



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Backlog Elimination Plan

Fiscal Year 2005, 1st Quarter Update
May 25, 2005



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

❧ *Prepared for the United States Congress* ❧

The Honorable James Sensenbrenner
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable John Hostettler
Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims
House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and
Claims, House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable John Cornyn
Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and
Citizenship, Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and
Citizenship, Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Martin Olav Sabo
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Chris Cox
Chair, House Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security

Message from the Director

In the past year, USCIS (U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services) forwarded to the Congress a Backlog Elimination Plan that outlines the roadmap to achieve the President's mandate. I am pleased to present this Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, First Quarter Update to report on our continued progress on Backlog Elimination and provide an update on our achievements.

Since USCIS was established in March of 2003, we have made tremendous progress. It is my sincere belief that the progress shown is not an anomaly, but rather a strong foundation and a new baseline from which to grow. FY 2004 was truly an outstanding year for USCIS. USCIS increased overall completions by 17% over the FY 2003 volume and met and/or exceeded cycle time targets in fifteen of sixteen major form types.

USCIS has established three priorities: (1) ensuring the security and integrity of the immigration system, (2) eliminating the immigration benefit application backlog, and (3) improving customer service. In our second year of operations, we successfully reduced the backlog to 1.4 million cases (down from a high of 3.8 million cases in January 2004), expanded electronic filing to support 50% of the total volume of benefit applications, expanded InfoPass (a USCIS Web-based system that enables the public to go online to schedule appointments), expanded phone services to allow round-the-clock access via automated means, expanded access to customers' case status information via the USCIS website, and created the Fraud Detection and National Security Unit to work closely with appropriate law enforcement entities in responding to concerns relating to aliens who may pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Although we are on track to achieve the President's backlog elimination mandate, we fully realize that, as Will Rogers so simply stated, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." Thus, we have taken, and continue to take, a hard look at the way we currently conduct our business. This commitment is not just one of words, but one of action. Since my appointment and confirmation as Director of USCIS, I have worked closely with the leaders in USCIS to continually review our processes, identify opportunities for streamlining and further improvement, and to implement meaningful change. Let me assure you that USCIS will never compromise security in an effort to increase productivity.

USCIS will continue to secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to our customers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system. Our vision is to strengthen America's future by becoming a customer-focused innovator of benefits processing, a catalyst for citizenship education, instruction and outreach, a recognized and credible source of useful information, and a leading contributor to the security of the United States.

Eduardo Aguirre



Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



Table of Contents

Production Update.....	1
Updating FY 2005-2006 Completion Targets	2
Staffing Allocation Model.....	2
Improvement Initiatives.....	3
Pilot Initiatives.....	3
Streamlining Processes.....	3
Quality Initiatives.....	4
Fraud Assessment and Security Initiatives.....	4
Refugee Corps.....	4
Information Technology.....	4
Customer Service Initiatives.....	5
Second Quarter Preview.....	5
Conclusion.....	6

Production Update

The USCIS quarterly report is designed to provide Congress with an update on the progress USCIS has made in its effort to eliminate the backlog of pending applications for immigration benefits by the end of FY 2006. This report will focus on the progress made during the first Quarter of FY 2005.

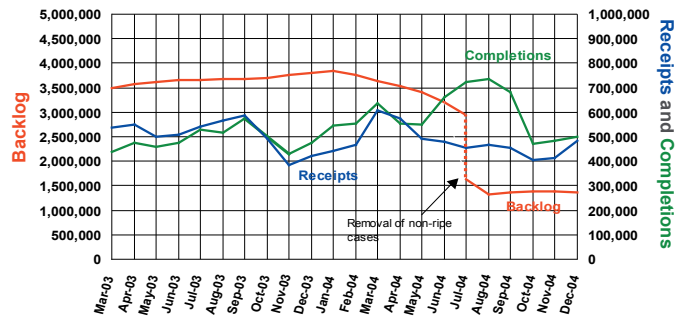
USCIS completed 154,891 more applications than it received during the first Quarter of FY 2005. Although completions were higher than receipts, completions were significantly below backlog elimination targets. Completion figures will have to increase significantly if USCIS is to stay on target to meet the Backlog Elimination Plan goals.

