

university-based centers. The listed areas of expertise include: (1) The training of first responders; (2) responding to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction and biological warfare; (3) emergency and diagnostic medical services; (4) chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear countermeasures or detection; (5) animal and plant health and diagnostics; (6) food safety; (7) water and wastewater operations; (8) port and waterway security; (9) multi-modal transportation; (10) information security and information engineering; (11) engineering; (12) educational outreach and technical assistance; (13) border and transportation security; and (14) the public policy implications and public dissemination of homeland security relevant research and development. However, the list is not exclusive. 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(C) gives the Secretary discretion to except certain criteria specified in 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B) and consider additional criteria beyond those specified in 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B) in selecting universities for this program, as long as the Department issues a **Federal Register** notice explaining the criteria used for the designation.

Criteria

In response to Congressional direction contained in the Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, the DHS Under Secretary for Science and Technology developed a plan in November 2006 to establish new DHS Centers of Excellence in high priority science and technology areas which aligned to the DHS Science and Technology Directorate's research portfolios and for which DHS determined there were significant gaps in scientific understanding and technological development. These areas included: 1. Natural Disasters, Coastal Infrastructure and Emergency Management, 2. Explosives Detection, Mitigation and Response, 3. Maritime, Island and Remote Environment Security, and 4. Border Security and Immigration. Research in these areas will contribute significantly to the Department's ability to enhance homeland security and the safety of our citizens from both natural and man-made threats.

The criteria for designation for this new Center of Excellence (COE) for Explosives Detection Mitigation and Response (EDMR) is demonstrated expertise in conducting fundamental explosives-related sciences and engineering research. S&T is establishing the EDMR COE to conduct

research to enhance the Nation's technical capabilities to detect, prepare for, prevent damages from, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks involving explosives. The EDMR COE will collaborate closely with the DHS/ Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate's Explosives Division, which manages a full-spectrum research and development (R&D) program from fundamental research to advanced technologies. The EDMR COE will provide enabling basic research that will advance the technical tools and information that S&T's customers will need in the future. The EDMR COE will develop relevant educational curricula for both matriculated students and career professionals. The EDMR COE also will participate in S&T's University Network, a consortium of COEs that share resources and data and collaborate on research projects to provide cost-effective results to support DHS's mission.

Announcement of Funding Opportunities and Competition

In February 2007, the Department established a competitive process and requested white papers and proposals from universities that wished to be designated as DHS Centers of Excellence in: 1. Natural Disasters, Coastal Infrastructure and Emergency Management, 2. Explosives Detection, Mitigation and Response, 3. Maritime, Island and Remote Environment Security, or 4. Border Security and Immigration. The funding opportunity announcements for these four Centers of Excellence were published at <http://www.grants.gov> on February 4, 2007, as required by the Office of Management and Budget. In the area of Explosives Detection Mitigation and Response, DHS received 19 white papers and evaluated them through a peer-review panel process that included scientific expertise from the federal government, peer-institutional faculty, and the private sector. Following the white paper review, DHS received 5 full proposals by the closing date of July 30, 2007. The 5 full proposals were reviewed by subject matter experts external to DHS S&T. All 5 full proposals were referred to an internal review panel of S&T subject matter experts for evaluation, who recommended site visits at 3 sites. Based on information collected on these site visits, DHS selected the University of Rhode Island to be the Education Lead Institution for the Explosives Detection Mitigation and Response Center of Excellence, in partnership with Northeastern University (the Research Lead), New Mexico Institute of

Mining and Technology and other affiliated universities.

The University of Rhode Island and its partners will develop educational programs and conduct basic and transformational research and on explosives-related issues including explosives properties, formulation, and characterization; detection of explosives and explosive devices; sensor materials; unconventional approaches to identify threats, and other countermeasures. These programs will include the development and use of explosives research and educational capabilities at minority-serving institutions.

This team of institutions will become an intrinsic part of the DHS science and technology portfolio, working closely with DHS and other federal, state and local governments to reduce potential damages from floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters.

Jay M. Cohen,

*Under Secretary for Science and Technology,
Department of Homeland Security.*

[FR Doc. E8-13291 Filed 6-12-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Office of the Secretary

Notice Designating the University of Texas at El Paso as a DHS Center of Excellence for the Study of Border Security and Immigration for Education Lead Institution

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Homeland Security has designated the University of Texas at El Paso as a DHS Center of Excellence for the Study of Border Security and Immigration, Education Lead Institution.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tiffany Lightbourn, Program Manager, University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528; telephone 202-254-5843, facsimile 202-254-6179; e-mail tiffany.lightbourn@dhs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 308 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107-296, (the "Homeland Security Act"), as amended by the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution 2003, Public Law 108-7, and as codified in Title 6 of the United States Code Chapter I Subchapter III

Section 188(b)(2) [6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)], directs the Department of Homeland Security (“Department”) to sponsor extramural research, development, demonstration, testing and evaluation programs relating to homeland security. As part of this program, the Department has established a coordinated system of university-based centers for homeland security (the “Centers”).

