



A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO GONZÁLEZ

JANUARY 2008 “Securing America’s Promise”

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At USCIS, we are responsible for administering our nation’s immigration and naturalization adjudication functions, and establishing immigration services policies and priorities.

As the Director of this vital agency and an American by choice, I find it satisfying that so many people want to become a part of the American fabric. This significant increase in the number of immigration applications and petitions filed is clearly welcome news as applicants demonstrate a deep desire to participate fully in our country’s civic life. I understand well that processing delays are not abstract numbers; each case affects an individual’s or family’s dreams and aspirations. At USCIS, we are committed to providing immigration services and benefits to eligible applicants as expeditiously as possible.

In July and August, we received 2.5 million applications and petitions for immigration benefits, double the normal volume. During Fiscal Year 2007, the agency received approximately 1.4 million naturalization applications. That is more than the total naturalization applications filed in Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 combined. For the months of June and July of 2007, it represented an increase of nearly 350% compared to the same period in 2006.

This surge in filings resulted in receipting delays for many naturalization applicants initially. We have addressed this situation, and have returned to normal timeframes for issuing naturalization application receipt notices. USCIS projects this filing surge will impact overall processing times for naturalization applications received after June 1, 2007. USCIS is projecting that under current conditions, the average processing time for these applications is expected to be up to 18 months. It is likely, however, that some applicants in jurisdictions less heavily impacted by the filing surge will be processed sooner.

We are finalizing a plan to specifically address the application increase. It will detail how we plan to improve this situation by enhancing our information systems, realigning our internal processes, and expanding our workforce capabilities. In the interim, we are taking some immediate steps. The Rule adjusting our price schedule provided the resources to expand our workforce by about 1,500 employees and invest in information technology, facilities, training and other areas to improve service. We now have more than 400 new staff on board, including more than 270 adjudicators, who have a direct effect on this workload. Many more will be arriving in USCIS offices this summer.

Our goal is to continue these efforts and accelerate them where possible to better meet demands. We will not shortcut our procedures or processes to the detriment of immigration integrity or national security. Processing applications fairly without sacrificing national security and public safety is our core mission and the American people deserve our utmost dedication and commitment. Look to future editions of USCIS Monthly for status updates of our plans and actions. USCIS remains committed to fulfilling its promise of maintaining the integrity of our immigration system while also providing world-class customer service.

NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM USCIS COMMUNICATIONS

[USCIS Extends Suspension of Premium Processing Service for Religious Workers \(R-1\) Nonimmigrant Visa Classification](#) - 01/04/2008

[USCIS Field Office Adopts Teletch Call Appointment System](#) - 01/03/2008

[USCIS Reaches H-2B Cap for Second Half of Fiscal Year 2008](#) - 01/03/2008



NEW PRODUCTS

In 2007, USCIS released new Chinese, Urdu and Polish language versions of the popular publication, [Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants](#). The revised Guide includes information from federal and state agencies, as well as community organizations that assist immigrants and their families. Information includes finding a place to live, receiving a social security number, getting a job, registering children for school, finding healthcare, locating English language classes, and preparing for emergencies.

In addition to settlement and integration information, the Guide contains an introduction to the U.S. system of government, a section on civic rights and responsibilities, and information on how to obtain citizenship.

All [translations](#) of the Guide and other [resources for new immigrants](#) are available to download for free. New permanent residents may call the USCIS forms line (1-800-870-3676) to request a hard copy. Copies will also be available for purchase by the public, both individually and in bulk, through the [U.S. Government Printing Office \(GPO\) Bookstore](#).

NEW FRIENDS

Director Gonzalez administered the Oath of Allegiance to more than 11,500 new American citizens during a special series of naturalization ceremonies at the Miami Beach Convention Center in December.

During ceremonies on Wednesday, December 19th, Florida Governor Charlie Crist gave the keynote address during the morning ceremony, and Miami Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez addressed citizens in the afternoon. On Thursday, December 20th, Miami Beach Mayor Matti H. Bower was on hand to deliver remarks in the morning, and the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, State Representative Marco Rubio gave remarks in the afternoon.