As indicated in the fourth Quarter update to the Backlog Elimination Plan, the monthly target for all USCIS Backlog Elimination Plan forms has increased from 533,000 completions per month in FY 2004 to 570,000 completions per month in FY 2005. The relatively low number of completions realized during the first three months of FY 2005 means USCIS will have to offset this initial shortfall by completing more applications than the initial monthly target in the coming months if it is to meet the Fiscal Year target of 6,841,025 completions.

USCIS aims to process all applications, from the time the application is received to adjudicative decision, within a defined cycle time that ranges from 1 to 6 months depending upon the specific benefit. USCIS began FY 2005 with 4.9 million pending applications for benefits, approximately 1.2 million fewer pending applications than in the beginning of FY 2004. Of this total pending, the backlog (defined as the number of applications exceeding target cycle times) at the end of the first Quarter of FY 2005 stands at just under 1.4 million cases. USCIS completed almost 1.5 million cases during the first Quarter while receiving over 1.3 million new cases in receipts. Higher completion levels are expected for the coming months that will set the pace for FY 2005 Backlog Elimination efforts.

The following chart shows the progress made since the establishment of USCIS.

Receipts, Completions, and Backlog: All Backlog Elimination Plan Forms



During December 2004, completions exceeded receipts by 19,000 cases, due to the extension of certain Temporary Protective Status programs. Typical of historical first Quarter production, completions were 15% below BEP annualized targets. Production lagged during the first Quarter due to time spent redirecting staff from workloads where backlogs were virtually eliminated toward those areas that require the most attention. As a result, adjudicative hours were lower than previous quarters. That said, progress was made on the I-485, I-130 and N-400 applications that constitute the majority of the USCIS backlog. In the month of December, USCIS completed over 43,000 more applications than it received from these three form types.

As shown in the following table, FY 2005 target cycle times as of December 2004 have been already met or exceeded in 9 of the 16 application types tracked in the BEP.

Cycle Time Goals by Form Type (in months)

Form No.	Form	FY '04 4th Quarter	FY '05 1st Quarter	FY '05 Goal	FY '06 Goal
I-485	Adjustment of Status	18.77	18.66	15	6
I-129	Nonimmigrant Worker	1.53	2.24	2	2
I-539	Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status	3.45	3.48	4	3
I-90	Replacement Green Card	5.30	4.8	8	6
I-130	Relative Alien Petition	10.97	9.85	16	6
I-131	Advance Parole	2.27	2.19	3	3
I-131	Refugee Travel Document	5.65	4.42	7	6
I-140	Immigrant Worker	11.06	9.44	7	6
I-751	Removal of Conditional Status	11.23	10.72	11	6
I-765	Employment Authorization Document	2.28	2.4	3	3
I-821	Temporary Protected Status	12.3	14.11	6	6
N-400	Naturalization	11.81	11.84	10	6
N-600/643	Certificate of Citizenship	6.62	7.47	7	6
I-589	Asylum Application	20.0	20.03	14	6
I-881	NACARA 203 Application	8.6	8.64	9	6
I-867	Credible Fear Referral	<1	<1	<1	<1
All Forms		9.6	9.57	N/A	N/A

Production Update (continued)

Updating FY 2005-2006 Completion Targets

The Backlog Elimination Plan (BEP) fourth Quarter update submitted to Congress in February 2005 led to the adjustment of the FY 2005 and FY 2006 completion targets for each BEP form type to account for actual completion and receipt volumes during FY 2004.

During the first Quarter of FY 2005, USCIS realized significant increases in receipts due to the extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. In December 2004, 43,000 new I-821 applications were received. This increase is significant since average TPS receipt levels in FY 2004 were about 1,000 per month. Because of this spike in TPS receipts, completion targets for Form I-821 have been adjusted to reflect the new requirement. This increase in workload will have two major effects on future planning and production: 1) USCIS will have to divert resources to the I-821 product line in order to keep the cycle time below 6 months and 2) because of the increased receipts, the USCIS I-821 backlog will grow if USCIS fails to adjudicate these new applications within 6 months of receipt.