The Centers are envisioned to be an integral component of the Department’s capability to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks. The Centers will leverage multidisciplinary capabilities and fill gaps in current knowledge.

Title 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B) lists fourteen areas of substantive expertise that, if demonstrated, might qualify universities for designation as university-based centers. The listed areas of expertise include: (1) The training of first responders; (2) responding to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction and biological warfare; (3) emergency and diagnostic medical services; (4) chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear countermeasures or detection; (5) animal and plant health and diagnostics; (6) food safety; (7) water and wastewater operations; (8) port and waterway security; (9) multi-modal transportation; (10) information security and information engineering; (11) engineering; (12) educational outreach and technical assistance; (13) border and transportation security; and (14) the public policy implications and public dissemination of homeland security relevant research and development. However, the list is not exclusive. 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(C) gives the Secretary discretion to except certain criteria specified in 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B) and consider additional criteria beyond those specified in 6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2)(B) in selecting universities for this program, as long as the Department issues a **Federal Register** notice explaining the criteria used for the designation.

Criteria

In response to Congressional direction contained in the Conference Report for the Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, the DHS Under Secretary for Science and Technology developed a plan in November 2006 to establish new DHS Centers of Excellence in high priority science and technology areas which aligned to the DHS Science and Technology Directorate’s research portfolios and for which DHS determined there were significant gaps in scientific understanding and

technological development. These areas included: (1) Natural Disasters, Coastal Infrastructure and Emergency Management, (2) Explosives Detection, Mitigation and Response, (3) Maritime, Island and Remote Environment Security, and (4) Border Security and Immigration. Research in these areas will contribute significantly to the Department’s ability to enhance homeland security and the safety of our citizens from both natural and man-made threats.

The criteria for designation for this new Center of Excellence for the Study of Border Security and Immigration will demonstrate expertise in conducting fundamental research into the policy and technological issues and challenges of U.S. border security, immigration, and national security. Research results will support DHS, other federal, state and local agencies missions to secure our national borders while welcoming legitimate visitors and trade. This COE will collaborate closely with S&T’s Borders & Maritime Division which manages a full-spectrum research and development (R&D) program from fundamental research to advanced technologies. The COE for the Study of Border Security and Immigration will provide enabling basic research that will advance the technical tools and information that S&T’s customers will need in the future to balance the lawful movement of people and goods with effective border security. This COE will develop relevant educational curricula for both matriculated students and career professionals.

The Center of Excellence for the Study of Border Security and Immigration will conduct basic and transformational research on border security issues in the following areas:

1. Surveillance, Screening, Data Fusion, and Situational Awareness. Specifically they will research the best ways—in terms of legality, sensitivity to privacy, effectiveness, and affordability—of maintaining surveillance over borders and ports of entry. In addition they will develop improvements in our ability to screen cargo, vehicles, and passengers entering the U.S.

2. Population Dynamics, Immigration Administration, and Immigration Enforcement. Research will develop methods to accurately measure and reliably predict the size of immigration flows to the U.S. and improve the efficiency of our system of immigration administration and enhance the enforcement of our immigration laws.

3. Operational Analysis, & Command, Control, and Communications. In particular they will develop approaches

that allow for multiple layers of security and diverse forms of surveillance, interdiction, and enforcement to be effectively integrated. Research will also facilitate the timely communication of information and analysis generated by surveillance and screening systems.

4. Immigration Policy, Civic Integration, & Citizenship. Research will assess the consequences of immigration policies on future flows of migrants, the American labor market, and on the incorporation of immigrants into American society.

5. Border Risk Management & International Governance. Research will assess new technologies and improved risk assessment methodologies to prioritize protection efforts. Research will also assess strategies that can enhance cooperation among national and international organizations that share common interests regarding the security of the border domain.

