

FYs 2023-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am proud to share the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2023 to 2026. This plan is grounded in USCIS' longstanding mission and firm commitment to making the United States a stronger, more inclusive, and welcoming nation, and preserving the integrity of the U.S. immigration programs we administer.

At its core, USCIS has the responsibility to deliver decisions about immigration service requests to individuals while ensuring the security of our nation. The work of USCIS employees makes the possibility of the American dream a reality for immigrants, the communities and economies they join, and the nation as a whole. USCIS' new mission statement affirms our commitment to an accessible and humane immigration system:

USCIS upholds America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve.

This new strategic plan is the continuation and expansion of activities stemming from the five priorities I announced in FY 2022, illuminating our pathway into the future. Our new strategic plan will be our roadmap to realize our own promise as an agency of transparency and responsiveness – an agency that upholds the legal immigration system, supports, and engages its employees, and fosters collaboration to deliver high-quality results. While USCIS has made strides in reducing undue barriers to immigration benefits and services, we have much more to do to achieve a modern, fair, and effective immigration system.

Our success relies on the dedication and talent of the USCIS workforce. I am immensely proud of your accomplishments during recent times of challenges and rebuilding, from responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing processing delays, to enacting numerous operational and policy changes to enhance efficiency and integrity. To build on these successes, we will continue to engage our employees across the agency to implement their actionable ideas, grow our partnership with our employee unions, and strengthen our relationships with USCIS' stakeholders, such as the Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman and the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, to ensure we consider a variety of perspectives. We look ahead, firmly grounded in our renewed vision for our agency.

As we look toward the future, my commitment to you and the agency is steadfast: USCIS will continue to serve the public with respect and fairness and lead with integrity to reflect America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility—today and for generations to come.

I invite you to discover, in the USCIS Strategic Plan, how we will strengthen our capabilities—together—to help our nation live up to its highest ideals.



Ur M. Jaddou
Director, USCIS



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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

MISSION STATEMENT

USCIS upholds America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve.

INTRODUCTION

USCIS, a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), oversees lawful immigration to the United States and carries out this important work with a dedicated and growing workforce of more than 20,000 federal employees at more than 285 offices across the country and around the world. The American people, through Congress, have entrusted USCIS to faithfully administer the legal immigration programs that allow foreign nationals to visit, work, study, live, and seek refuge in the United States. The USCIS Mission Statement is:

USCIS upholds America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve.

The Work of USCIS

USCIS is the agency where U.S. citizens, U.S. companies, and noncitizens from around the world seek U.S. immigration services. USCIS delivers decisions to individuals, families, businesses, workers, and those seeking a place of safety and shelter in our country, whether they filed applications, petitions, requests, or appeals. The work of USCIS employees makes the possibility of America a reality for immigrants, for the communities and economies they join, and for the nation as a whole.

Citizenship and Integration for New Americans. USCIS encourages naturalization through citizenship education and awareness, by building capacity and expanding partnerships, and by reducing undue barriers throughout the naturalization process. Individuals who wish to become U.S. citizens through naturalization submit their applications to USCIS. USCIS carefully reviews each application, determines eligibility through in-person interviews, adjudicates the application, and, if the application is approved, schedules the applicant for a ceremony to take the naturalization Oath of Allegiance. USCIS also determines eligibility and provides documentation of U.S. citizenship for individuals who acquired or derived U.S. citizenship through their family members.



Family Unification. USCIS manages the process that gives U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents the right to petition to bring certain relatives to live and work in the United States. Additionally, USCIS administers the first step in the process by which U.S. citizens adopt children from other countries. USCIS collaborates closely with the Department of State, which shares responsibility for the processing of this workload abroad.

Economic Growth and Opportunity. USCIS manages the process that allows U.S. companies to bring individuals from other countries to lawfully work in the United States. Through partnerships, such as joint rulemakings between DHS and the Department of Labor, USCIS is making certain visas more available than ever before, in addition to ensuring robust and fair protections for U.S. and foreign workers alike. Some opportunities of varying skill level are temporary and some provide a path to lawful permanent residence. These programs and the people they serve facilitate innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth and opportunity, enabling the United States to continue to be a global economic leader.

Humanitarian Protection. USCIS administers several humanitarian programs, domestically and abroad, to assist individuals seeking protection from persecution or torture, survivors of trafficking, domestic violence, or other serious crimes, individuals fleeing disasters or other temporary and urgent circumstances. By working in close collaboration with the Departments of State and Health and Human Services to fulfill the United States' protection obligations, USCIS' unique humanitarian programs have long been a beacon of hope and inspiration for individuals around the world seeking protection and refuge.

Information Sharing and Data Facilitation. USCIS facilitates access and sharing of immigration status and work authorization information. The E-Verify program provides a service to the business community and helps those authorized to work to realize that benefit in a timely way. The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program offers a fast, secure, and reliable immigration status information system that assists benefit-granting agencies in determining program eligibility.

