

Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate

Asylum Division



Joseph E. Langlois is the Chief of the Asylum Division within the Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate. The mission of the Asylum Division encompasses the management of three main programs: adjudication of affirmative asylum applications, adjudication of applications for suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), and credible fear screenings for those in expedited removal. In addition, Asylum Officers conduct reasonable fear of persecution or torture screenings and travel overseas to interview and process refugees for the Refugee Affairs Division.

The Asylum Division guides and oversees the operations of eight asylum offices located in Arlington, VA; Chicago, IL; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Newark, NJ; New York, NY; and San Francisco, CA. The Asylum Officer Corps consists of approximately 300 Asylum Officers and 60 Supervisory Asylum Officers. Each field office reports to Asylum Division headquarters. The Asylum Division headquarters office is composed of three separate branches.

The **Operations Branch** is responsible for program and procedural development with respect to all programs managed by the Asylum Division, including the affirmative asylum, credible fear, ABC/Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA 203) and reasonable fear programs. The branch develops policy, regulations and procedures and evaluates major Asylum program initiatives.

The **Management Branch** is responsible for oversight of issues related to productivity, logistics and infrastructure. Often coordinating with other Department of Homeland Security and USCIS components, the branch manages finances, statistics, budget, staffing, productivity plans, records, contracts, procurement, correspondence, emergency planning, information management, facilities, property, security, labor-management relations and performance appraisal systems.

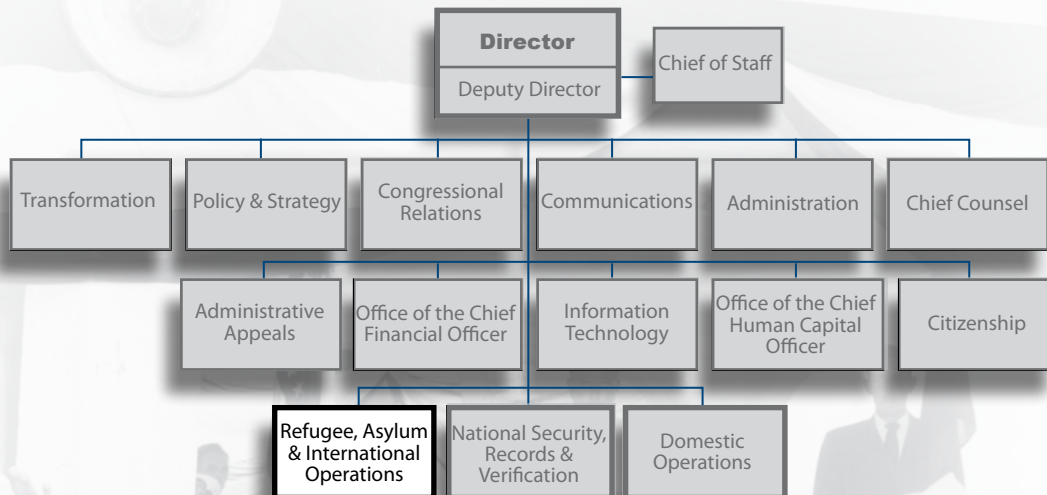
Through its **Training, Research, and Quality Branch (TRAQ)** the Asylum Division conducts quality assurance, develops training programs and compiles and disseminates information on country conditions. TRAQ designs and delivers the mandatory five-week Asylum Officer Basic Training Course for all incoming Asylum Officers. The course covers asylum and refugee law, international human rights law, interviewing techniques, decision-making and decision-writing skills and effective country conditions research skills.

TRAQ reviews sensitive asylum cases and provides legal and policy guidance to ensure consistency within a constantly evolving legal framework and identifies areas and issues requiring additional training. In addition, TRAQ's Country of Origin Information Research Section conducts research on unique cases, disseminates country conditions information and ensures the appropriate use in the asylum decision-making process. As a key measure to ensure quality throughout the Asylum Program, the Asylum Division requires 100 percent Supervisory Asylum Officer review of all asylum decisions, regular supervisory observation of interviews and weekly field training. TRAQ supports these field office efforts by providing guidance and advice to supervisors and quality assurance/training officers in the field.



USCIS officer conducts reasonable fear of persecution screening

USCIS Organizational Chart



Asylum Division