FY 2005-2006 Completion Targets

Form No.	Form Name	ORIGINAL FY '05 Completion Target	REVISED FY '05 Completion Target	ORIGINAL FY '06 Completion Target	REVISED FY '06 Completion Target
I-485	Adjustment of Status	936,164	838,706	1,154,635	990,392
I-485	Asylee Adjustment of Status	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
I-129	Nonimmigrant Worker	341,844	423,271	341,844	418,125
I-539	Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status	290,594	231,499	290,988	272,713
I-90	Replacement Green Card	681,725	588,605	681,725	624,583
I-130	Relative Alien Petition	1,503,957	1,585,617	1,272,579	1,305,920
I-131	Advance Parole	305,835	255,858	305,835	295,369
I-131	Refugee Travel Document	174,567	118,137	183,295	189,429
I-140	Immigrant Worker	105,227	107,069	105,268	87,044
I-751	Removal of Conditional Status	175,556	179,261	197,361	248,376
I-765	Employment Authorization Document	1,770,000	1,463,196	1,770,000	1,705,176
I-821	Temporary Protected Status	12,000	98,343	12,000	163,826
N-400	Naturalization	666,667	763,655	666,667	883,717
N-600/ N-643	Certificate of Citizenship	69,947	59,885	69,947	64,501
I-589	Asylum	97,000	93,733	110,815	100,605
I-881	NACARA 203	25,000	19,105	18,620	14,970
I-867	Credible Fear Removal	5,000	5,085	5,000	5,000
Total		7,171,083	6,841,025	7,196,578	7,379,746

Staffing Allocation Model

USCIS recently conducted an analysis that provides insight into the allocation of resources at each local office and service center to ensure that backlog goals are not only met by the end of FY 2006, but are also maintained thereafter. The Staffing Allocation Model (SAM) determines Office-specific adjudicative staffing and support requirements through the backlog elimination period and into FY 2007. Staffing requirement determinations are based on each Office's current and projected workloads. Each distinct workload has a corresponding adjudicative labor hour. Each form is weighted in terms of hours expended per completion commensurate with actual historic completion rates. Labor hour requirements are calculated by multiplying an Office's workload with the amount of time it takes to adjudicate each type of workload. Labor hour requirements are then converted into adjudicative staffing requirements. Non-adjudicative support positions and management staffing was determined through ratio-based analysis.

Determining an Office's adjudicative staffing requirement entails determining the staffing resources necessary to eliminate an office's application backlog by the end of FY 2006 while simultaneously processing newly filed applications in a timely manner. Adjudicators designated as 'permanent' staff are quantified based on the workload requirement associated with projected receipt volumes, while 'term' Adjudicator staffing requirements are calculated based on the volume of application backlogs. Application backlog volumes that exceed current term adjudicator capacity will be managed through overtime, details, and workload redistribution.

Beginning in FY 2007, USCIS plans to align permanent staffing levels with the SAM to ensure that USCIS has sufficient resources on-board in every office to process projected receipts and ensure that cycle time goals are maintained.

The methodology behind the SAM does not simply allocate additional resources to inefficient processes. The SAM incorporates the increased efficiency USCIS has realized due to reengineering/ process improvements. The completion rates that serve as the basis for staffing levels reflect a 10% increase in productivity over historical rates. In key areas, such as Naturalization (Form N-400) and Adjustment of Status to Permanent Residence (Form I-485), the completion rates used reflect productivity increases of 13% and 21%, respectively. The SAM contemplates that USCIS will continue to produce at these higher levels of efficiency.

As expected, the SAM requires a temporary increase in staffing levels in FY 2005 and FY 2006, and an overall decrease in FY 2007 and beyond. USCIS will use fees and appropriated backlog elimination funding to cover the additional costs of the temporary staffing increase.

Improvement Initiatives

USCIS seeks to improve customer service, shorten cycle times and ensure security while adhering to a high level of quality. The leadership and talented workforce of USCIS intend to meet these challenging goals through the process improvements listed below. Each category has been updated to reflect progress through the first quarter of FY 2005.

Pilot Initiatives

Section 451 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 authorizes the Director of USCIS to design and implement pilot initiatives for backlog elimination.

In addition, as authorized in Section 452 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, USCIS is working with the Office of the Ombudsman to identify additional solutions, both Information Technology and workflow related, to improve customer service and eliminate the backlog.

During FY 2004, USCIS implemented four pilot projects, one of which is continuing in a pilot phase. USCIS will analyze the effectiveness of each pilot to determine its impact on backlog elimination and amenability to expansion.

