

GOAL 6: OPERATE AS A HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION THAT PROMOTES A HIGHLY TALENTED WORKFORCE AND A DYNAMIC WORK CULTURE

OBJECTIVE 6.1: STRENGTHEN THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL, INCLUDING RECRUITING, HIRING AND, CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In response to the application surge, USCIS formulated a plan to deal with a sudden and significant increase in its pending workload. The end result of this effort was the development of innovative approaches to maximize our resources and invest in our most valuable resource—human capital. To that end, we refined our human capital processes to more efficiently hire new employees, train them and get them on the front lines.



USCIS attracted nearly 55,000 qualified applicants through various nationwide announcements. USCIS hired 3,771 new employees, including 1,471 Immigration Services Officers (formally Adjudication Officers). With this record hiring, USCIS has increased staff by 20.5 percent and achieved nearly 88 percent of its two-year fee hiring in the first year.

Under these new hiring initiatives, USCIS recruited and hired individuals with disabilities, with a focus on severely injured disabled veterans. Individuals with disabilities comprised 9.3 percent of new permanent hires.

In support of the largest agency-wide hiring surge in USCIS history, USCIS

implemented an expedited process for advanced security entry on duty (EOD) approvals for surge hiring priorities, which reduced the average EOD approval cycle time by 50 percent to 14 days for USCIS new hires and 9.5 days for surge applicants. USCIS approved 8,284 applicants to enter on duty (EOD) with the service, processed 2,235 internal transfers within USCIS, and made 6,778 adjudicative determinations, a 62 percent increase in adjudicative determination over FY 2007.

As part of an overall agency workforce restructuring initiative (WRI), Domestic Operations executed and completed implementation of a new workforce model in all of its field offices in the United States affecting over 5,500 federal employees. It was determined that WRI was necessary in order to more properly align with the job duties and responsibilities.



To continue to attract talented, high-quality employees, USCIS launched the USCIS Recruitment and Hiring webpage located on the USCIS website. This website contains a wealth of resources, human capital guidance, information on various USCIS career opportunities and a direct link to USCIS career opportunities posted on the Office of Personnel Management's USAJOBS website.

USCIS also implemented and expanded an automated performance management system for managers, supervisors and non-bargaining unit employees in accordance with Office of Personnel Management guidelines on aligning performance to mission goals.

OBJECTIVE 6.2: FOSTER A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

USCIS provided training to over 10,000 employees on issues of integrity, emphasizing every employee's responsibility to uphold the highest ethical standards and to administer the immigration system fairly, honestly, and correctly. The training included employees' responsibilities, examples of "red flags" for corruption or misconduct, mechanisms and programs in place to identify criminal or serious misconduct, and guidance on reporting any suspected criminal or serious misconduct.

The USCIS Office of Privacy was also created to prevent potential lapses in the secure handling of sensitive employee and customer personal data and to ensure privacy controls are built into system operations and procedures. The agency also issued a series of memoranda and other guidance to increase awareness and enhance employee knowledge and understanding of federal privacy laws, statutes, regulations, and policy.



OBJECTIVE 6.3: SUSTAIN A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The USCIS Academy built a diverse suite of training and education programs to prepare USCIS employees for current and future job responsibilities. These programs are organized under four categories: Immigration Training, Continuous Learning, Leadership Education and Development, and the Tuition Assistance Program.

Through the USCIS Academy, a new, updated curriculum for BASIC was released at the beginning of FY 2008. The development of the curriculum was the result of an agency-wide collaborative effort to deliver a training program on a real-time basis grounded in on-the-job performance and addressing the changing needs of immigration benefit processing. More than 1,350 new Immigration Services Officers completed BASIC immigration training.

More than 360 USCIS employees participated in advanced skills training workshops, executive education programs and national security classes under the USCIS Academy's Leadership Education and Development program. Approximately 3,000 employees participated in Workforce Development programs. New supervisory training for first line and mid-level supervisors was developed and rolled out, with 220 participants in these courses in FY 2008.

In order to further enhance anti-fraud and national security efforts, USCIS developed and improved its Fraud Officer Basic Training Course. Beyond the Basic training, FDNS is developing program and process-specific training courses to implement all anti-fraud and national security programs consistently throughout the Agency.

Under professional education, over 20 employees participated in rigorous education programs at private institutions. 209 individuals – 50 of who are in degree programs – completed 300 courses under the USCIS Academy Tuition Assistance Program.