Immigration System Integrity. USCIS' work includes identifying and mitigating national security, public safety, and fraud concerns during the adjudication process. For example, USCIS conducts fraud risk assessments, a strategic approach identifying fraud risks within the immigration benefits adjudicated by USCIS. USCIS also develops fraud risk profiles and assessments to mitigate risk and evaluates the efficacy of existing anti-fraud strategies across the agency. USCIS conducts systematic screening and vetting processes on every immigrant and nonimmigrant application and petition filed with USCIS to confirm an individual's identity, combat potential fraud, and mitigate threats to public safety and national security. USCIS does this by obtaining relevant information from DHS and interagency biometric and biographical databases to identify information that may affect an individual's eligibility for a benefit or admission in the United States and to inform proper adjudicative decisions. Additionally, the Administrative (ASVVP) and Targeted (TSVVP) Site Visit Verification Program serves as additional compliance and integrity measure, as well as a tool to protect workers from falling victim to labor exploitation, fraud, and abuse. This program verifies information in certain visa petitions to further ensure employers and beneficiaries are following the terms and conditions of the visa.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ Grants lawful permanent residence to more than 2,100 people and issues nearly 5,900 Green Cards.
- ✦ Ensures the employment eligibility of 132,000 new hires in the United States.
- ✦ Processes refugee applications around the world in support of refugee admissions.
- ✦ Screens 200 people for protection based on an expressed fear of persecution or torture if they return home.
- ✦ Conducts affirmative asylum interviews across 11 offices and on circuit rides, including asylum merit interviews as part of the new Asylum Processing Rule.

Progress on the Director's Priorities

In FY 2022, when delivering the new USCIS Mission Statement, Director Jaddou laid out five priorities:

- ✦ Priority #1 – **Strengthen USCIS Fiscal Health and Management**
- ✦ Priority #2 – **Increase Hiring and Improve Employee Morale**
- ✦ Priority #3 – **Promote Efficiency in USCIS Adjudications**
- ✦ Priority #4 – **Deliver on our Humanitarian Mission**
- ✦ Priority #5 – **Strengthen Public Engagement and Improve Customer Service**

These priorities served as the initial steps for strengthening USCIS' organizational infrastructure and the nation's immigration system and are the building blocks for this strategic plan. The priorities were successful with many achievements in FY 2022.

USCIS' accomplishments during FY 2022 include:

- ✦ Welcoming more than 1 million new U.S. citizens, including 10,640 members of the U.S. military.
- ✦ Developing and implementing a virtual naturalization process for active-duty members of the U.S. military stationed abroad.
- ✦ Meeting a growing humanitarian need by those seeking assistance or protection from oppression, violence, and other urgent circumstances. For example, USCIS:
 - Interviewed over 6,250 refugee applicants from Afghanistan, completing decisions for over 2,000 applications.
 - Confirmed the financial suitability of over 177,000 supporters for the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) process, and over 82,000 Ukrainians and their immediate family members have been paroled into the United States under the U4U process.
- ✦ Awarding nearly \$20 million in grants to 66 organizations in 35 states to help prepare lawful permanent residents and those with a clear pathway to lawful permanent residency for naturalization.
- ✦ Hosting 87 national engagements with almost 30,000 participants and more than 2,500 local engagements with over 73,000 participants. Over 400 of our engagements were multilingual, reaching 16,000 participants.
- ✦ Receiving and responding to 179,577 inquiries from Congress, a 150% increase over previous annual averages. USCIS' congressional program conducted 1,201 outreach activities which included events that often drew over 300 congressional staff. Additionally, the congressional program conducted over 110 briefings to Members of Congress, their staffs, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Congressional Research Service.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ **Responds to 690 inquiries across the congressional program with an average response time of 20 days, conducts outreach activities, provides briefings to members of congress and their staff, and provides technical assistance to the Hill on bills, amendments, or other legislative language.**

USCIS' work serves our *Mission*. We advance our mission through our Strategic Goals and Core Values.

USCIS Strategic Goals FYs 2023-2026

Goal 1 – Strengthen the U.S. Legal Immigration System

Ensure that immigration policies, regulations, strategies, processes, and communications support a strong legal immigration system with integrity and promote integration, inclusion, and citizenship.

Goal 2 – Invest in Our Workforce

Attract, recruit, train, and retain a diverse, flexible, and resilient workforce that drives high-quality organizational performance.

Goal 3 – Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship

Enhance organizational capability for efficient and effective use, management, and sharing of resources entrusted to the agency, and to evaluate and balance competing demands and priorities to serve the agency's mission.

USCIS Core Values

Champion People – In Service to the Public

People are at the heart of our mission – from USCIS employees to the people we serve. We value our employees and empower them to bring their best selves to USCIS, in service to the public and the USCIS mission. When people of all backgrounds are valued, heard, and respected in an inclusive manner, the nation reaps the reward.

Uphold Integrity – Honor of Character and Action

Integrity is the foundation for trust and strengthens the American public's confidence in the immigration system. USCIS maintains the highest professional standards in the decisions we make, the processes we create, and the relationships we build. We achieve excellence by vigilantly carrying out the USCIS mission.

Foster Collaboration – Moving Forward Together

Strong teams build strong organizations that deliver quality results. Creativity and innovation are cultivated when employees feel confident proposing new ideas, giving and receiving feedback, and collaborating with colleagues, stakeholders, and the communities we serve. The success of our mission is tied to the quality of our partnerships and teamwork.

Advance Opportunity – The Future Depends on What We Do Today

At USCIS, we believe that every task we face is an opportunity to promote career development, inclusivity, and equity. We are committed to growing the talents of our employees to serve our mission, our nation, and those who seek to reunify with their families, contribute their talents, seek refuge, or become our newest U.S. citizens.

