integrity and the security of the U.S. immigration system," Dickens further noted.

The recently released version contains changes to the form and instructions, including shortening the Form I-9 itself to one page, and reducing the instructions to eight pages.

Other changes to the form that employers will see when completing the I-9 with their new hires include:

- The removed use of "alien authorized to work" in Section 1, replacing it with "noncitizen authorized to work" and clarified the difference between "noncitizen national" and "noncitizen authorized to work."
- Ensured the form can be filled out on tablets and mobile devices by downloading onto the device and opening in the free Adobe Acrobat Reader app.
- Removed certain features to ensure the form can be downloaded easily. This also removes the requirement to enter N/A in certain fields.
- Improved guidance to the Lists of Acceptable Documents to include some acceptable receipts, guidance, and links to information on automatic extensions of employment authorization documentation.
- Added a checkbox for E-Verify employers to indicate when they have remotely examined Form I-9 documents.

While the number of pages in the Form I-9 Instructions have been cut nearly in half from the former 15, definitions have been added in to identify each "key actor" more clearly in the process and what steps they are required to take in completing their section of the form.

Another added convenience comes with the rollout of this new I-9 form as well. As of August 1, employers are allowed to continue remotely examining an employee's Form I-9 documentation, including supporting documents, but only if the employer is enrolled in E-Verify. This was a practice



This infographic illustrates where employers can find their I-9 Form's version date. The red arrow and circle indicate the date's location in the lower left corner of the document. (Melissa Crockett Meske/Illinois Business Journal)

first implemented by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) out of necessity in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

If an employer participates in E-Verify and is in good standing within its system, they are qualified to remotely examine new employee I-9 documentation using a DHS-authorized alternative procedure. If implemented, this must be done consis-

tently for all employees at your hiring site.

Remote examination includes examining the I-9 Form documents, ensuring review of both the front and back of any two-sided supporting documentation. Employers should follow this with a live video interaction with the individual presenting the document(s) to ensure that the documentation reasonably appears to be

genuine and relates to the individual.

The new employee must first transmit a copy of the required documentation to the employer and present the same documentation during the live video interaction. The employer must also retain a clear and legible copy of all I-9 Form verification and documentation, including the front and back of any documentation that is two-sided, for as long as the employee works for them, plus a specified period after their employment has ended.

An employer may opt to use this remote alternative procedure only for new hires who work remotely, and continue to use physical, in-person examination procedures for documentation with all employees who work onsite or in a hybrid capacity where they are coming onsite periodically.

Employers must be careful not to adopt an I-9 remote examination practice for any discriminatory purpose, even if done inadvertently. Employers need to remain cognizant of any potential for differential treatment of employees based on their citizenship, immigration status, or national origin, that might arise from deciding that certain employees are not eligible for remote examination of their documentation.

If an employer needs more information about E-Verify, including finding out if they're enrolled or what it takes to become so if not, visit https://www.e-verify.gov/employers/enrolling-in-e-verify.

Collinsville announces the next phase of Sports Complex redevelopment

By MELISSA CROCKETT MESKE macmeske@ibjonline.com

The City of Collinsville recently announced the next phase of the Collinsville Sports Complex redevelopment, strategically situated a quarter mile from I-255 on Collinsville Road.

In an official statement, officials shared that Sports Facilities Advisory (SFA) had been enlisted by the City to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study and proforma for the project. This endeavor builds upon the strategic insights of the Great Streets initiative on St. Louis Road and Parks Master Plan, both of which envision the expansion and redesign of the Sports Complex.

"Guided by the recommendations of the Great Streets and Parks Master Plan, both of which included extensive public input, we recognized the immense potential of our Sports Complex. Engaging Sports Facilities Advisory to evaluate feasibility and financial opportunities was a natural progression," said Collinsville Mayor Jeff Stehman as he emphasized the opportunity these initiatives uncovered.

Hailing from Clearwater, Fla., SFA is a leading national consultant for studying a community's capacity to advance health initiatives and economic growth through sports complexes, sports tourism, and related programs. Their meticulous, two-phase research has centered on the

utilization of the City's sports assets to fulfill our health and financial objectives.

Collinsville Interim City Manager Derek Jackson highlighted the project's evolution: "Phase 1 delivered a thorough feasibility study, while Phase 2 has supplied comprehensive financial proformas, confirming our readiness to embark on detailed design models." Based on SFA's findings, Collinsville is poised for redevelopment of the Sports Complex.

Partnering with the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau has been another important piece to studying the impact of this redevelopment.

The sports tourism industry accounts for over \$45 billion of direct spend economic impact nationally, generating over \$14.5 billion in tax revenue and nearly \$7 billion accrued by state and local governments. Further, these sporting events become a source of civic pride and improve the quality of life locally with better infrastructure, residential and business recruitment, and retention.

"Sports tourism related facilities and tournaments are key factors in economic growth in southwest Illinois," said Cory Jobe, president and CEO of the tourism bureau. "Establishing new facilities and events in Collinsville will bring in new visitor spending to the region, more overnight stays, and increase local tax revenues. It's a win-win for everyone."

"The redevelopment of the Sports
Complex into a tournament level facility
will draw tournament revenue on the weekends and positively impact our hotels, food
and beverage establishments, and other local
businesses," said Collinsville Parks and
Recreation Director Kimberly Caughran.
"The redevelopment will also provide our
Collinsville residents with improved facilities to play on throughout the week. It's an
excellent opportunity for Collinsville and a
great utilization of our location and assets."

Collinsville's existing infrastructure and hospitality amenities positions it for success in sports tourism. With 800 hotel rooms, the Collinsville Aqua Park, the Gateway Convention Center, a vibrant Uptown, and strategic economic development incentives zones, the City is primed for prosperity. The Sports Complex's proximity to St. Louis Airport, Busch Stadium, St. Louis Zoo, Cahokia Mounds, and other popular tourist destinations further supports the potential for enduring financial stability of the Collinsville Sports Complex.

Jackson further encapsulated the City's vision and ambitions: "Our City Council and leadership are committed to responsible, long-term solutions that uphold competitive property tax levels while enhancing resident living conditions. Sports tourism will play a pivotal role in Collinsville's trajectory, with groundbreaking on this project being the next step."