In total, USCIS welcomed more than 650,000 citizens during naturalization ceremonies across the United States during fiscal year 2007.



Florida Governor Charlie Crist and Director Gonzalez welcome new citizens in Miami

OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

The [Outstanding American by Choice](#) initiative recognizes the achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to the country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Throughout the year, USCIS Director González will continue to recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their communities and adopted country.



JOHN SHALIKASHVILI

A retired four-star U.S. Army General and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili was born June 27, 1936 in Warsaw, Poland to Georgian parents. As the Russian Army approached Nazi occupied Warsaw in 1945, the family fled to Germany and later came to the United States in 1952 as refugees, sponsored by a cousin who had recently emigrated to Peoria, Illinois. In May 1958, Shalikashvili and his family were sworn in as American citizens. It was the first citizenship he ever held. Shalikashvili had been classified as "stateless", since his parents were refugees during WWII.

When John arrived in Peoria at the age of sixteen, he spoke little English. He recalled it this way, "As school was over, I would run to the local movie theater. There I would sit through movies in order to learn English. In those days movies didn't start at a specific time and end at a specific time, but they would roll continuously. The first time through it wouldn't make much sense to me. But the second time through, it would begin to make a little more sense."

A bright student, Shalikashvili graduated from Peoria High School, where he was a long distance runner. He went on to attend Bradley University, and earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. After graduation he received a draft notice and entered the US Army as a private. Finding his calling in uniform, he applied to Officer Candidate School, and received his commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army in 1959.



Director Gonzalez presents General Shalikashvili with the Outstanding American by Choice Certificate during a special ceremony at his home

Early in his commissioned career, Shalikashvili served in various Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery positions as a platoon leader, forward observer, instructor, student and company commander before being sent to Vietnam where he served as a senior advisor to the South Vietnamese military. After his combat duty in 1970, he served as executive officer and commander of an Artillery Battalion based at Fort Lewis, Washington.

An alumnus of the United States Army War College and the Naval Command and Staff College, Shalikashvili later served in Germany as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Europe and as the Commander of the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, before being appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by President Bill Clinton in 1993. He retired from this post and the Army in September 1997, after 38 years of distinguished service. General Shalikashvili became the first immigrant in United States history to become a general of the United States Army and hold the title of Joint Chiefs Chairman.



ADOPTED VALOR: IMMIGRANT HEROES

FOREIGN BORN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

SERGEANT CHARLES A. MACGILLIVARY - WWII

Born to Cardigan Scot Roland MacGillivary and Minnie Quinn, in Charlottetown, Canada on January, 17, 1917, Charles MacGillivary attended Queens Square School in Charlottetown and joined the Merchant Marines at age 16. Shortly thereafter, MacGillivary immigrated to the United States, to live with a brother in Boston, Massachusetts. After hearing about the attack on Pearl Harbor, he decided to volunteer for the U.S. Army. MacGillivary was attached to Company I, 71st Infantry, 44th Infantry Division and assigned to the European Theatre.

Called to testify before a United States Senate Subcommittee on Immigration 50 years later, MacGillivary said that when he was in boot camp, "An officer asked me and two other immigrants ... whether we wanted to become U.S. citizens. They took us to a federal courthouse and swore us in before a judge. I thought that if I was going to fight for this country, I should be a U.S. citizen."

MacGillivary's first wartime action came during the Battle of Normandy, landing on Omaha Beach in 1944. From Omaha Beach, MacGillivary was involved in numerous conflicts throughout France and earned a field promotion to Sergeant, before reaching the village of Wœfling during the Battle of the Bulge. On New Years Day, 1945, MacGillivary's unit was surrounded by elements of the elite 17th German SS Panzer Grenadier Division and he was leading a squad to counterattack the advancing German forces.



Sergeant Charles A. MacGillivary receives the Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman

Assigned to protect his unit's left flank, MacGillivary discovered hostile troops digging in. As he reported this information, German machinegun positions opened fire on his location and pinned down the Americans. Knowing the position of the enemy, Sgt. MacGillivary volunteered to knock out one of the guns while another company closed in from the right to assault the remaining strong points. MacGillivary circled from the left through woods and snow, carefully worked his way to the emplacement and shot the 2 camouflaged gunners at close range as other enemy forces withdrew.