USCIS Strategic Goals and Objectives, Fiscal Years 2023-2026

Goal 1 – Strengthen the U.S. Legal Immigration System

Objective 1.1 Access to the Legal Immigration System

Objective 1.2 Fair, Efficient, and Humane Adjudication

Objective 1.3 Naturalization Promotion and Process Improvement

Objective 1.4 Security and Integrity in the Legal Immigration System

Goal 2 – Invest in Our Workforce

Objective 2.1 Attract, Recruit, Train, and Retain Employees

Objective 2.2 Future of Work

Objective 2.3 Leadership and Employee Empowerment

Objective 2.4 A Culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Goal 3 – Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship

Objective 3.1 Financial Management

Objective 3.2 Human Resources Capacity and Processes

Objective 3.3 Quality Data and IT System Management

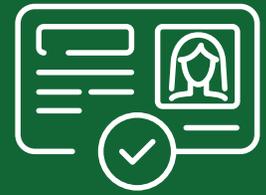
Objective 3.4 Program Performance Evaluation and Evidence Building



GOAL 1

STRENGTHEN THE U.S. LEGAL IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Ensure that immigration policies, regulations, strategies, processes, and communications support a strong legal immigration system with integrity and promote integration, inclusion, and citizenship.



To fulfill USCIS' statutory responsibilities and mission to administer the nation's immigration system, Strategic Goal 1 commits USCIS to adjudicate requests with fairness, efficiency, and integrity, to enhance the security of the legal immigration system, and to inspire trust in USCIS by building relationships and promoting communication with the communities we serve. The objectives and strategies within Goal 1 will ensure that USCIS:

- ✦ Promotes quality adjudications while reducing the time that individuals wait for decisions on their applications, petitions, and requests;
- ✦ Increases its capacity to fulfill and respond to an ever-growing humanitarian mission—including processing refugee, asylum, temporary protected status, and humanitarian parole applications;
- ✦ Reduces undue barriers to the legal immigration system and encourages naturalization through a whole-of-society approach that leverages federal, state, and local partnerships and collaboration; and
- ✦ Enhances its ability to identify threats to national security and public safety, and to deter, detect, and disrupt immigration benefit fraud in an efficient manner so that only those eligible for immigration benefits are approved.



1.1 Access to the Legal Immigration System

Develop immigration policies, regulations, and guidance to support and expand legal immigration pathways, improve access to immigration benefits, strengthen the asylum system, and effectively support the resettlement of refugees.

Developing Immigration Policies that Promote Legal Immigration Pathways

To ensure that USCIS policies do not impede access to lawful immigration benefits or limit available pathways for lawful migration, USCIS will review regulations and policy documents to identify and remove barriers for those we serve. USCIS will also issue regulations and policies that restore and strengthen the family and employment-based immigration systems and the asylum and refugee systems that improve the lives of survivors of domestic and sexual violence and other serious crimes, and that are nimble enough to effectively and quickly address urgent humanitarian needs. Additionally, USCIS will review regulations and policies to ensure that they do not hamper operational efficiency and future innovation for the intake, processing, and adjudications of immigration benefit requests. Regulations and policy guidance documents will be clear and easy to understand and include opportunities for public engagement and input.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ Receives 55,000 phone calls to our tollfree phone line and more than 150,000 inquiries and service requests via online accounts and digital self-help tools.
- ✦ Develops systems to further modernize our immigration system, bringing more forms into ELIS and users into MyUSCIS.

Promote Access and Equity in Filing Processes

To help all people who need USCIS' services obtain them and reduce undue barriers to access, USCIS will conduct assessments of all forms used to apply for immigration benefits, with a goal of eliminating unnecessary, redundant questions and reducing the complexity of forms. USCIS will increase access to e-filing of forms while maintaining the availability of paper forms to bridge "the digital divide." To increase public awareness about how to apply for immigration benefits, USCIS will strengthen communication through additional community partnerships and communication channels and by evaluating ways to enhance USCIS' communication resources.

Enhance Customer Experience

To ensure USCIS is accessible and inclusive in the delivery of our services, the agency will enhance the experience of all those USCIS serves. The agency will embed a human centered design approach—engaging with and listening to our customers—to support a modernization of the USCIS Contact Center and improve access to services and information across the agency. For example, USCIS has begun efforts to reduce wait times for calls, address the need for appointments through various efforts, and, where needed, ensure appointment capacity to meet the needs of our applicants. Additionally, the Contact Center has piloted a text-ahead feature to better alert our customers when to expect a call-back after submitting a request and began efforts towards full implementation of this feature to improve customer service.

USCIS will also establish secure online accounts as the customer's centralized channel for interacting with USCIS about their case, regardless of whether they file via paper or electronically. All online accountholders will be able to receive and respond to Requests for Evidence and comparable requests electronically, including uploading supporting documents, receiving electronic case status notifications, opting out of postal mail notifications, and ultimately filing online. Accountholders will also be able to view personalized processing times ensuring an understanding of timelines.

USCIS will ensure that applicants have myriad channels for timely, respectful, and meaningful access to assistance. USCIS will leverage and strengthen our workforce so that they can be receptive, responsive, and empathetic to the diversity of communities that we serve.

Modernize Our Framework for Stakeholder Engagement

To improve the public's knowledge of USCIS' services, enable people to easily find needed information, and increase satisfaction with their USCIS interactive experience, USCIS will leverage partnerships with key stakeholders for broader dissemination of information, especially in harder-to-reach communities, about USCIS' services to the public. USCIS will also explore pathways to strengthen and implement more consistent engagement with stakeholders to both distribute information and collect valuable insights and feedback.

Improve the E-Verify and Form I-9 Experience and Verification Process

USCIS will apply the demonstration project authority to begin developing the E-Verify "Next Generation" Proof of Concept (POC) in a simulated environment, using human-centered design to ensure that the needs of employees who use USCIS tools and services are major considerations in developing the POC. The POC will demonstrate product capabilities to reduce data duplication and provide employees with greater control and ownership of their employment verification process through a secure private method. Ultimately, E-Verify Next Gen will integrate the E-Verify and Form I-9 experiences and streamline the verification process. USCIS expects this strategy to generate evidence determining the return-on-investment value of the POC and to improve system access and its ease of use by employees and employers.