Streamlining Processes

A key component to the success of USCIS in eliminating its backlog in FY 2006 is to review and revise its processes to ensure efficiency. USCIS has made progress on several initiatives during the first quarter of FY 2005 that have already yielded results.

Risk Assessment. USCIS believes that through the use of risk assessment, quality assurance, and fraud indicators significant progress can be made in a short period of time to realign our workforce so those cases that truly require close adjudicative attention can be more fully scrutinized, and those that meet certain eligibility criteria can be handled in a more streamlined manner. USCIS is in the planning stages of developing more streamlined processes for low-risk cases.

Automating Manual Processes. USCIS has reengineered the adjudicative process for cases that do not actually provide a new benefit or status to the applicant. For example, the Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Form I-90) merely serves to replace evidence of a status already provided. As such, the adjudicative process is to verify identity and status. Since identity is verified at the time of filing, the largest segment of the cycle time currently experienced is the time spent waiting for an available officer to review the application and verify status in the system. Verification can now be accomplished in an automated manner for the majority of these cases, reserving adjudicators time for those pending cases where permanent resident status is not recorded and focus its adjudicative resources on those cases. USCIS has implemented this initiative with the support of the

anti-fraud and quality components. Through this initiative, the backlog of Forms I-90 has been eliminated. USCIS eliminated this backlog more than twelve months ahead of schedule.

Requests for Evidence. The USCIS goal is to increase the percentage of cases that will be completed at the time of initial review by an officer. Through a two-pronged campaign aimed at clarifying requirements for adjudicators and providing information to prospective applicants, USCIS has reduced the ratio of requests for evidence (RFE) to completions.

During the last half of FY 2004, RFE ratios for Adjustment of Status applications (Form I-485) dropped 22% compared to the first two quarters of the fiscal year. During the same period, RFE ratios for nonimmigrant worker petitions (Form I-129) dropped by 1% and RFE rates for employment-based immigrant petitions (Form I-140) dropped 12%. Also during the last two quarters of FY 2004, denial rates for forms I-485, I-140, and I-129 declined slightly. This data demonstrates that the processing change increased efficiency but did not adversely affect denial rates, as some stakeholders had anticipated.

USCIS is revising the regulation governing RFEs to remove requirements that limit discretion and promote inefficient processes. On November 30, 2004, the proposed rule was published in the Federal Register.

Action Team to streamline immigration processes for Form I-130. During the fourth quarter of FY 2004, USCIS began prioritizing Petitions for Alien Relative (Forms I-130) to focus first on processing cases where a visa number is available. Since a benefit cannot be obtained until a visa number is available, the initiative will not delay permanent resident status for eligible family members of United States citizens or lawful permanent residents. This initiative has enabled families who are immediately eligible to be reunited more quickly without adversely affecting the permanent residence process for those applicants awaiting visa numbers. The first-in-first-out processing policy previously in place would hold these in chronological order by filing date regardless of when a benefit might be available.

USCIS recognizes that any productivity enhancements must be carefully planned and monitored to ensure that process integrity and security issues are not compromised in any way. Further, USCIS believes that these efforts to reduce cycle times and eliminate backlogs will actually enhance security efforts. The immediate results seen in several of the initiatives will serve as a foundation for further enhancements.

Improvement Initiatives (continued)

Quality Initiatives

It is imperative that the integrity of the immigration system not be compromised in the effort to stimulate additional productivity. Efforts to benchmark and assure quality are at the heart of every production initiative.

For cases reviewed during the first quarter of FY 2005, USCIS achieved a 99.7% accuracy rate for both overall processing and critical processing, exceeding the minimum acceptable accuracy rates of 96% and 99% respectively. In all cases, corrective actions to prevent future problems were implemented. It was also verified that in applications where errors were detected, no applicant received a benefit for which he/she was not eligible.

The current USCIS quality assurance program consists of an internal process validation through random samples of completed work. In order to comply with the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), USCIS has contracted with Booz, Allen, and Hamilton to validate the Quality Assurance results from FY 2004.

The results of the independent review were in line with the expected results. Processing errors were generally localized to specific offices rather than systemic issues and were often remedied immediately by office quality assurance analysts. USCIS' overall compliance rate for the naturalization and adjustment of status processes were 98.4% and 96.1% respectively. Both rates meet or exceed the minimum acceptable accuracy rate of 96%.