Announcement of Funding Opportunities and Competition

In February 2007, the Department established a competitive process and requested white papers and proposals from universities that wished to be designated as DHS Centers of Excellence in: (1) Explosives Detection Mitigation and Response, (3) Maritime, Island and Remote Environment Security, or (4) Border Security and Immigration. The funding opportunity announcements for these four Centers of Excellence were published at <http://www.grants.gov> on February 4, 2007, as required by the Office of Management and Budget. In the area of Border Security and Immigration DHS received 11 white papers and evaluated them through a peer-review panel process that included scientific expertise from the federal government, peer-institutional faculty, and the private sector. Following the white paper review, DHS received 6 full proposals by the closing date of July 30, 2007. The 6 full proposals were reviewed by subject matter experts external to DHS S&T. Three full proposals were referred to an internal review panel of S&T subject matter experts for evaluation, who recommended site visits at all 3 sites. Based on information collected on these site visits, DHS selected University of Arizona to be the Research Lead Institution for the Border Security and Immigration Center of Excellence, in partnership with the University of Texas at El Paso (the Education Lead), University of New Mexico and other affiliated universities.

The University of Texas at El Paso and its partners will develop educational programs on the policy and

technological issues and challenges of U.S. border security, immigration, and national security.

Jay M. Cohen,

*Under Secretary for Science and Technology,
Department of Homeland Security.*

[FR Doc. E8-13288 Filed 6-12-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Office of the Secretary

Designation of the Electronic Employment Eligibility Verification System Under Executive Order 12989, as Amended by the Executive Order Entitled "Amending Executive Order 12989, as Amended" of June 6, 2008

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces that the Secretary of Homeland Security has designated the E-Verify system, operated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in partnership with the Social Security Administration, as the electronic employment eligibility verification system to be used by Federal contractors, pursuant to Executive Order 12989, as amended by the Executive Order entitled "Amended Executive Order 12989, as Amended" of June 6, 2008.

DATES: This designation is effective immediately.

Designation

Executive Order 12989, as amended by the Executive Order entitled "Amended Executive Order 12989, as Amended" of June 6, 2008, instructs Federal departments and agencies that enter into contracts to require, as a condition of each contract, that the contractor agree to use an electronic employment eligibility verification system designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security to verify the employment eligibility of all persons hired during the contract term by the contractor to perform employment duties within the United States, and all persons assigned by the contractor to perform work within the United States on the Federal contract.

Pursuant to that Executive Order, I hereby designate the E-Verify system, modified as necessary and appropriate to accommodate the policy set forth in the Executive Order entitled "Amended Executive Order 12989, as Amended" and the implementation of that Executive Order by the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of General

Services, and the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as the electronic employment eligibility verification system to be used by Federal contractors.

Dated: June 9, 2008.

Michael Chertoff,

Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

[FR Doc. E8-13294 Filed 6-12-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9111-97-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Agency Information Collection Activities: Form I-698, Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection; Comment Request

ACTION: 30-Day Notice of Information Collection Under Review: Form I-698, Application to Adjust Status From Temporary to Permanent Resident; OMB Control No. 1615-0035.

The Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has submitted the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The information collection was previously published in the **Federal Register** on April 9, 2008, at 73 FR 19234 allowing for a 60-day public comment period. USCIS did not receive any comments for this information collection.

The purpose of this notice is to allow an additional 30 days for public comments. Comments are encouraged and will be accepted until July 14, 2008. This process is conducted in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.10.

Written comments and/or suggestions regarding the item(s) contained in this notice, especially regarding the estimated public burden and associated response time, should be directed to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) USCIS Desk Officer. Comments may be submitted to: USCIS, Chief, Regulatory Management Division, Clearance Office, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529. Comments may also be submitted to DHS via facsimile to 202-272-8352 or via e-mail at rfs.regs@dhs.gov, and to the OMB USCIS Desk Officer via facsimile to 202-395-

6974 or via e-mail at

kastrich@omb.eop.gov.

When submitting comments by e-mail please make sure to add OMB Control Number 1615-0035 in the subject box. Written comments and suggestions from the public and affected agencies should address one or more of the following four points:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques, or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Overview of this information collection:

(1) *Type of Information Collection:* Extension of an existing information collection.

(2) *Title of the Form/Collection:* Application to Adjust Status from Temporary to Permanent Resident.

(3) *Agency form number, if any, and the applicable component of the Department of Homeland Security sponsoring the collection:* Form I-698. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(4) *Affected public who will be asked or required to respond, as well as a brief abstract: Primary:* Individuals and households. The data collected on this form is used by the USCIS to determine eligibility to adjust an applicant's residence status.

(5) *An estimate of the total number of respondents and the amount of time estimated for an average respondent to respond:* 1,179 responses at 60 minutes (1 hour) per response.

(6) *An estimate of the total public burden (in hours) associated with the collection:* 1,179 annual burden hours.

If you have additional comments, suggestions, or need a copy of the proposed information collection instrument with instructions, or additional information, please visit the USCIS Web site at: <http://www.regulations.gov/search/index.jsp>.

If additional information is required contact: USCIS, Regulatory Management