1.2 Fair, Efficient and Humane Adjudication

Reduce the net pending caseload and processing times to a reasonable and sustainable level, improve the efficiency of casework processes, strengthen partnerships to inform process improvement and equity and fairness in adjudication, enhance information delivery and the experience of those we serve, and provide sufficient resources for staffing, information technology (IT), and infrastructure for high-quality performance.

Increase Staff to Meet Workload Demands

USCIS will increase staffing levels of adjudication and support functions in accordance with funded positions. The onboarding and training of new staff focused on adjudication work will increase capacity to process applications and decrease pending workloads and processing times.

Leverage Technology to Transform Business Processes

USCIS will continue to strategically deploy technology to improve efficiencies and reduce the backlog. USCIS will accelerate the transition of high-volume workflows to the case management systems that support full electronic case processing. This improvement will increase the efficiency and thoroughness of assessments for eligibility, better detect and disrupt fraud, and screen for national security risks. This will strengthen security, accountability, and improve efficiency of administrative tasks performed during the adjudicative process.

Additionally, implementation of more efficient and effective VTEL (video teleconferencing) interview processes and of modernized communications equipment and capabilities will give USCIS greater flexibility in managing adjudication workflows. These improvements will enable managers to direct resources where needed to conduct interviews and other office work that is necessary to adjudicate applications and petitions, while reducing the risk of human error in important integrity processes. USCIS expects that these strategies will result in a reduced pending caseload and greater efficiency in processing applications and petitions and free up officer capacity that can be reallocated where it is most needed.

Promote Efficient and Effective Processing of Humanitarian Response Initiatives

USCIS will continue to support U.S. initiatives to protect vulnerable persons through the refuge and asylum system, Temporary Protected Status, T and U visas, the Violence Against Women Act, deferred action, and parole. Based on recent examples of USCIS' support in responding to humanitarian emergencies, USCIS will evaluate prior successes and challenges to develop flexible and swift response frameworks both within the agency and the Department—such as leveraging new technology and volunteers from across USCIS and developing a surge capacity force—that can be used to address to future humanitarian crises.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ Adjudicates more than 32,500 requests for various immigration benefits.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ Processes 3,700 applications to sponsor relatives and future spouses.
- ✦ Approves applications and petitions to help unite four foreign-born orphans with the Americans who want to adopt them.
- ✦ Serves 800 people at in-person appointments for document services and other urgent needs.



1.3 Naturalization Promotion, Partnership Building, and Process Improvement

Expand citizenship education and promotion efforts through a whole-of-society approach that leverages federal, state, and local partnerships and collaboration; reduce undue barriers throughout the naturalization process through policy, operational, and other improvements; and ensure equitable and timely access to naturalization by addressing net pending caseload and processing times.

Whole-of-Government Approach to Promoting Naturalization

USCIS chairs the Interagency Naturalization Working Group, which promotes and implements the Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization, a whole-of-government approach to breaking down barriers to U.S. citizenship and promoting naturalization to all who are eligible. Stakeholder feedback about eligibility requirements and adjudicative processes, including the naturalization interview, indicate that USCIS needs to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, uniformity, and consistency of the citizenship and naturalization process. USCIS will reach out to communities to identify undue barriers to access and will develop comprehensive assistance to tackle issues, including addressing outdated policy and regulatory provisions. Expected outcomes include fewer barriers to naturalization and citizenship and an increase in the number of individuals who apply for citizenship and are naturalized. In addition, USCIS will ensure effective stewardship of the Citizenship and Integration Grants program, which provides funding to organizations that prepare immigrants for naturalization and promote civic integration.

Enhance Relationships and Communications with the Communities We Serve

USCIS will reinvigorate a proactive engagement posture that reflects the importance of public engagement across the USCIS workforce. USCIS will refocus its resources and planning and elevate liaison and coordination efforts to promote the importance of U.S. citizenship. This engagement will be with all USCIS stakeholders, including the Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, and with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and it will include coordination and partnership with state and local governments, data analysis to better understand communities and their needs, and consistent messaging to communities. By listening and engaging with the public nationally and locally, USCIS will better understand the undue barriers to naturalization and service delivery and identify quicker, smarter, and more cost-efficient solutions for process improvement.

Effectively Deploy Technology to Naturalize Eligible Military Service Members

To improve the naturalization process for members of the military, in consultation with the Department of Defense, USCIS will implement a scalable video-based solution that allows for completion of naturalization interviews and administration of the oath at military bases, nationwide and abroad. This enhancement will reduce USCIS resources spent for travel to military installations while increasing the efficiency for those we serve.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ Welcomes 3,800 new citizens at naturalization ceremonies—that's one every 22 seconds in a 24-hour period. Typically, about 42 of these daily new citizens are members of the U.S. armed forces.



1.4 Security and Integrity in the Legal Immigration System

Develop and enhance processes and systems in the legal immigration system administered by USCIS that identifies, resolves and prevents national security, public safety, and fraud concerns.

Improve Fraud and National Security Resolution Processes

USCIS will strengthen and unify agency approaches to fraud and national security detection and deterrence while maintaining the integrity of the U.S. legal immigration system. Approaches will include establishing improved criteria, documentation, data access, and coordination in fraud and national security identification, referral, and resolution processes. They will also include ensuring USCIS officers consider actionable and material findings of potential fraud, public safety, and national security concerns as they make decisions on immigration applications and petitions.