Fraud Assessment and Security Initiatives

Office of Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) developed a joint anti-fraud strategy with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), hired and trained nearly 100 anti-fraud officers, and is in the midst of implementing an anti-fraud initiative throughout the United States. The FDNS is also leading the enhancement of USCIS' background check process, which is aimed at identifying applicants, beneficiaries, and petitioners who pose a threat to national security and public safety prior to granting them immigration benefits. The FDNS is also leading USCIS' information sharing initiative with key law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

The USCIS Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has initiated a project to develop an FDNS Fraud Tracking System (FTS) with data mining capabilities for FDNS. The FTS will enable FDNS to collect and track established anti-fraud data elements as recommended by GAO, and manage cases referred to ICE for criminal investigation and USCIS field offices for administrative inquiry. The Case Management and Analysis initiatives will be developed in parallel, and be available for progressive application in the 3rd and 4th quarters of FY05.

Refugee Corps

For several years, the Office of Refugee Affairs has stated that in order to provide protection to at-risk refugee populations, while simultaneously combating fraud in the refugee program, it needs permanent resources and staff dedicated to refugee adjudications. Therefore, USCIS has begun the work necessary for the hiring and deployment of a dedicated corps of refugee officers for FY 2005. The establishment of a Refugee Corps will greatly enhance program responsiveness and flexibility. Refugee Corps officers will be based in Washington D.C., but will travel to overseas locations for up to fifty percent of the year. While on temporary overseas duty assignments, Refugee Officers will conduct interviews of applicants for refugee resettlement in the United States. While in Washington, officer assignments will support overseas operations, fraud deterrence and security, and training and quality assurance. The hiring process for the Refugee Corps began in early 2005.

In order to make the vision of the refugee corps a reality, USCIS entered into a contract with a management consulting firm for technical assistance in the design and launching of the corps. Through extensive meetings with staff and refugee resettlement program stakeholders, progress has been made toward development of a new proposed organizational design.

Information Technology (IT)

IT Transformation Program. USCIS has initiated an IT Transformation Program that is a comprehensive program to migrate USCIS to an organization with a modern, world-class digital processing capability in order to ensure the security and integrity of the immigration system, improve customer service and responsiveness, better prevent future backlogs, and improve efficiency and effectiveness. The IT Transformation effort will address current gaps and shortcomings by putting in place an improved desktop infrastructure in the field; transitioning from a fragmented paper filing system to a centralized and consolidated electronic case file system; integrating the information used for adjudication and analysis; and improving data integrity and decision consistency.

Digitization. Digitization will assist in streamlining the adjudication process by making paper applications and records available electronically to the integrated case management system. By approaching digitization from a data element perspective, USCIS will be better positioned to implement an integrated case management system that delivers accurate digital data to enable the adjudicators to more affectively and efficiently perform their tasks and prevent future backlogs. USCIS received a \$20M congressional appropriation for FY 2005 to initiate a digitization pilot. The results of this pilot will be presented in subsequent quarterly reports.

Improvement Initiatives (continued)

Case Management and e-Adjudication Pilots. USCIS is moving towards a fully integrated long-term case management solution. The vision for case management within USCIS is to provide the Adjudicating Officer a web-enabled tool for performing his/her duties while significantly strengthening the fraud detection and screening capabilities within USCIS. A central feature of the USCIS Case Management approach is a move towards paperless processing using 3rd party and e-Filing (and eventually Lockbox) capabilities to perform up-front fraud and national security checks prior to delivering the case to the Officer. This technology will improve customer service, reduce case backlogs and cost through automation, improve data quality and consolidate information from disparate USCIS applications. As a first step, USCIS is working towards implementation of e-Adjudication for Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker.

Interim Case Management Solution (ICMS). This initiative will provide an Intranet-based front end to the CLAIMS 3 LAN database at the National Benefits Center and will allow updates and permanent resident card production orders to be performed in real-time at any office in the United States. Duplicative data entry will be significantly reduced, saving time and improving consistency. Further, customer service will be enhanced as approval-to-card production timeframes are reduced. Additional offices were brought on-line the week of November 15, 2004, equating to forty-five offices as of the writing of this report using ICMS to help adjudicate cases. Applications processed through ICMS continue to result in permanent resident card production in less than one week.

