



## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

### USCIS 2012 Strategic Priorities

USCIS is underway in 2012 with priority initiatives to help safeguard our nation's security, uphold the integrity of the immigration system, and carry forward our country's proud tradition as a land of hope and opportunity. These initiatives build on efforts highlighted in our 2011 report and are guided by the following strategic priorities. We look forward to staying in touch on these priority initiatives as the year progresses.

#### Strengthen National Security Safeguards and Combat Fraud

*Efforts to counter fraud and reduce threats to national security and public safety are robust and fully integrated into every aspect of our work.*

This strategic priority emphasizes further integration of national security and fraud detection activities throughout the agency. It requires collaboration internally as well as with other government entities and international counterparts to support adjudication decisions in ways that prevent fraud and strengthen our national security safeguards. We will bolster existing tools and develop new ones to combat fraud and enhance screening capabilities to identify threats to national security, benefit integrity, and public safety. We will employ research and data-based tools to more effectively target our efforts and enhance policies, guidance, and procedures. We will strive to protect vulnerable populations from becoming victims of fraud and develop a mechanism to pursue individuals attempting fraud.

##### Priority initiatives aim to:

- Establish more effective integration of fraud detection and national security efforts throughout operational processes
- Strengthen national security safeguards through enhanced security screening, process integrity improvements, and increased collaboration
- Mitigate the potential for fraud by refining verification practices, enhancing document security, bolstering analytical tools, supporting vulnerable populations who may be victims of fraud, and presenting fraud cases for prosecution

#### Reinforce Quality and Consistency in Administering Immigration Benefits

*Benefit decisions are based on the law and the facts, supported by a cohesive policy framework and operational processes to ensure that decisions are informed, made in a timely manner, and further the integrity and goals of the immigration system.*

USCIS adjudicates between 6 and 7 million applications for benefits each year. This strategic priority highlights our effort to ensure that our policy-making infrastructure is efficient and effective, our policies and processes align and are streamlined, and that we emphasize quality and consistency in all we do. We must support adjudication processes to equip officers with the tools necessary to make the correct determination on the merits of each case within a policy framework that realizes the legislative intent of immigration law and promotes operational efficiency.

##### Priority initiatives aim to:

- Enhance quality and consistency in adjudications and streamline operational processes by releasing the first phases of the USCIS Electronic Immigration System (ELIS), implementing the Entrepreneurs-in-Residence initiative, enhancing the EB-5 program, and making additional process improvements
- Improve USCIS policy making through a new regulations division, extensive work on the Policy Review, and presenting Administrative Appeals Office precedent decisions for publication

#### Foster Organizational Excellence

*USCIS has a well-trained, engaged, and fulfilled workforce with the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and tools to deliver on the agency's mission.*

The strength of the agency's foundation is critical to supporting new initiatives. Within USCIS, this strategic priority relates to the internal structures that inclusively support our diverse workforce and facilitate how we operate and interact as an agency. 2012 will be the year of the USCIS employee, with initiatives to advance a mission-focused culture of professionalism, training, recognition, and opportunity. We will reform performance management, provide opportunities for employee development and engagement, foster collaboration and enhance our ability to leverage untapped talent within our workforce.

##### Priority initiatives aim to:

- Support and reinforce employee achievement by improving performance management, training, and career development
- Bolster a mission-oriented culture of excellence through sharing promising practices, fostering employee engagement, and enhancing identification with USCIS's mission

#### Promote Citizenship and Immigrant Civic Integration

*High quality resources and initiatives effectively prepare immigrants for the naturalization process and successful citizenship, and highlight the contribution of immigrants and the importance of citizenship.*

This strategic priority recognizes the role of citizenship in providing full equality under the law and as a common bond uniting all Americans. USCIS will provide educational tools and resources to help permanent residents prepare for the naturalization process and test, and support community capacity to prepare immigrants for citizenship. We also will raise awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and importance of citizenship and celebrate the meaning of citizenship and the contributions of immigrants.

##### Priority initiatives aim to:

- Support effective citizenship preparation by providing grants, outreach tools, and educational resources for immigrants,

- organizations, and educators
- Celebrate citizenship through naturalization ceremonies and highlighting the accomplishments of naturalized citizens

### **Enhance Customer Service and Public Engagement**

*Customers can easily access useful information and resources that meet their needs and expectations, and the public and our partners can engage with a responsive, respectful, and transparent agency.*

This strategic priority recognizes the importance of customer service to our agency's success. We endeavor to provide exceptional service, increase access to information and services, and interact with our customers and stakeholders in ways that reflect their needs and expectations. This requires developing strategic methods for reaching the right populations with the right information. For those individuals seeking immigration benefits, including those most vulnerable, we represent the face of the U.S. government. During 2012 USCIS will develop a new customer service architecture to change how we interact with the individuals we serve. Proactively delivering our message, we will expand opportunities for customers and stakeholders alike to obtain information, access services, and provide input.

#### Priority initiatives aim to:

- Improve public access to useful and accurate information to meet customer needs through the development and implementation of a new design for, and improvements to, our customer service architecture
- Advance proactive engagement and transparency by expanding mobile services, increasing partnerships to protect vulnerable populations, improving FOIA processing, and achieving greater transparency in the publication of data

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