Support and Leverage the Continued Development of the National Vetting Center

The National Vetting Center helps federal programs identify individuals who may present a threat to national security and public safety. To increase effectiveness and efficiency of refugee and asylum application processing, USCIS will implement guidance that integrates the results of the center's consolidated vetting framework into the adjudication process, increase the quality and timeliness of adjudications, streamline existing screening and vetting processes, and expand access to national security and public safety related information.

Develop Risk Analysis Model to Evaluate Trends in Administrative Investigation Findings

By implementing a risk framework analysis model applicable to different form types to evaluate historical filings to identify significant trends, USCIS will strengthen the agency's capability to baseline and predict risk and recommend mitigating measures for vulnerable form types. The expected result is strengthened risk management, improved data for use in adjudication processes and decision-making, and increased effectiveness of resources allocated to investigate vulnerabilities in immigration applications and petitions.

ON AN AVERAGE DAY, USCIS

- ✦ **Fingerprints and photographs 10,000 people across 131 application support centers**
- ✦ **Collaborates with other federal government agencies, as well as local and state governments, to accomplish our mission.**

Redesign USCIS Immigration Documents, Secure Forms, and Certificates of Naturalization

Redesigning USCIS' immigration documents, secure forms, and naturalization certificates to enhance security features will mitigate the risk of the use of fraudulent and counterfeit immigration documents. USCIS expects this strategy will decrease the number of potential counterfeit immigration documents presented for travel and work authorization or to obtain other government benefits.

Improve Criteria for Documentation Shared with DHS Partners for Potential National Security, Public Safety, or Fraud Cases

An improved process by which USCIS solicits, records, and consistently evaluates feedback from DHS partners will enhance our capacity to identify best practices, monitor investigative trends, and improve quality of coordination. This will result in increased usefulness of data and referrals that USCIS provides to DHS partners investigating potential national security, public safety, and fraud cases.

GOAL 2

INVEST IN OUR WORKFORCE

Attract, recruit, train, and retain a diverse and resilient workforce that drives high-quality organizational performance.



The abilities, expertise, and agility of USCIS' workforce are the foundation of USCIS' success. To meet the ever-growing complexity of today's challenges and opportunities, USCIS will recruit and hire the best talent and provide employees the resources and workplace flexibilities they need to thrive and succeed. USCIS' Strategic Goal 2 includes objectives and strategies that will:

- ✦ Attract, recruit, train, and retain a diverse and resilient workforce by ensuring that positions in high-priority areas are filled;
- ✦ Promote a USCIS culture that values principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility;
- ✦ Provide needed tools, leverage best practices, and identify efficiencies to attract new talent and encourage high-performing employees; and
- ✦ Implement a multi-faceted workforce engagement plan that improves employee morale and gives employees a voice in shaping our agency for the future.



2.1 Attract, Recruit, Train, and Retain Employees

Identify and implement strategies to attract, recruit, train, and retain high-performing employees at all levels, and remove barriers to ensure equal employment opportunities.

Develop an Enterprise-Wide Strategic Hiring Plan

A new agency-wide approach to hiring, formalized through a USCIS Human Capital strategy addressing people, processes, and technology, and an Enterprise Recruitment Hiring Model, will define goals that focus on efficient, creative, and strategic recruitment practices. The USCIS Strategic Hiring Plan will reflect a holistic perspective on USCIS' human capital needs and direction. It will guide how we identify the workforce we need for the future of the agency; how we hire, train, and develop employees; how we implement succession planning; and how we will incorporate knowledge management and transfer among employees. Results will include effective prioritization and recruitment of exceptional individuals from a variety of demographics and sources and who seek a career with USCIS; fulfillment of current and expanding staffing needs; and establishment of USCIS as an employer of choice.

Modernize and Expand Enterprise-Wide Training Opportunities

USCIS will reengineer and modernize training curriculums to develop a skilled employee cadre that understands our underlying immigration laws, policies, and procedures and that can successfully interact with the diverse set of customers we serve. Through established development pathways for leaders, officers, and nonadjudicators, USCIS will support its employees through continuous learning opportunities that will produce quality and consistency in all we do.

Improve Technologies and Tools for Employee Retention

USCIS will attract and retain high-performing employees by investing in current and reliable technologies and tools that enable remote work, support continual learning, and make it easier to access and use the tools and data needed to succeed. The intended result is that employee satisfaction with USCIS' work tools and workplace flexibilities will increase retention of high-performing employees.

Fully Realize Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) for Current and Future Employees

New data, tools, and processes will enable USCIS to effectively identify and address deficiencies and eliminate undue barriers that prevent the full realization of EEO for employees and prospective employees in employment practices, including recruitment and hiring, professional development, performance evaluations, advancement, compensation, awards, and retention. USCIS' desired outcome for this strategy is the full realization of EEO for employees and applicants.



2.2 Future of Work

Based on guiding principles of employee health and safety, mission accomplishment, and work-life balance, we will work toward a future USCIS where all employees, regardless of work schedule or site, are engaged and able to collaborate seamlessly with one another to accomplish our mission. USCIS will maximize, update, and formalize work schedules and workplace flexibilities that fit operational needs, that support qualified employees at all levels, and that promote work life balance and wellness for all employees.

