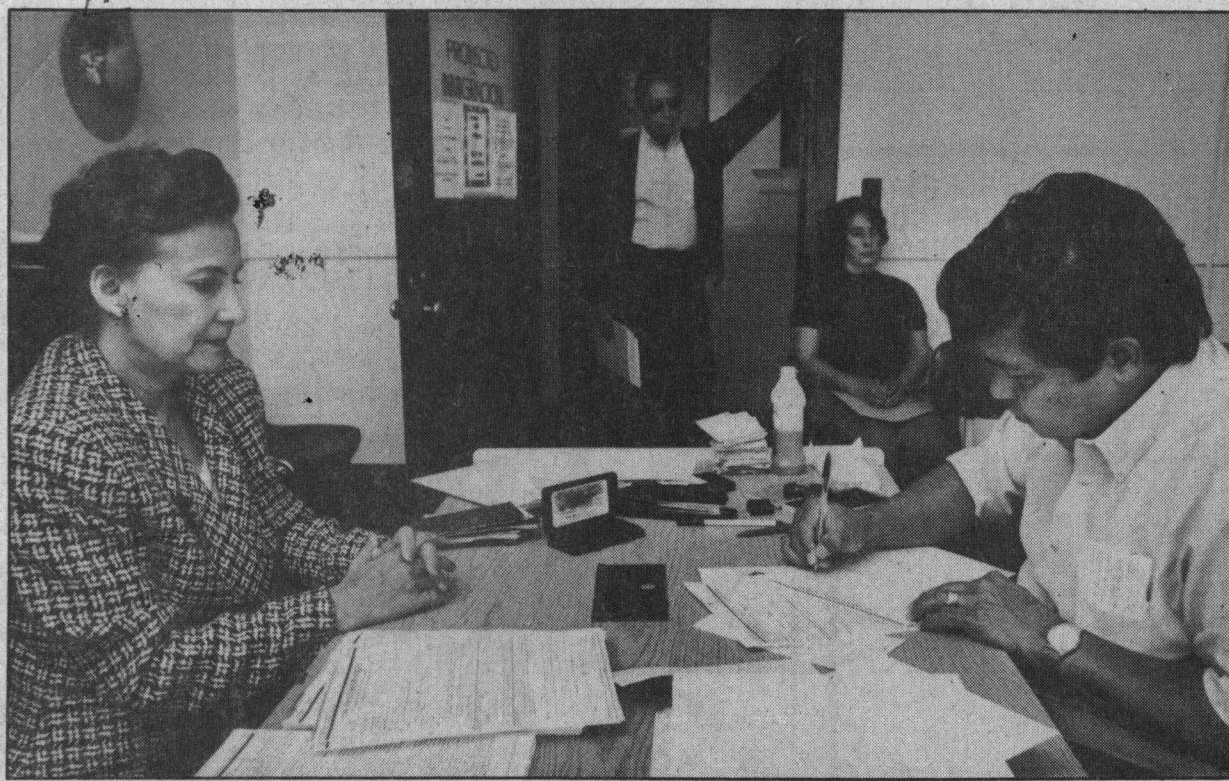


# Local office speeds alien card application

ILLEGAL ALIENS



Kurt Ellison

INS records and information supervisor Ernie Nazareno, right, helps Olivia Flores fill out application papers.



By LARAMIE TREVINO  
STAFF WRITER

By the end of today, about 50 people will have gotten ahead in replacing their resident alien cards as required by a new U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service law.

Officials from the San Jose office processed clients in eight-minute intervals today from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Watsonville's Main Street location of the Santa Cruz County Immigration Project. The officials plan to be here every Thursday until further notice to serve those with appointments. Fifty-one people signed on for today.

The new policy affects all people who were issued I-151 resident or "green cards" before 1978. Those cards will expire Aug. 2, 1993.

Nationwide, about 1.5 million people are affected, said Robert Ackerman, the officer in charge of the San Jose office.

Ackerman, who urges residents to avoid procrastinating, was at the SCCIP office this morning as Ernesto Nazareno, a records and information officer who is heading

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the project, conducted interviews. This service was only to be available once a week in Salinas, but at the urging of SCCIP Director of Immigration Services Jane Yokoyama, a Watsonville site was offered, Ackerman said.

If a group of perhaps 50 people or more can be assembled in one place, as was the case in San Jose's Portuguese-American community, the INS will consider evening sessions, Ackerman said.

The new card will cost applicants \$70 and is good for 10 years.

"We've been very pleased with the response to the program," Ackerman said, although he acknowledged that in Salinas, where the first session was held yesterday, "there were a couple of negative comments on the cost of the card."

The service was given high marks by Olivia Flores, a sociologist from Aptos, who appreciates not having to drive to San Jose to take care of the matter.

"It's magnificent," she said, speaking in Spanish. "I think people will benefit from it."

The price didn't present a hardship to her, she said.

Virginia T. Mata, who waited in line with a granddaughter in tow, also found no problem with the fee, concurring with Flores over the cost of the alternative, traveling to San Jose.

In San Jose, applicants are taken on a walk-in basis. Ackerman said if people want to go to San Jose, he recommends Tuesdays through Fridays because "Mondays are always rather hectic."

Catholic Charities, which can be reached by calling 422-0602, sets up Salinas appointments. The Salinas appointments take place in the office of Congressman Leon Panetta, D-Carmel Valley, in the Steinbeck Post Office at Alisal and Church streets.

In a flier promoting the program, the INS describes the new card as having security features that make it easier to prove — to employers for example — that the bearer is a permanent resident of the United States.

Also, the new document is supposed to speed the inspection process for card holders re-entering the United States after traveling abroad.

Additional information and forms can be requested by calling 1-800-755-0777. For appointments with INS officials at the SCCIP offices, call 724-5667.