



A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO GONZÁLEZ

On March 11th, I was pleased to inform members of the House Appropriations Committee that USCIS had lowered its original processing projections for naturalization applications. Individuals who filed for citizenship during the summer of 2007 can now anticipate an average processing time of 13-15 months, a marked improvement from the 16-18 months projection we announced in January and testament to the professionalism and hard work of nearly 17,000 dedicated USCIS employees and contractors.

In addition, USCIS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently announced a joint plan to eliminate the backlog of name checks pending with the FBI, focusing on resolving the oldest pending name checks first and the urgent resolution of cases with completed interviews. The FBI has already eliminated all cases pending more than four years. By increasing staff, expanding resources, and applying new business processes, the goal is to complete 98 percent of all name checks within 30 days and the remaining two percent in 90 days or less and sustain these processing times by June 2009.

Our workforce will continue to do everything possible to assist immigrants on the path to legal residency or citizenship, facilitate the smooth transit of others who wish to work here temporarily, and safeguard the security of the United States through the integrity of our immigration system. By adjusting our fee schedule to correspond to the costs of doing business, the agency has been able to further expand its operations, improve efficiency and enhance security while planning for the long-term future viability of our national immigration system.

Utilizing revenue generated from the new fees, USCIS will hire more than 3,000 new employees over the course of the current fiscal year and has been approved to rehire experienced retirees on a temporary basis to assist with urgent adjudications. Modernization efforts to build a fully-electronic immigration platform continue to move forward through pilot-programs and employee evaluations. More than 34 USCIS facilities will be renovated or replaced nationwide, and employees both new and old can take advantage of an increased selection of professional training and career development opportunities.

As I step down from my post at USCIS to pursue time with my family and return to being a full-time husband and father, I am proud of our accomplishments as an agency, focusing especially on our commitment to secure the homeland and protect our fellow Americans. It has been a true honor for me to continue a career of service to my adopted nation here at USCIS, and a privilege to work alongside the finest men and women in federal government whose boundless determination to succeed has taken this agency to new heights.

May God bless you and your families and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

APRIL 2008

“Securing America’s Promise”

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NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM USCIS COMMUNICATIONS

[USCIS Releases Preliminary Number Of FY 2009 H-1B Cap Filings](#) - 04/10/2008

[USCIS Announces Update for Processing Petitions for Nonimmigrant Victims of Criminal Activity](#) - 04/10/2008

[USCIS Reaches FY 2009 H-1B Cap](#) - 04/08/2008

[USCIS to Accept H-1B Petitions Sent to California or Vermont Service Centers Temporary Accommodation Made for FY 09 Cap-Subject H-1B Petitions](#) - 04/04/2008

[Questions and Answers: Extension of Optional Practical Training Program for Qualified Students](#) - 04/04/2008

[USCIS Extends Comment Period For Proposed Change to H-2A Program](#) - 03/28/2008

[USCIS to Review Immigration Cases that Could Benefit From Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008](#) - 03/27/2008

[Comment Period Reopened for Adoption-Related Rule](#) - 03/25/2008

[USCIS Revises Filing Instructions for Petition for Alien Relative Form I-130s to be filed with the Chicago Lockbox](#) - 03/21/2008

[Questions and Answers: USCIS Announces Interim Rule on H-1B Visas Rule Modifies Petition Selection Process and Prohibits Multiple Filings](#) - 03/19/2008

[Fact Sheet: Changes to the FY2009 H-1B Program](#) - 03/19/2008

[USCIS Announces Interim Rule on H-1B Visas](#) - 03/19/2008

[USCIS Announces Overseas Office Closings in Observance of Religious Holidays](#) - 03/17/2008

[Statement by USCIS Director Emilio T. González on Processing of Naturalization Applications](#) - 03/14/2008

[Questions and Answers: 18-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) for Somalis](#) - 03/12/2008



SECRETARY CHERTOFF TESTIFIES AT SENATE HEARING ON IMMIGRATION

Secretary Michael Chertoff appeared before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security to discuss Immigration related topics and answer questions from Senators regarding resolutions to the recent FBI Name Check Backlog and Naturalization Case Processing Times.



Secretary Chertoff and Senator Leahy

“As we take steps to meet the lawful needs of our economy, we are also working to improve existing immigration benefits and services for those seeking to live in, work in, or immigrate to the United States,” said the Secretary. “We must continue to welcome new generations of immigrants to the United States to pursue their dreams and enrich our civic culture and our society. But, as we also know, immigration has become an issue that is inextricably linked to our national security.”

[Secretary Chertoff's full testimony](#) is available at DHS.gov in addition to previous statements, press releases and testimony released by the [DHS Office of Public Affairs](#)

USCIS: ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY

IMPROVING SERVICE, ENHANCING EFFICIENCY

CASE PROCESSING TIME UPDATE

USCIS announced that it will finish more than one million naturalization cases during fiscal year 2008 – far exceeding the number of cases completed last year. This update comes following a thorough analysis of the work completed during the last six months.