Incorporate Workplace and Work Schedule Flexibilities

During the COVID-19 pandemic, workplace and work schedule flexibilities and extensive use of collaboration tools helped support employee well-being while continuing to deliver services and products and engage stakeholders. Consequently, USCIS' Future of Work working group drew upon knowledge gained about flexibilities in work scheduling and new ways to effectively perform work. They recommended USCIS' path forward to implement permanent offerings for expanded remote work, telework, and alternative work schedule options that fit our operations. USCIS will provide employee workplace flexibilities, including telework and remote work, if the position allows. To expand the types of work tasks and activities that may be performed at alternate worksites, USCIS will identify work that can be assigned to employees reporting remotely or via telework. In addition, USCIS will leverage the career-pathing strategies being developed by the DHS Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer for the DHS enterprise. The intended outcomes are employee satisfaction with telework, remote work, and alternative work schedule options, and reduced attrition rates.

Safeguard the Workforce and Promote Resilience

USCIS will mitigate threats to the workforce through proactive safety, security, threat, risk management, and preparedness and resilience programs. Ever-evolving global security, safety, weather, and health threats highlight our workforce's vulnerability to acts of violence and destruction, whether natural or manmade, or from internal or external forces. USCIS will partner with local, state, and federal stakeholders to help provide the safest workplace possible. By accomplishing this strategy, USCIS will secure a safe working environment for employees and visitors at USCIS facilities, mitigate threats through proactive threat reduction and risk management programs, and ensure USCIS' resilience to continue its mission during continuity or emergency events.



2.3 Leadership and Employee Empowerment

Increase employee engagement by empowering employees to improve work processes, involving employees in decisions that affect their work, and increasing transparency through enhanced leadership communication.

Support More Inclusive Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Action Planning

As a part of our commitment to lean into all employee feedback communicated through the FEVS annual process, USCIS will develop an employee engagement strategy which utilizes the results, by translating them into action, in the maximum possible way. This mechanism will drive action planning for the organization through increased communication, coordination, and planning with workforce representatives.

Equip Managers with the Tools to Empower Employees

USCIS will create space and tools for supervisors and managers to share their successful approaches and to identify effective ways of practicing employee empowerment. The expected outcome of this strategy is the availability of a greater diversity of perspectives from employees at all levels of the organization to inform decision-making and process improvement.

Develop An Effective Format to Engage Employees for Innovation

USCIS will develop a formal and well-promoted approach to employee engagement, which better involves employees in process improvements that directly impact their work and provides employees with opportunities to contribute to agency innovation and to their well-being. The desired outcomes are increased employee engagement as they contribute suggestions and feedback; transparent dialogue between leadership and employees about suggested innovations, improvements, and the results of implementation; and recognition of employees for contributing actionable suggestions.



2.4 Culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Assess existing culture and develop and implement plans that embed inclusive diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles into agency decisions and daily mission activities.

Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Accountability and Decision Making

USCIS will implement a DEIA Strategic Plan and an analysis framework to assess the baseline and improve the state of the agency's DEIA organizational maturity, training and education, and efforts to raise employee awareness of DEIA. The resulting data-driven approach will advance DEIA accountability and decision making for continuous improvement toward a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace where all employees feel valued and respected.

Proactive Prevention and Early Resolution of EEO Complaints

USCIS will equip supervisors and employees with the training and tools needed to assist with managing conflict in the workplace. USCIS will promote the Alternative Dispute Resolution program to increase resolution of EEO complaints as early as possible. USCIS' desired outcome is a work environment free of discrimination.

Strengthen Agency Infrastructure to Achieve DEIA and EEO Goals

USCIS will invest in expanding infrastructure supporting its equal employment opportunity and DEIA initiatives. New positions, including senior leadership and specialized staffing, will enhance and expand organizational capabilities in these areas to facilitate USCIS' ability to leverage its diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion in the workplace.

GOAL 3

PROMOTE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

Enhance organizational capability for efficient and effective use, management, and sharing of resources entrusted to the agency, and to evaluate and balance competing demands and priorities to fulfill the agency's mission.



Strengthening USCIS' fiscal health and management will ensure that the agency has the resources to responsibly manage its existing workload and execute key priorities. Increased due diligence, evidence-building, and innovation will bolster USCIS' infrastructure and service delivery. USCIS' governance frameworks will continue to promote, align, and monitor resource management, standards, and consistency of management practices. By accomplishing the objectives and strategies of Strategic Goal 3, USCIS will:

- ✦ Effectively prioritize and monitor use of our resources;
- ✦ Efficiently balance and process our work;
- ✦ Transparently use and share quality data;
- ✦ Provide valuable customer experience; and
- ✦ Proactively improve our services and products.



3.1 Financial Management

Ensure financial accountability and agency solvency through the implementation of multi-year budget and acquisition planning that align resources with strategic goals and operational priorities.

Implement Multi-Year Budget Planning Aligned with Strategic and Operational Goals

By implementing and evaluating a multi-year budget plan and process, USCIS will be able to produce a list of needs that can be prioritized over several years and ensure that planned spending is within estimated resources. This planning will allow USCIS to maintain solvency and fund identified priorities, and it will inform future fee reviews. As a result, USCIS expects accurate and reliable multi-year budgets aligned to strategic goals and operational priorities.



3.2 Human Resources Capacity and Processes

Implement process efficiencies and improve data integration, consulting, and advisory capabilities to deliver results-oriented human capital services and solutions that address current and emerging needs of those we serve.

Enhance Consultative Services for Recruitment and Hiring

USCIS will implement customized recruiting and hiring strategies that incorporate historical and real-time data about attrition, recruit for priority competencies and high-level proficiencies to meet mission objectives, and better integrate key hiring authorities. Services will provide customized advice and guidance to hiring managers. As a result, USCIS expects that hiring managers will receive accurate, relevant, and useful information needed to recruit and hire the most qualified candidates.