Early in the afternoon of the same day, Sgt. MacGillivary was dispatched on reconnaissance and found that members of his unit were opposed by about 6 machineguns reinforcing a company of fanatically fighting Germans. His unit began an attack but was pinned down by furious automatic and small arms fire. With a clear idea of where the enemy guns were placed, he voluntarily embarked on a lone combat patrol. Skillfully taking advantage of all available cover, he stalked the enemy, reached a hostile machinegun and blasted its crew with a grenade.

He picked up a submachine gun from the battlefield and pressed on to within 10 yards of another machinegun, where the enemy crew discovered him and feverishly tried to swing their weapon into line to cut him down. He charged ahead, jumped into the midst of the Germans and killed them with several bursts. Without hesitation, he moved on to still another machinegun, crawling and rushing from tree to tree, until close enough to toss a grenade into the emplacement and close with its defenders. He dispatched this crew also, but was himself seriously wounded after dispatching of 36 German soldiers.

MacGillivary told a Boston Globe reporter in 1995, "I looked down and my right arm wasn't there. When you get hit by a machine gun, it's like somebody put a hot poker in you. I stuck the stump of my arm into the snow, but the warm blood melted the snow. I figured I was dying. When they rescued me, my arm had a cake of bloody ice frozen around it, sealing the wound. If it had been summer, I'd have been dead."

On August 25, 1945, MacGillivary personally received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman. He returned home to Boston, where he worked as a special agent for the Treasury Department and later joined the U.S. Customs Service in 1950, starting as a warehouse officer, but went on to become a special agent for the Office of Investigations. Charles MacGillivary died on June 24, 2000 at the age of 83. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors and lies at rest beside his wife, Esther.



“How Do I...?”

BECOME AN ACADEMIC STUDENT IN THE U.S. ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is Allowed to Study in the United States?

People who are coming to the United States to pursue full-time academic or vocational studies are usually admitted in one of two nonimmigrant categories. The F-1 category includes academic students in colleges, universities, seminaries, conservatories, academic high schools, other academic institutions, and in language training. The M-1 category includes vocational students. For more information on vocational studies in the United States, please see [How Do I Get Approval For Vocational Studies in the United States?](#)

How Do I Apply if I am Outside of the United States?

You first must apply to study at a USCIS-approved school in the United States. When you contact a school that you are interested in attending, you should be told immediately if the school accepts foreign national students. If you are accepted, the school should give you USCIS Form I-20 A-B/ID (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status - for Academic and Language Students).

If you require a visa, then you should take the USCIS Form I-20 to the nearest U.S. consulate to obtain a student visa. Only bring the USCIS Form I-20 from the school you plan on attending for visa processing at the U.S. consulate. You must also prove to the consulate that you have the financial resources required for your education and stay in the United States. Please see the State Department Website for more information on visa processing.

How Can I Change My Nonimmigrant Status to Become a Student if I Am Already in the United States?

You first must apply to study at a USCIS-approved school in the United States*. When you contact a school that you are interested in attending, you should be told immediately if the school accepts foreign national students. If you are accepted, the school should send you USCIS Form I-20 A-B/ID. You must submit this form and a [USCIS Form I-539](#) (Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status) to the USCIS. You must also prove that you have the financial resources required for your education and stay in the United States. For more information, please see [How Do I Get Permission to Change to a New Nonimmigrant Status?](#)

How Long Can I Stay in the United States?

You are allowed to stay in the United States for as long as you are enrolled as a full-time student in an educational program and making normal progress toward completing your course of study. If approved, you also will be allowed to stay

in the country up to twelve additional months beyond the completion of your studies to pursue practical training. At the end of your studies or practical training, you will be given sixty days to prepare to leave the country.

How Can I Extend My Stay as a Student in the U.S.?

You do not need to apply to extend your stay in the United States as long as you are maintaining your student status and making normal progress toward completing your academic course of study. The designated school official (DSO) from your school will write down a completion date on your USCIS Form I-20 A-B. Under normal circumstances, you should be able to complete your studies by this date.

