



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

## Memorandum

DATE: May 23, 2008

TO: Michael T. Dougherty  
Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman

FROM: Jonathan R. Scharfen /S/  
  
Acting Director

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendation #34, Recommendation that USCIS clarify its refund of fees procedures and revise the Adjudicator's Field Manual, Section 10.10 "Refund of Fees" accordingly

### Recommendation

The CIS Ombudsman recommends that USCIS clarify its refund of fees procedures and revise the Adjudicator's Field Manual, Section 10.10 "Refund of Fees" accordingly. The Ombudsman further recommends that USCIS provide customers with a way, such as refund request receipt information, to track the status of the refund.

### USCIS Response

USCIS appreciates the Ombudsman's interest in the issue of fee refunds. The two parts of the recommendation are addressed separately below:

- 1. Clarify the refund of fees procedures and revise the Adjudicator's Field Manual, Section 10.10 "Refund of Fees" accordingly.**

This has been accomplished. The Adjudicator's Field Manual, Section 10.10 "Refund of Fees," was updated in March of this year. The applicant or petitioner is now instructed to request a refund by contacting the customer service line or by submitting a written request to the office having jurisdiction over the application or petition. USCIS will make a determination to approve or deny the request based on the available information. If the request is approved, USCIS – and *not* the applicant or petitioner – will complete Form G-266, Request for Refund of Fee.

**2. Provide customers with a way to track the status of their requests for refunds.**

Requests for refunds currently are not "received in" like applications or petitions. Consequently, USCIS is not capable of tracking the status of a refund request in the same manner that USCIS is capable of tracking the status of an application or petition. As an interim solution, customers can contact the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) in order to obtain an update on the status of their refund requests. The NCSC will submit a "Service Request" to the local field office or service center asking for a status update. The appropriate office will respond to the customer within thirty days. USCIS is now in the process of enhancing the Service Request Management Tool (SRMT) within the Customer Relations Information System (CRIS). As such, customers should not begin making inquiries with the NCSC until after October 1, 2008.

This interim solution eventually will be overcome by the transformation of the agency's information systems. In a transformed operating environment, customers through personal accounts will be able to keep track of their interactions with USCIS, including the amount and status of any refund requests. The electronic nature of the account management service will also allow USCIS to systematically track, manage, and resolve refund requests. USCIS will continue to keep the Ombudsman's Office apprised of the agency's progress with these efforts.