Streamline Personnel Security Vetting

USCIS will transform personnel security vetting under the Trusted Workforce 2.0 initiative. Following government-wide implementation guidance, this initiative will reduce the time required to bring new hires onboard and will promote mobility of the federal workforce by permitting personnel security clearance determinations to be carried between job positions with the same security requirements. The expected outcome will be faster and more effective security vetting of personnel.



3.3 Quality Data and IT System Management

Deploy full scale end-to-end electronic processing by modernizing and safeguarding IT systems and solutions, improve data quality through transparent governance, enhance the experience of those we serve, and advance business intelligence.

Modernize IT Infrastructure

USCIS will establish a scalable, secure, and high-availability technical infrastructure by evolving our cloud hosting environment and by improving network performance to support remote work in a distributed environment. IT modernization supports USCIS' operational and strategic initiatives, including end-to-end electronic processing and caseload reduction, which rely heavily upon increased capacity to process a significant growth in forms digitization and retrieval, and the capability to conduct simultaneous video interviews to support immigration benefits processing. As a result, USCIS will deliver immigration services and products efficiently due in part to an IT infrastructure that is available, fast, and secure, and USCIS' IT infrastructure resources will be deployed effectively and timely where needed.

Improve Data Quality for Case Management

To increase the accuracy and consistency of data shared between USCIS' electronic case management systems, intake processes, and other government systems, USCIS will lead its partners to develop and effectively implement data standards. The desired outcome is accurate and consistent data across federal immigration case management systems and databases, and improved ease of data sharing among key government partners.

Mature Data Architecture Strategy

A new data protection strategy, USCIS' Enterprise Data Security Architecture, will identify sensitive data elements requiring protection. This approach will mature the agency's data security posture and will enhance authentication (access), authorization (roles), confidentiality (encryption), integrity (change approval), and auditing for all of USCIS' data. This strategy aims to ensure that all sensitive USCIS data are protected.

Enhance the User Experience of Our Workforce

USCIS will use recognized industry standards and best practices to establish effective methods for design and development of internal systems. USCIS will increase its focus on user experience throughout the software development lifecycle, from pre-application through post-adjudication solutions, and will incorporate employee input into final products. In addition, USCIS will apply a Development, Security and Operations approach to deliver timely solutions to the field. The expected outcomes of this strategy include increased employee engagement about decisions that affect their work; increased effectiveness and use of public-facing tools resulting in fewer returned applications, contact center and field inquiries, and Requests for Evidence; and the maturation and application of these best practices applied across the tools that USCIS' employees use to efficiently complete our work and improve USCIS' return on investment.

Develop Unified Strategy for Digitization of Paper Documents Submitted to USCIS

USCIS will develop and implement a coordinated, enterprise-wide framework and to ensure that all paper-based documents submitted to USCIS are digitized, prioritized, and available in the appropriate case management system. This approach will capture paper-based documents needed for processing of immigration services requests and improve officers' timely and secure access to the data for case processing. USCIS expects that this strategy will provide faster, safer, and more reliable delivery of information that officers need to adjudicate cases and will increase the security of data and case files.

Improve Access to Identity Information

To provide more accurate, efficient, and timely access to an individual's comprehensive immigration history and status and allow USCIS to decommission older and duplicative data systems, USCIS will expand system capabilities and improve access to person-centric biographic and biometric data needed to process immigration applications and petitions. This will allow for streamlined and accurate initial application reviews resulting in faster and higher quality adjudication decisions. Additionally, this will improve the customer experience for those we serve by facilitating access to their immigration history and status data without waiting for USCIS to respond to an information request.

Enhance Cybersecurity and Resilience

USCIS will invest in and build an enterprise cybersecurity program that applies Zero Trust principles, strategies, and solutions. This program will ensure USCIS' compliance with federal cybersecurity laws, policies, and executive orders and will enhance our ability to prevent, detect, and respond to cybersecurity incidents.

Protect Against Violations of Privacy Policy

USCIS will advance the agency's capacity to comply with federal requirements for protection of privacy and civil liberties, and to prevent violations of a person's civil liberties that result in litigation. By executing a framework that includes accurate and reliable data tools which detect and prevent violations of privacy policy and implementing a process that identifies and evaluates trends in violations, USCIS will assess risks and gaps within the agency's processes and systems that contribute to violations. The new information will inform and improve communications promoting employees' awareness of measures that protect personal and other sensitive data, resulting in greater protection of the privacy and civil liberties of our employees and those we serve.



3.4 Program Performance Evaluation and Evidence Building

Establish high-quality program evaluation, data analytics capability, and evidence building capacity and protocols to better assess operational and strategic effectiveness and support evidence-based decision making.

Build Capacity for Evidence Building and Evaluation

A robust system of frameworks, methods, and tools for monitoring program performance, conducting program evaluations and building other types of evidence will provide the information needed for the agency's sound policy, budgetary, operational, and management decisions. USCIS expects this strategy to result in existing and new evidence, built through analysis, evaluation, and experimentation, that is integrated into USCIS decision-making processes.

CONCLUSION

An effective immigration system is accessible, trusted, and fulfills America's promise as a nation of welcome and possibility with fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve. With every person USCIS naturalizes, we are strengthening the nation by fully integrating that individual with all the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to live out and promote the American dream for themselves, those around them, and the future of this nation. With every person approved to come to our country to work, we are building our economy, promoting innovation, and fortifying businesses. With every person approved for family-based immigration, we are enabling and promoting family reunification. With every person granted humanitarian relief, USCIS reinforces the strength of our American legal immigration system by ensuring safe, orderly, and humane immigration processes.

