Pillar 3 — Proposal 6: In-Person Interview Capability with All Examiners

Summary: Under current USPTO policy, in-person interviews with examiners must be conducted in a USPTO facility or through a USPTO-hosted video conference. Although recent IT improvements have greatly improved the virtual interview experience by including video, documents sharing, and other desired features, some applicants nevertheless prefer in-person interviews. The USPTO proposes that in-person interviews with remote examiners could be conducted at additional locations, such as at the USPTO Satellite Offices, at federal facilities, or at regional libraries across the country that have partnered with the USPTO to serve as repositories for patent materials, for example, the Boston Public Library, Chicago Public Library, and Los Angeles Public Library. Upon a request for an in-person interview with a remote examiner, the USPTO would designate a specific interview location nearest to the examiner and arrange for that examiner to travel to that location to conduct the interview. This proposal would ensure the availability of in-person interviews for all applications as the USPTO refines its telework program and leverages its Satellite Offices. This proposed program would have cost implications on the USPTO, which may lead to associated fees to defray these costs.

Concept	Brainstorming Questions
General	- What are the benefits of in-person interviews versus video conference interviews? - What are some obstacles associated with having examiner interviews at a remote location?
Resources and Logistics	- What equipment or resources are necessary to effectively conduct in-person interviews away from a USPTO campus? - In order to coordinate remote interviews, advance notice to the participants will be required. What is a reasonable notification time for scheduling and conducting an in-person interview at a remote location?
Metrics	- How should USPTO fund an in-person interview program in order to recover the costs associated with examiner travel and coordinating interviews at a remote location? (i.e. employee travel, loss of production time, etc…)? Flat fee for all in-person interviews? Or specific fee for only interviews in the program? - What metrics would you use to gauge the effectiveness of this program?