Electronic Filing. Electronic filing (E-filing) provides benefits applicants with a convenient, customer-friendly option to file their application. USCIS has eight forms that are available for E-filing.

Customer Service Initiatives

USCIS telephone contact centers are an important facet of USCIS customer service efforts, providing information to over 20 million customers annually. Telephone services include an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, which provides 55% of all customers the information they need without talking to someone; contract telephone centers that provide general immigration information; and two USCIS telephone centers staffed by Immigration Information Officers, who answer complex immigration inquiries.

USCIS call centers collect, qualify, and forward more than 50,000 inquiries monthly to USCIS offices on behalf of customers thereby reducing walk-in traffic to the offices. Typically, offices research and resolve 86% these inquiries within 30 days of the request.

A restructuring of ADIT (temporary evidence of residence) processing, scheduled for implementation in FY 2005, will reduce the number of inquiries collected and forwarded to USCIS offices by our

call centers. Inquiries related to non-delivery of a card or document, which account for about 24% of all requests, will be significantly reduced.

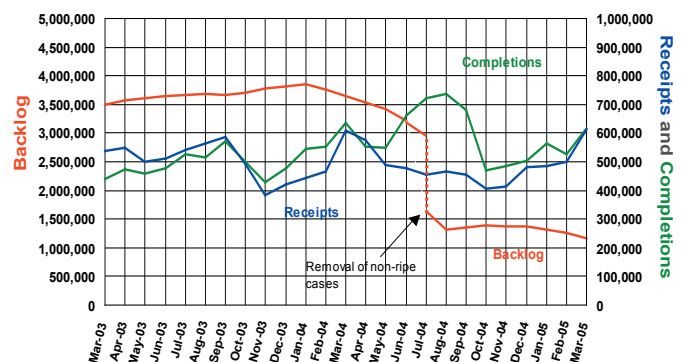
Customer service quality, customer satisfaction, and information accuracy are key priorities. To this end, USCIS contracts with two renowned companies for independent quality assurance reviews and customer satisfaction surveys to monitor contract and USCIS telephone service operations. Overall customer satisfaction with telephone customer services was 75 percent, and satisfaction with live assistance exceeded 82 percent during the first quarter of FY 2005. The customer service surveys also revealed, in the first quarter of FY 2005, that 77 percent of customers were satisfied with the information provided by the USCIS Internet Website.

The Customer Assistance Office (CAO), located at USCIS Headquarters, responds to inquiries from the White House, DHS Headquarters, and the general public, including customers and employers. In addition to correspondence sent directly to CAO, the Office of the Ombudsman routinely transmits correspondence to CAO for appropriate action using a stipulated referral tool. In the first quarter of FY 2005, CAO prioritized, researched, and responded to over 2,710 written inquiries. Process improvements, including enhanced tracking, quality control measures, and correspondence management initiatives allow CAO to manage the high volume of inquiries effectively, completely and timely.

Second Quarter Preview

Due to the timing of this report, USCIS feels that it is important to include a preview of FY 2005 second Quarter production. A more detailed explanation of the data and updates on backlog elimination and other initiatives will be forthcoming in the Second Quarter Update. USCIS second Quarter production increased 17% over first Quarter numbers, and backlog was reduced by almost 200,000 applications. At the end of the second quarter, backlog stood at 1.17 million applications. USCIS expects that the upward trend in productivity will continue as training hours spent in the first Quarter yield results.

Receipts, Completions, and Backlog: All Backlog Elimination Plan Forms



Conclusion

The backlog at the end of the first Quarter of FY 2005 stands at just under 1.4 million cases. USCIS completed nearly 1.5 million cases during the first Quarter while receiving 1.3 million new cases in receipts. Historically, the first Quarter of the fiscal year is the least productive for USCIS. The beginning of FY 2005 was not considerably different, as USCIS experienced a decrease in completions. Higher completion levels are expected for the coming months that will set the pace for FY 2005 Backlog Elimination efforts.

USCIS has established three core values: integrity, respect, and ingenuity. We shall always strive for the highest level of integrity in our dealings with our customers, our fellow employees, and the citizens of the United States. We will also demonstrate respect in all our actions to ensure that everyone we affect will be treated with dignity and courtesy regardless of the outcome of the decision. And we will also use ingenuity, resourcefulness, creativity, and sound management principles to strive for world class results.