

The following USCIS response was received as part of a collective response to several recommendations submitted by the CIS Ombudsman. The following response has been extracted from the original document received by the CIS Ombudsman for display and readability purposes.

USCIS issue national policy guidance on the implementation of InfoPass to ensure equitable access to immigration services. Specifically, the guidance should direct that:

- 1. All districts should schedule as many InfoPass appointments as possible.**
- 2. Each field office must either reserve some time each week for walk-in appointments or implement clear procedures for emergency, same-day appointments due to exigent circumstances. To ensure standard implementation nationwide, USCIS Headquarters should promulgate a definition of "exigent circumstances" and provide examples of situations that would warrant same-day appointments.**
- 3. Each field office must either have a kiosk or computer available to help customers make an InfoPass appointment. If the local offices are not immediately capable of providing this service they must at least compile and provide a list of public libraries, legal services providers, and/or community-based organizations that can help immigration customers make InfoPass appointments. Local offices should *not* simply use their current list of immigration legal service providers, but should compile a new list with the prior consent of each listed entry.**

USCIS agreed with this recommendation last year, and provided offices with written guidance on maintaining some capacity each day for individuals who arrive without an appointment, but are seeking an appointment due to an emergency. We have advised our offices to take into account the long distance that individuals may have driven to reach a USCIS office when determining whether to see customers without an appointment. In addition, our local management teams are very customer oriented and do everything possible to accommodate those exceptional and emergent needs. We continuously monitor INFOPASS scheduling and most offices have sufficient capacity to see customers within two weeks. We have found that a small number of offices have more requests for personal contact than they have capacity. In those offices we are increasing staffing levels of immigration information officers. This issue, however, will be an ever-present one, as public announcements concerning changes in laws or programs can cause temporary surges in workload that exceed our capacity in particular offices at particular times. For this reason, our customer service strategy also includes constant review and updates to our Internet site as we continually strive to make it more user friendly, and more informative, and also, to maximize our capabilities at the National Customer Service Center by providing both automated information as well as contact with customer service representatives when necessary.