



RECOMMENDATION AR 2007 -- 05

The Ombudsman further recommends that USCIS adopt a national process similar to that in the San Diego Field Office wherein an applicant who has not received a decision after an interview can contact the District Adjudications Officer (DAO) via email. If the DAO fails to respond within a set period of time, the applicant should be able to contact the supervisor. If there is still no response, the applicant should be able to contact the District Director.

**BEST PRACTICES:**

The Ombudsman considers it a best practice to:

(1) Provide email access for customers to inquire about case status. Providing this opportunity for case status inquiries alleviates the burden on INFOPASS and leaves more slots open to the public. 

(2) Have a duty officer at each field office location assigned to handle inquiries for customers who appear for a second INFOPASS appointment based on a previously unresolved inquiry. A few field offices have adopted this approach to reduce the number of repetitive visits as well as identify and correct systemic problems. 

3. Case Status Online

USCIS customers can use the internet-based Case Status Online to check case status if they have application/petition receipt numbers. The primary shortcomings of this resource, noted in previous annual reports, all remain.³⁴ Case Status Online information is often inaccurate or unreliable, which can have serious consequences for the individual. For example, the resource often shows a case is “pending,” although it was denied and the applicant or representative never received the decision. This is the same information the Tier 1 NCSC representatives provide to a caller, as they do not have access to any internal databases. As a result, an applicant may unwittingly forgo challenging a decision from lack of information. Moreover, there is no avenue to prove non-receipt of the notice and USCIS does not make copies of notices readily available.

³⁴ See Ombudsman’s 2006 Annual Report (at p. 35); Ombudsman’s 2005 Annual Report (at p. 14).