



USCIS Today

Office of Communications



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



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USCIS TODAY

A MESSAGE FROM ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR ROBERT DIVINE



Effective July 25th, I assumed responsibility as Acting Deputy Director of USCIS until President Bush nominates a new Director and the Senate confirms this appointment. It is a honor and a privilege to work with such a talented team at USCIS. It is my intention to facilitate a seamless transition process for our new Director and to continue working to ensure national security, eliminate backlog processing, and improve customer service.

From July 18th to July 22nd, USCIS convened our second annual Leadership Conference in Cambridge, Maryland, bringing together 150 Directors, Supervisors and Managers from across every sector of our organization for a "Meeting of the Minds." With the USCIS Strategic Plan as our blueprint, we proposed cooperative solutions to the challenges we face and the best approaches to critical decisions on strategy, policy, organization and the implementation of new initiatives and programs. The results of the Leadership Conference will help shape the future of USCIS.

Sincerely,
Robert Divine

AUGUST 2005

[Message from Acting Deputy Director Robert Divine](#)

["How Do I..." Replace a Permanent Residency Card](#)

[By the Numbers – Backlog Elimination Progress](#)

[Secretary Chertoff Announces DHS Improvements](#)

[Faces of America – Meet Our Newest Citizens](#)

[News You Can Use](#)

[USCIS Photo Gallery – Citizenship Ceremonies](#)

[USCIS...A Day In The Life](#)

[Real People, Real Progress – Employee Spotlight](#)

COMING NEXT MONTH...

DHS Preparedness Month
Citizenship Day Events
New Announcements from USCIS

“HOW DO I...?”

GO ONLINE TO REPLACE A PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD

A Permanent Resident Card is proof of permanent resident status in the United States. It also serves as a valid identification document and proof that you are eligible to live here and be employed. Most Permanent Resident Cards, commonly known as "Green Cards," are valid for 10 years. If you have been granted conditional permanent resident status, the card is valid for 2 years.

“DON’T WAIT IN LINE...
GO ONLINE!”

The quickest, easiest way to replace or renew your Permanent Resident Card is to file the Form I-90 using our online E-Filing system. To access the online form and to learn more about USCIS E-Filing options, [CLICK HERE](#).



INTEGRITY . RESPECT . INGENUITY

BY THE NUMBERS...

BACKLOG ELIMINATION EFFORTS

Due to the outstanding efforts of USCIS employees, the numbers of existing backlog caseloads dipped below the 1 million mark for the first time this past month.

USCIS continues to work towards the goal of a maximum six-month processing time for all received applications.

| Date | Number of Backlog Cases | Percent Reduction |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| February | 1,269,392 | 7.6% |
| March | 1,172,288 | |
| April | 1,093,114 | 6.7% |
| May | 1,053,902 | 3.5% |
| June | 993,910 | 5.7% |

SECRETARY CHERTOFF ANNOUNCES PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO USCIS

On July 13, 2005, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff announced a six-point agenda for the Department designed to ensure that policies, operations, and structures are aligned in the best way to address the potential threats - both present and future - that face our nation. USCIS plays an important role in the future of DHS and Secretary Chertoff specifically addressed some of the challenges USCIS faces as the world's largest immigration service.

"Immigration policy is about more than keeping illegal migrants out. Our heritage and our national character inspire us to create a more welcoming society for those who lawfully come to our shores to work, learn and visit," Secretary Chertoff said. "Of course, some people come to our shores to seek a better life for themselves and their children. Ours is, after all, a nation of immigrants. But for legal immigrants trying to become American citizens, the process can be confusing, frustrating, and seemingly endless."

USCIS is working to transform the delivery of our immigration services to make our systems more efficient and secure. As a customer-oriented agency, processing more than 7 million applications annually, one of the greatest responsibilities we face at USCIS is to ensure the highest quality service for our constituency. It is our mission to make certain that the right person, receives the right benefit, in the right amount of time. In these efforts we have made great strides to reduce the backlog of existing immigration cases, and we are working overtime to establish and maintain a standard six-month processing time for every application received.

Parallel to our improvements in efficiency, we are committed to maintaining the integrity of our immigration system and USCIS employees implement security checks on all persons seeking immigration benefits. Our responsibility to national security remains our highest priority. Each applicant must submit biometric information, such as fingerprints, along with their application, to verify their identity and protect against immigration fraud. Every day, USCIS completes more than 135,000 security checks on individuals seeking benefits, and in FY 2004 a total of 35 million background checks were conducted by USCIS.

To view a full transcript of Secretary Chertoff's remarks, [CLICK HERE](#). For more information on USCIS agency priorities and mission objectives, [CLICK HERE](#) to view a copy of the USCIS Strategic Plan.

USCIS CONTENT NOTIFICATION SERVICE

To sign up for a subscription to *USCIS Today* or for more information on upcoming events, press releases and policy changes, please visit the USCIS Content Notification Service webpage: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/exec/cns/index.asp> and fill out the requested information to receive information specialized to your needs.

NEED TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH USCIS?

[CLICK HERE](#) to make an appointment online using InfoPass



Pelageya Ilchenko



Pelageya receives her
Citizenship Certificate

FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS – UNIQUE STORIES

PELAGEYA ILCHENKO – RUSSIA

It goes without saying that anyone who is 101 years old probably has a few good stories to tell. The most recent chapter of Pelageya Ilchenko's century-long journey through life is the story of how she became a proud American citizen.