“By the end of the year, I expect USCIS will have finished 36 percent more naturalization cases than last year without compromising national security or the integrity of the naturalization process,” said USCIS Director Emilio González.

The agency recently [updated the expected time it will take to complete naturalization cases](#), projecting processing times averaging 13-15 months. That’s a three month improvement from the 16-18 month projection that USCIS made six months ago.

A critical component of the strategy for addressing this workload is to quickly grow the capacity to handle the influx of additional cases. That includes expanding the USCIS workforce by adding 3,000 new employees, detailing employees to work in the most heavily affected offices, quadrupling the funding for overtime and using Asylum Office facilities and staff to conduct naturalization interviews.

Last summer, USCIS received an unprecedented number of applications and petitions for immigration benefits. During June, July and August alone, USCIS received nearly three million filings, compared to 1.8 million filings during the same period the previous year. This sudden surge included 1.4 million naturalization applications last year – 460,000 in July alone. While historically filing increases have occurred in advance of fee increases, Presidential elections, immigration debates and new legislation, none of the past increases are close to the magnitude of the summer’s surge.

USCIS AND FBI COOPERATION TO ELIMINATE NAME CHECK BACKLOG

[USCIS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\) have announced a joint plan to eliminate the backlog of name checks pending with the FBI.](#)

USCIS and the FBI established a series of milestones prioritizing work based on the age of the pending name check. The FBI has already eliminated all name check cases pending more than four years.

“This plan of action is the product of a strong partnership between USCIS and the FBI to eliminate the backlogs and to strengthen national security,” said USCIS Director Emilio González.

By increasing staff, expanding resources, and applying new business processes, the goal is to complete 98 percent of all name checks within 30 days. USCIS and the FBI intend to resolve the remaining two percent, which represent the most difficult name checks and require additional time to complete, within 90 days or less. The goal is to achieve and sustain these processing times by June 2009.

May 2008	Process all name checks pending more than three years
July 2008	Process all name checks pending more than two years
Nov. 2008	Process all name checks pending more than one year
Feb. 2009	Process all name checks pending more than 180 days
June 2009	Process 98 percent of all name checks within 30 days and process the remaining two percent within 90 days.

The joint plan will focus on resolving the oldest pending FBI name checks first. USCIS has also requested that the FBI prioritize resolution of approximately 29,800 pending name checks from naturalization applicants submitted to the FBI before May 2006 where the naturalization applicant was already interviewed.

OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

The [Outstanding American by Choice](#) initiative recognizes the achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to the country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Throughout the year, USCIS Director González will continue to recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their communities and adopted country.

SECRETARY ELAINE CHAO AND DR. JAMES CHAO



2/27/08 - U.S. Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, and her father, Dr. James Chao, were recognized as Outstanding Americans by Choice during a naturalization ceremony at Stuyvesant High School in New York City.

Dr. James Chao, born in Shanghai, China, studied marine navigation and began his career in shipping as a cadet on ocean-going vessels. In the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War, Dr. Chao fled to Taiwan where he met his wife, Ruth Mulan Chu Chao. There, he began his family and was later sponsored for advanced studies in the United States. Three years after he moved to the United States, he was joined by his family, including his 8-year-old daughter Elaine.

Today, Chao is Chairman of the Foremost Group, a company he founded in 1964, which has interests in marine shipping, international trade and finance. Active in many philanthropic and academic activities throughout his life, Dr. Chao has received numerous awards for his professional accomplishments and community service. He has served as an Advisor, adjunct professor, and Trustee Emeritus at St. John's University, was inducted into the International Maritime Hall of Fame at the United Nations and received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor award.

Elaine Chao is the Nation's 24th Secretary of Labor and the first Asian American woman appointed to a President's cabinet in U.S. history. Elaine L. Chao arrived in America at the age of eight from Taiwan, the eldest of six girls in her family. She didn't speak English and had little in the way of friends or family in the States. Her early experiences transitioning to a new country inspired her to dedicate her professional life to ensuring that every American has access to opportunity and the chance to build better lives.

Since her confirmation as Secretary of Labor by the United States Senate on January 29, 2001, she has been dedicated to carrying out the Department's mission of promoting and protecting the health, safety, retirement security, and competitiveness of the nation's workforce.

