



the local level contributes to the continuing lack of standardization of all adjudication processes.

COMMENT FROM OMBUDSMAN'S TELECONFERENCE

A caller mentioned that receipt notices have an increasing number of inaccuracies, which can cause problems for establishing the priority date and other subsequent events. 

RECOMMENDATION AR 2007 --10

The Ombudsman strongly endorses a plan whereby employees responsible for quality assurance at the local level receive uniform and comprehensive training in QA procedures. 

- **I-601 Waivers.** The Ombudsman reviewed Form I-601 waiver approval and denial rates for all USCIS domestic and international offices for the last five years. The Ombudsman analyzed the average denial rates for the top five domestic field offices and top five international offices.⁵⁸ The variation in these rates was significant among the offices. While international offices demonstrated a consistent trend upward, the denial rate in similar fiscal years for domestic offices differed. Domestically, denial rates fluctuated with no noticeable trend. For example, at one domestic office where the receipt volume was relatively similar from FY 03 through FY 06, the office's denial rate fluctuated from approximately 53 percent, to 26 percent, to 67 percent, in FY 05, FY 06, and FY 07 YTD, respectively. Although the causes of these fluctuations are likely numerous, in the next reporting period the Ombudsman hopes to analyze the extent to which standardized adjudication criteria might stabilize or destabilize the I-601 waiver denial rate.

To address lack of standardization in adjudications, the Ombudsman encourages USCIS leadership to implement a nationwide program of standardization, as uniform adjudication processing practices and decision-making are imperative. Innovative leadership and effective management oversight are essential elements to achieve this objective.

J. Inefficient or Redundant Processes

In the 2006 Annual Report (at pp. 44-50), the Ombudsman reported on and made recommendations to address these issues under "USCIS Revenue."

⁵⁸ The Ombudsman reviewed I-601 denial rates for the ten field offices, five domestic and five overseas, with the highest number of I-601 receipts.