Born in 1903, Ilchenko and her five siblings were orphaned when she was nine years old. Being the oldest daughter, she supported the family through the Bolshevik Revolution, the starvation in 1933, and World War II, which took the lives of three of her brothers. "Starvation, devastation, fear, death, and patriotism - everything had mixed together," Ilchenko recalls of her years living in the Soviet Union.

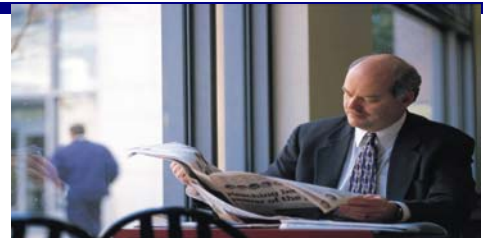
"I decided to be a citizen of this country because only here I could feel myself a truly happy person," says Ilchenko, who naturalized on Citizenship Day, September 17, 2004 in Vancouver Washington, "...All I can do (to repay the American people) is bring them before God in my prayers. America is my peaceful refuge."

ARE YOU ONE OF THE "FACES OF AMERICA?"

USCIS wants to hear from you!!! [CLICK HERE](#) to submit your story!!!

NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



[USCIS Announces Update Regarding New H-1B Exemptions, 7/12/05](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today that it has received 8,069 H-1B petitions that will count against the Congressionally-mandated exemption cap for fiscal year 2005 (October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005) established by the H-1B Visa Reform Act of 2004.

[90-Day Extension of Work Permits for Hondurans and Nicaraguans with Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\), 7/1/05](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will announce in the Federal Register a 90-day auto-extension of employment authorization documents (EADs) for Hondurans and Nicaraguans with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) valid until October 5, 2005.

LOOKING FOR THE NEAREST USCIS OFFICE?

To find your local office, [CLICK HERE](#)

"SECURING AMERICA'S PROMISE"

USCIS PHOTO GALLERY

More than 15,000 men, women and children in cities across the United States celebrated Independence Day by becoming America's newest citizens at more than 90 special July 4th events Citizenship events hosted by USCIS.



50 members of the U.S. Armed Forces were sworn in at a ceremony in San Diego, CA



New citizens celebrate at a USCIS ceremony in Phoenix



New citizens at a USCIS Ceremony in Los Angeles, CA



USCIS ONLINE PRODUCTS... TOOLS YOU CAN USE!!!

USCIS offers a wide variety of educational materials online at our website.
All of the products are free and available in several languages.

New Immigrant Orientation Guide: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/welcomeguide/index.htm>
"How Do I...?" Series Factsheets: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/factsheet/index.htm>
Citizenship Test Flash Cards: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/flashcards/index.htm>

USCIS... A DAY IN THE LIFE

Every day, the 15,000 federal and contract employees of USCIS accomplish the following at our 250 offices worldwide:

- Conduct **135,000** national security background checks
- Answer phone inquiries from **82,000** calls to our toll-free customer service phone line
- Process **30,000** applications for immigrant benefits

Check the September issue or [CLICK HERE](#) for more statistics on what we do every day to effectively and efficiently administer our nation's immigration system.

[HTTP://WWW.USCIS.GOV/](http://www.uscis.gov/)

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

USCIS RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Background:

A San Antonio native and Southwest Texas State University graduate, Jacque Crouse spent twenty-two years working in media as a reporter and editor for the San Antonio Express newspaper before joining INS (Legacy) in 2000. Now a Community Liaison Officer in the USCIS San Antonio District Office, Jacque reflects on how USCIS has improved during her tenure and her contributions to her office.

How has USCIS most changed since March 2003?

"It's more service-oriented. We have made an effort to project a friendlier face to a public that is often bewildered by the complicated maze called immigration."

Which of your contributions to USCIS are you most proud of?

"At the San Antonio Office, we initiated the formation of a state-wide task force to combat fraud against immigrants. We wanted to stop benefits fraud in which immigrants are swindled out of large sums of money. The work of the task force has been the catalyst for many prosecutions by the State Attorney Generals Office. As a result of our efforts, immigrants were reimbursed for more than one million dollars they paid to unscrupulous people."

What's the most memorable moment you've experienced at USCIS?

"Being at the office and watching the television as the second plane hit the World Trade Center."

Recognition:

Ms. Crouse is actively involved in the Big Brother/Big Sister school-workplace program sponsored by the Camelot Elementary School, serving as the liaison. The school is ethnically diverse and has many single-parent households, due to one parent being in prison. Ms. Crouse is currently mentoring her second little sister. Also, Ms. Crouse has chaired the Combined Federal Campaign at the San Antonio District Office since 2002, and during that year, the office contributed the largest single donation in the entire district history.



Name: Jacque Crouse
Position: Community Liaison Officer
Location: San Antonio, Texas

USCIS POSITION PROFILE

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

USCIS has an active community affairs and public outreach program. Through the Office of Citizenship, the Community Liaison Officers (CLO) establishes relationships with key community stakeholders, including community- and faith-based organizations, adult educators, and local and state officials to promote USCIS objectives.

Positioned at 19 offices across the country, the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is responsible for USCIS outreach activities within their local regions. In meetings with immigrant groups and interested parties, the CLO is trained to discuss important immigration issues, gather valuable feedback from the community on immigration matters, and to discuss changes in USCIS policy and procedures.

Would you like to work at USCIS?

Visit USAJOBS Online for more information on openings and opportunities at USCIS and other federal agencies.

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200