To that end, USCIS is focused on ensuring that we are processing requests in a timely manner, making tools and resources available to people who are navigating the immigration process, and directly reaching out to communities to talk, listen, and engage in diverse and creative ways. At the same time, USCIS must remain vigilant to protect the integrity of the U.S. immigration system and the security of the nation.

The USCIS Strategic Plan is the roadmap to achieving meaningful progress in strengthening our nation's immigration system. USCIS has already begun work on some of the strategic objectives included in this Strategic Plan. As part of the strategic review process and reporting to DHS, USCIS will assess progress against performance measures to accomplish our objectives.

USCIS is committed to evidence-based policymaking. USCIS will develop and publish a learning agenda: a plan for determining and researching key questions that will provide the evidence needed, including input from our stakeholders, to improve our regulations, programs, services, and products. The learning agenda will help USCIS determine where additional evidence is needed to ensure it is accomplishing its strategic plan.

We look forward to the work ahead for USCIS, and we are ready to demonstrate that the work we do honors our nation's highest values.



APPENDIX

USCIS Strategic Goals and Objectives, FYs 2023-2026

Goal 1 – Strengthen the U.S. Legal Immigration System

Ensure that immigration policies, regulations, strategies, processes, and communications support a strong legal immigration with integrity and promote integration, inclusion, and citizenship.

Objective 1.1 Access to the Legal Immigration System

- ✦ Developing Immigration Policies that Promote Legal Immigration Pathways
- ✦ Promote Access and Equity in Filing Processes
- ✦ Enhance Customer Experience
- ✦ Modernize Our Framework for Stakeholder Engagement
- ✦ Improve the E-Verify and Form I-9 Experience and Verification Process

Objective 1.2 Fair, Efficient, and Humane Adjudication

- ✦ Increase Staff to Meet Workload Demands
- ✦ Leverage Technology to Transform Business Processes
- ✦ Promote Efficient and Effective Processing of Humanitarian Response Initiatives

Objective 1.3 Naturalization Promotion and Process Improvement

- ✦ Whole-of-Government Approach to Promoting Naturalization
- ✦ Enhance Relationships and Communications with the Communities We Serve
- ✦ Effectively Deploy Technology to Naturalize Eligible Military Service Members

Objective 1.4 Security and Integrity in the Legal Immigration System

- ✦ Improve Fraud and National Security Resolution Processes
- ✦ Support and Leverage the Continued Development of the National Vetting Center (NVC)
- ✦ Develop Risk Analysis Model to Evaluate Trends in Administrative Investigation Findings
- ✦ Redesign USCIS Immigration Documents, Secure Forms, and Certificates of Naturalization
- ✦ Improve Criteria for Documentation Shared with DHS Partners for Potential National Security, Public Safety, or Fraud Cases

Goal 2 – Invest in Our Workforce

Attract, recruit, train, and retain a diverse and resilient workforce that drives high-quality organizational performance.

Objective 2.1 Attract, Recruit, Develop, and Retain Employees

- ✦ Develop an Enterprise-Wide Strategic Hiring Plan
- ✦ Modernize and Expand Enterprise-Wide Training Opportunities
- ✦ Improve Technologies and Tools for Employee Retention

- ✦ Fully Realize Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) for Current and Future Employees

Objective 2.2 Future of Work

- ✦ Incorporate Workplace and Work Schedule Flexibilities
- ✦ Safeguard the Workforce and Promote Resilience

Objective 2.3 Leadership and Employee Empowerment

- ✦ Support More Inclusive Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Action Planning
- ✦ Equip Managers with the Tools to Empower Employees
- ✦ Develop An Effective Format to Engage Employees for Innovation

Objective 2.4 A Culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

- ✦ Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Accountability and Decision Making
- ✦ Proactive Prevention and Early Resolution of EEO Complaints
- ✦ Strengthen Agency Infrastructure to Achieve DEIA and EEO Goals

Goal 3 – Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship

Enhance organizational capability for efficient and effective use, management, and sharing of resources entrusted to the agency, and to evaluate and balance competing demands and priorities to fulfill the agency’s mission.

Objective 3.1 Financial Management

- ✦ Implement Multi-Year Budget Planning Aligned with Strategic and Operational Goals

Objective 3.2 Human Resources Capacity and Processes

- ✦ Enhance Consultative Services for Recruitment and Hiring
- ✦ Streamline Personnel Security Vetting

Objective 3.3 Quality Data and IT System Management

- ✦ Modernize IT Infrastructure
- ✦ Improve Data Quality for Case Management
- ✦ Mature Data Architecture Strategy
- ✦ Enhance the User Experience of Our Workforce
- ✦ Transition to Full Electronic Case Processing to Accelerate Backlog Reduction
- ✦ Develop Unified Strategy for Digitization of Paper Documents Submitted to USCIS
- ✦ Improve Access to Identity Information
- ✦ Enhance Cyber Security and Resilience
- ✦ Protect Against Violations of Privacy Policy

Objective 3.4 Program Performance Evaluation and Evidence Building

- ✦ Build Capacity for Evidence Building and Evaluation



NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS APPLYING OUTSIDE A STATE DEPARTMENT FACILITY

When you apply for a passport outside of the normal operating hours of the State Department facility, you will be required to provide your Social Security Number (SSN) to the passport agent. This information is used to verify your identity and to ensure that you are eligible for a passport. The Department of State will not release your SSN to anyone else. If you do not provide your SSN, you will not be able to apply for a passport. If you are unable to provide your SSN, you may be able to apply for a passport by mail. For more information, please visit the Department of State website at www.state.gov/passports.

FEDERAL TAX LAW

REMITTANCE OF FEES

OTHER USES OF SOCIAL SECURITY







**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**