



Why This Matters

SAVE is an electronic system to provide immigration status to Federal, State, and local agencies that award various public benefits such as drivers' licenses, public housing subsidies, and Federal education grants. However, SAVE does not make determinations on any applicant's eligibility for a specific benefit or license.

Approximately 1,000 agencies are registered to use SAVE. According to USCIS, there was an average of 935,793 SAVE initial verifications per month during June to August 2010. The different SAVE program fees resulted in \$6 million in fiscal year 2010 and provide 25 percent of the funding of the SAVE program.

DHS Response

USCIS concurs with Recommendation 1. Additionally, USCIS provided further information on planned improvements including the implementation of the SAVE Case Check initiative.

USCIS did not concur with Recommendation 2. According to USCIS, SAVE is not the owner or custodian of the immigration records it uses to determine immigration status, some of which are outside of USCIS control, and does not have the legal authority to require database owners to report back to the SAVE program. However, USCIS also listed steps they could take to identify if record changes have been made.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov

U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program Issues

What We Determined

USCIS has established programs and processes to help monitor SAVE user agency compliance with the rules of the SAVE program. For example, USCIS established the SAVE Monitoring and Compliance Section to monitor agency compliance with SAVE program rules. Additionally, USCIS established the Integrated Monitoring Task Force to help identify specific behaviors of the user agencies, such as failure to deactivate SAVE user accounts. USCIS has also written technical manuals and standard operating procedures for monitoring agency compliance with SAVE program rules.

However, there have been instances where SAVE user agencies are not in compliance with SAVE program rules. For example, as of May 2012, 71 SAVE user agencies were 60 days overdue, for a total of \$622,497 in fees, interest, and penalties. However, according to USCIS staff, restricting or terminating access to the SAVE program would have a negative impact on benefit applicants. Specifically, if user agencies do not have access to SAVE, they may not be able to verify a benefit applicant's immigration status.

Additionally, USCIS staff do not collect information that would enable them to determine the average length of time it takes to adjudicate applicant requests to correct erroneous information. For example, USCIS does not track the number of SAVE-related appointments made through its InfoPass scheduling website.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Deputy Associate Director, Enterprise Services Division:

Recommendation #1:

Implement a process to compile and track SAVE benefit applicant requests and referrals.

Recommendation #2:

Implement a process for SAVE database owners to report to the Verification Division whether changes to SAVE benefit applicant records were made .