From her role as President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America, to serving as the Director of the Peace Corps, Secretary Chao's career has spanned the public, private and non-profit sector. Her government service also includes serving as Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, Deputy Maritime Administrator in the U.S. Department of Transportation and as a White House Fellow. She has also worked in the private sector as Vice President of Syndications at BankAmerica Capital Markets Group and a banker with Citicorp. Prior to her nomination as Secretary, she was a Distinguished Fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

Secretary Chao received her M.B.A. from the Harvard Business School and her undergraduate degree in economics from Mount Holyoke College. She also studied at M.I.T., Dartmouth College, and Columbia University. Active in many volunteer activities, Secretary Chao has received numerous awards for her professional accomplishments and community service. She is the recipient of 29 honorary doctoral degrees. Secretary Chao is married to the United States Senate's Minority Leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.





ADOPTED VALOR: IMMIGRANT HEROES

FOREIGN BORN SERVICE MEMBERS

STAFF SERGEANT KYU H. CHAY - AFGHANISTAN

Staff Sergeant Kyu H. Chay, USA, was born in 1972 in the ancient South Korean city of Daegu. Kyu and his family left Korea in 1980 and settled in Mount Kisco, a small town in upstate New York, where his parents opened a dry cleaning business. As he grew to adulthood, Kyu took great pride in his adopted country and the fact that he had become an American by choice.

In time, Kyu graduated from the State University of New York, Albany, and attended the Brooklyn School of Law, marrying his high school sweetheart and settling with his family in New York City. However, in January of 2001, Kyu would forego his law studies and the prospect of a six-figure salary as a lawyer to join the Army, entering active duty a few months before September 11th.

His brother said Staff Sgt. Chay was motivated by gratitude to America for the opportunities his parents found here. "He always appreciated coming to this country," said Chay. "He loved being American, loved being here, appreciated everything this country offered to him, and he wanted to give back in some way."

After initial training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and advanced language studies at Monterey, California, Chay was assigned to the 313th Military Intelligence Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division. After serving a combat tour in Iraq, Chay then joined the Green Berets, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, and deployed to Afghanistan with the responsibility for training and working with the new Afghan army, engaging hostile Taliban forces in the Uruzgan region.



Kyu H. Chay
Rank: Staff Sergeant
Branch: U.S. Army
Nation of Birth: South Korea



Chay holding his daughter Kelly and son, Jason

Chay's specialties in cryptology and Arabic language skills were essential to the success of this mission, and his Battalion, known as the "Desert Eagles," performed brilliantly, recognized for its aggressiveness on the battlefield as well as its humanitarian efforts.

On October 28, 2006, while on patrol in the Uruzgan region, the vehicle Staff Sgt. Chay was traveling in hit an IED, killing him and bringing to an end the life of a dedicated father, soldier, and patriot.

Staff Sergeant Chay was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on November 13, 2006. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal and Purple Heart. He is survived by his wife, Cathy, son, Jason and daughter, Kelly. He was 34.

USCIS HAS NATURALIZED MORE THAN 37,250 MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES, AND 111 FALLEN HEROES HAVE BEEN GRANTED POSTHUMOUS CITIZENSHIP SINCE SEPTEMBER 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE [USCIS FACT SHEET ON MILITARY NATURALIZATIONS](#)



“HOW DO I...?”

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I AM A REFUGEE. HOW DO I BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT?

A refugee or asylee may apply for permanent resident status in the U.S. one year after being granted asylum or refugee status. If you are a refugee, you are required by law to apply for permanent resident status one year after being granted / entering the U.S. in refugee status. If you are an asylee, you are not required to apply for permanent resident status after being granted asylum for one year. However, it may be in your best interest to do so.

What are the basic requirements to apply for permanent resident status as an asylee or refugee?

If you are a refugee, you may be able to apply for permanent resident status one year after you are admitted to the U.S. as a refugee and you:

- Have been physically present in the U.S. for at least one year after being admitted as a refugee;
- Are to be the spouse or child of a refugee;
- Have not abandoned your refugee status; and
- Have not had your refugee admission terminated.

If you are an asylee, you may be able to apply for permanent resident status one year after you are granted asylum and you:

- Have been physically present in the U.S. for at least one year after being granted asylum;
- Continue to meet the definition of a refugee;
- Have not abandoned your status; and
- Are not firmly resettled in any foreign country.

How do I apply?

To apply for permanent resident status, file the [Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or to Adjust Status](#). Please read the instructions on the form and follow them carefully.

Will I need to be fingerprinted?

All applicants will need biometrics taken. After filing the Form I-485 application, USCIS will notify you in writing of the time and location where you must go to be fingerprinted and photographed.

Will I need to obtain a medical examination report?

If you are in refugee status when you apply, you must submit a completed [Vaccination Supplement Form only \(Supplement to Form I-693, Medical Examination of Aliens Seeking Adjustment of Status\)](#).

If you are an asylee when you apply, you must submit a completed I-693 in addition to the Vaccination Supplement Form.

Should I apply for employment authorization with the application for permanent resident status?