Will I Get a Work Permit?

You may be allowed to work on-campus or off-campus (after the completion of your first year of study) under limited circumstances. You may also wish to discuss employment with the designated school official (DSO) at your school. Your accompanying spouse and child may not accept employment.

Can I Travel Outside the United States?

Students may leave the United States and be readmitted after absences of five months or less. Upon your return to the United States, you should provide immigration inspectors with a valid passport, a valid F-1 entry visa stamped in the passport (if necessary), a current USCIS Form I-20 ID signed by your appropriate school official, a new USCIS Form I-20 A-B/ID if there have been any substantive changes in your course of study or place of study and proof of your financial support.

How Can I Get USCIS Forms?

You should be able to pick up immigration-related forms from your designated school official (DSO). **Only your designated school official (DSO) can give you a USCIS Form I-20.** If you would like other immigration forms, you may call 1-800-870-3676, or submit a request through our forms by mail system. For further information on filing fees, please see USCIS filing fees, fee waiver request procedures, and the USCIS fee waiver policy memo.

Can Anyone Help Me?

Your school will have a designated school official (DSO) to help you with immigration issues. Please note that you (the F-1 student) are solely responsible for following U.S. immigration laws.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS CORNER

At every opportunity, the USCIS community relations program develops outreach plans to inform and establish dialogue with external stakeholders, advocates, customers and the public at large. This group of trained communicators works to ensure that USCIS programs and policies are understood by the impacted population, and that community concerns and input are conveyed back to our leadership.

The Community Relations Program engages community stakeholders in a variety of forums but often relies on the technical expertise of USCIS adjudications staff to help answer technical questions. USCIS Adjudications Officers and Immigration Information Officers routinely accompany Community Relations Officers on their outreach visits to external stakeholders and into immigrant communities.

In Los Angeles, Community Relations outreach efforts are enhanced by the support of District Adjudications Officers (DAOs) who participate in more than 50 outreach events a year. Perhaps the best example of the successful partnership between community relations and DAOs is military outreach. At least five times a year, an outreach team comprised of three DAOs and one IIO travels to Port Hueneme to provide one-on-one counsel to military servicemen and women and their families. On a typical day, DAOs speak with about 50 families.

The Adjudications Officers and Information Officers of the Chicago Field Office have been key participants in the district community relations program for many years. Their willingness to volunteer for outreach events at odd hours and varying locations has been invaluable in assisting the community. Along with providing technical expertise, these officers assuage applicants' fears of the immigration and naturalization process by performing mock interviews and giving presentations about the process. These officers are the face of USCIS for the community, and are as diverse as their community, aiding applicants in Spanish, Polish, Urdu and other languages.

USCIS COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICERS:

Sally Blauvelt - Program Director
Shannon Wheeler – USCIS HQ
Jolaine Marie Monaco – USCIS HQ

Western Region - Janna Evans
San Diego - John Ramirez
San Francisco - Rosemarie Fan
Laguna Niguel - Jorge Swank
Los Angeles - Rico Cabrera
Phoenix - Rudy Bustamante
Portland - Ed Sale

Central Region - Christine Pool
Denver - Barbara Melton
San Antonio - Jacque Crouse
Chicago - Val Obregon
Detroit - Hiwatha Greene-Janvier

**North/Southeastern Region
- Ted Albers**
Miami - Berta Cassidy
Atlanta - Pius Bannis
Washington - Gloria Williams-Brevard
Philadelphia - Carol Hallstrom
New York - Shyconia Burden-Noten



Community Relations Officer Valentin Obregon recognizes 40 USCIS Chicago employees who participated in outreach efforts with Certificates of Appreciation

The addition of a USCIS Community Relations Officer for Atlanta, Pius Bannis, has also enhanced the agency presence in the immigrant community and helped ensure the quality and effectiveness of outreach and education programs offered through USCIS. Bannis works with Atlanta DAO Debra Hinds, to coordinate activities supporting the large number of military personnel residing in the area. Recently, Bannis, Hinds and Atlanta Field Office Director Pam Hutchings conducted a training session for military POCs representing local military installations.

