



Highlights of [GAO-05-81](#), a report to congressional committees

### Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) assumed responsibility for the immigration enforcement and services programs of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 2003. The three DHS bureaus with primary responsibility for immigration functions are U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This transfer creates a great opportunity for DHS to address long-standing management and operational problems within INS. The Homeland Security Act requires GAO to review the transfer of immigration functions to DHS. In response, this report assesses the status of (1) communication and coordination of roles and responsibilities, (2) integration of immigration and customs investigators in ICE, and (3) administrative services and systems in CBP, CIS, and ICE.

### What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DHS use key practices to create a mechanism for periodically obtaining and considering employee feedback on their ideas and concerns and provides specific guidance on roles and responsibilities and administrative services. DHS commented on a draft of this report and generally agreed with our findings and recommendations.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-81](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-81).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Richard M. Stana at (202) 512-8777 or Stanar@gao.gov.

## HOMELAND SECURITY

# Management Challenges Remain in Transforming Immigration Programs

### What GAO Found

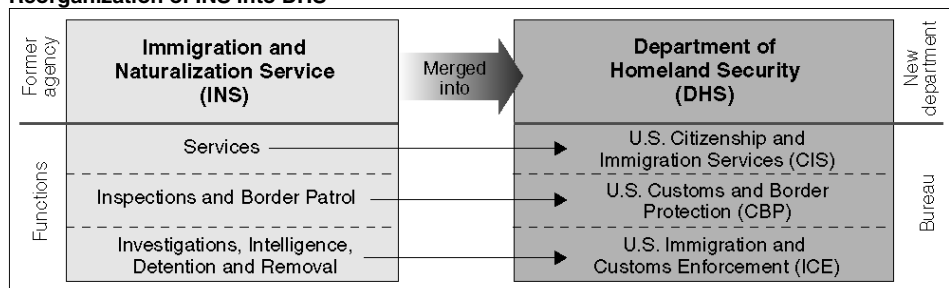
Most of the field officials with whom GAO spoke generally characterized communication and coordination with other DHS immigration programs in their geographic area as good or excellent. Other officials noted, that in some areas related to investigative techniques and other operations, unresolved issues regarding the roles and responsibilities of CBP, CIS, and ICE give rise to disagreements and confusion, with the potential for serious consequences. According to headquarters and field officials, some guidance has been made available to the field, and there are plans to provide more.

Most ICE field officials GAO contacted said they have taken initial steps toward integrating the former immigration and customs investigators, such as establishing cross-training and pay parity. Most of these officials said, however, that additional important steps remained to be completed to fully integrate investigators. They reported that the lack of uniform policies and procedures for some ICE operations has caused confusion and hindered the creation of a new integrated culture. Headquarters officials said they were responding to these challenges.

Officials in CBP, CIS, and ICE expressed confusion about a new shared services system for mission support when interviewed 3 to 4 months after the system was instituted. They also expressed frustration with problems they have encountered with travel, budget, and payroll systems, which are not a part of the shared services system. Additionally, the realignment of staff for shared services, along with other events, has resulted in some mission staff being assigned administrative work as a collateral duty, which may affect mission productivity.

Key practices used by other public and private organizations that have undergone successful mergers and transformations may be helpful to DHS in addressing the challenges raised in this report and in transforming immigration enforcement and services. These key practices include establishing communication strategies to create shared expectations and involving employees to gain ownership for changes.

Reorganization of INS into DHS



Source: GAO analysis of DHS data.