Even though you can apply for employment authorization when you apply for permanent resident status, it may not be necessary to do so. Refugees and asylees are authorized to work as soon as they are admitted or granted such status and can apply for an [Employment Authorization Document \(EAD\)](#).

What happens after I file the Form I-485?

After you file the Form I-485, you will receive a receipt notice from us. The receipt notice will give you a projected processing time and other valuable information about what to expect and what you may need to do. Once you get your receipt notice, it is important that you keep it in a safe place so you can refer back to the receipt number if you ever need to contact us about your case.

If you forgot something when you filed the Form I-485 and we need more information from you, we will send you a request for evidence. You should then send us the requested evidence in order for us to complete the processing of your application.

How long will it take to get a decision?

Processing time depends on a number of factors. You can check our current processing times on our website. Once you file an application, we will post an updated estimate of the processing time on the USCIS website.

What if I need to travel outside the U.S. while my adjustment application is pending?

As an asylee or refugee, if you wish to travel outside the U.S. for a brief period of time but return to your asylee/refugee status and continue to pursue your application for adjustment of status, you must apply for a refugee travel document. To apply for a travel document, you would file a [Form I-131, Application for Travel Document](#). If you decide to apply for a travel document, please read the instructions on the form and follow them carefully.

FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS...UNIQUE STORIES

While parents Vasilii and Inna Golub sat beaming, their eldest eight children, all born in Ukraine, stood and took the Oath of Allegiance on Monday, March 11th at the Sacramento Field Office. A roomful of applicants applauded after the children, ranging from Oksana, 18 down to Natalya, just 8, completed the oath, led by Supervisory Adjudications Officer Shelby Harris. Everyone enjoyed speeches by District Director Susan Curda, Field Office Director Michael Biggs and new Senior Adjudications Officer Leah Torino.



New Citizens, the Golub family

USCIS Director Emilio González joined Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England and Air Force Major General James W. Graves on April 14th, for a special Military Naturalization Ceremony in the Pentagon Courtyard. A cool breeze met sunny skies as twenty-two service members from fifteen countries raised their right hands and took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States.

The event marked Director González's final naturalization ceremony as USCIS Director.



INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION INFORMATION CORNER

Per the [Press Release dated April 1, 2008](#), USCIS is temporarily unable to approve Form I-800, Petition to Classify Convention Adoptee as an Immediate Relative, filed on behalf of a child to be adopted from Guatemala. USCIS has been advised that Department of State consular officers cannot issue the required Hague Adoption Certificate or Hague Custody Declaration at this time due to the agency's determination that Guatemala is not currently meeting its obligations under the Hague Adoption Convention, which recently entered into force for the United States.

USCIS will promptly advise the public when it is able to commence processing of new Hague Convention adoptions in Guatemala.

Please refer to [Questions and Answers: Intercountry Adoption Instructions Post-Hague Adoption Convention Implementation](#) for more information on this issue.

**USCIS RECEIVES BETWEEN SIX AND EIGHT MILLION APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS EVERY YEAR.
EVERY DAY, USCIS OFFICERS WELCOME MORE THAN 2,100 NEW CITIZENS AT LOCATIONS ACROSS THE WORLD.**

“WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS”



COMMUNITY RELATIONS CORNER

INVITATION TO NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING

Members of Community Based Organizations are invited to attend a National Stakeholders Meeting on April 29th, 2008 at 2:00pm at USCIS Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

USCIS Community Relations Officers and members of USCIS Executive Leadership will be on hand to facilitate a discussion session on topics varying from projected processing times, FBI name check policies and procedures that are being implemented as a result of recent decisions on U visas, International adoption cases and other sensitive immigration issues. Suggested agenda items for this meeting are due by COB April 11th, 2008.

If you would like to attend this event, please provide your full name, the organization you represent, and your full contact information (including email address) to HQ.CommunityRelations@dhs.gov by Friday, April 25th, 2008. Further information regarding location and directions will be forwarded once your request is received.

We look forward to seeing you!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

How would you like to work for an agency that changes lives everyday, invests time and money into the career development and growth of its employees, and comprises a diverse workforce providing unique opportunities? USCIS offers all that and more!

[USCIS Career Descriptions](#)

[Prep Guide for Adjudication Officers and Applications Adjudication Test Battery](#)

[Special Programs at USCIS](#)

[Federal Employment Benefits at USCIS](#)

[Current job openings at USCIS](#)

**OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE
NATIONWIDE, APPLY NOW!**



You can make a significant impact on immigrants' lives while protecting and securing our shores by helping qualified immigrants and refugees gain the promise and potential of legally living and working in the United States and becoming U. S. Citizens. Contribute to the USCIS mission to maintain the integrity of our Nation's immigration system and build on America's promise and foundation as a beacon of hope and liberty.

USCIS: SECURING AMERICA'S PROMISE