Thanks to the great support the Community Relations Program receives from Field Operations, USCIS is able to reach a greater number of stakeholders with timely and accurate information.

STUDENTS ENJOY VISIT TO SEATTLE FIELD OFFICE

When a parent from Kirkland, WA's Holy Family Parish School approached the USCIS Seattle Field Office and asked for a tour for a third grade class, employees Leanne Leigh, the Acting Field Office Director, Sheila Lee, Adjudications Officer and Sonia Hobart, Information Officer; went into action. On December 6th, they welcomed 31 students to the office, and gave them a presentation on all the services they provide each day.

The youngsters saw the civics video from the new [Civics and Citizenship Tool Kit](#), and a slide show made by an employee who visited Ellis Island. The attendant employees discussed the differences and similarities in the work done now, and in the days when Ellis Island was the chief point of entry for new immigrants.

Seattle's Application Support Center (ASC) Manager Willie Spencer explained the role of the ASC to the youngsters. The students were able to observe the fingerprint process, and learned about how fingerprints identify an individual and can link them to a criminal history record.

The class passed the naturalization test, which deals with U.S. history and civics and, with thirty-one waving flags, watched the "Faces of America" video and President Bush's welcome message. The young people seemed especially attuned to immigration issues, excitedly reporting where their classroom peers were born and mentioning basic facts about immigration and U.S. history.

"This visit shows how intensely youngsters are aware of our immigrant history, and the importance of immigration in their society," said Seattle District Director Anne Corsano.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

How would you like to work for an agency that changes lives everyday, invests time and money into the career development and growth of its employees, and comprises a diverse workforce providing unique opportunities? USCIS offers all that and more!

SEE THE LINKS BELOW TO FIND OUT
IF A CAREER AT USCIS IS FOR YOU!

[USCIS Career Descriptions](#)

[Prep Guide for Adjudication Officers and Applications Adjudication Test Battery](#)

[Special Programs at USCIS](#)

[Federal Employment Benefits at USCIS](#)

[Current job openings at USCIS](#)

OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE
NATIONWIDE, APPLY NOW!



“WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS”

FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS...UNIQUE STORIES

DARIO MARTINEZ

An outpouring of support from the South Florida community and an unexpected gesture from USCIS may have saved Darío Martínez's life. Martínez was in his fifth year of medical school in Havana, Cuba before he was expelled for political reasons. He found freedom and opportunity in the U.S. and was able to immigrate and obtain a medical internship in New Jersey.



Dario Martinez, center, poses with Miami District staff and USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez

Martínez, 31, a Cuban-born medical student studying in the U.S. was recently diagnosed with a devastating form of leukemia. He had exhausted his \$250,000 medical insurance coverage with no money remaining to pay for a bone marrow transplant. Martínez was not eligible for Medicaid assistance because he had applied for his U.S. citizenship only three months ago. Struggling to get by and pay for his treatment, Martínez was profiled on December 19th in the Miami Herald Newspaper's Wish Book series.

In a matter of days, Martínez went from despair to euphoria. He was sworn in as a U.S. citizen on December 28th, after officials from the agency learned of his case and fast-tracked his application in response to his life and death situation. In addition, the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa has agreed to take him in for treatment and cover the costs of the bone marrow transplant.

If the transplant goes well, Martínez will live to see his son and unborn daughter -- his wife is almost seven months pregnant -- grow up. "The article had a tremendous impact," Martínez said. "In donations, in support, it was incredible. It can change a person's life."



Dario Martinez is sworn-in as a U.S. citizen by USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez as his wife looks on

The effect was almost instantaneous, Martínez said. Donations and encouraging messages from around the country poured in. On December 21st, USCIS employees from the Miami District Office visited Martínez and administered a citizenship test. A week later, he was personally sworn in as a citizen by USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez, during a private naturalization ceremony at the USCIS Miami District Office.

Although Martínez is still awaiting a donor, as a citizen, he is eligible to receive federal assistance and has nothing but gratitude toward everyone who reached out to him. "So many doors are opening," he said. "Everything is moving forward."