



### Why This Matters

In 2005, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) embarked on an enterprise-wide program to transform its paper-based business processes to a flexible and efficient process supported by an integrated technical environment. The annual cost of shipping, storing, and handling paper files is approximately \$314 million. USCIS has obligated more than \$500 million for the transformation since FY 2008. The current processes make it difficult to process immigration benefits efficiently.

### DHS Response

USCIS concurred with all three recommendations. The Office of Transformation Coordination (OTC) is working toward the use of a modified agile information technology development approach, which will require a tailored documentation approach. OTC will streamline the current governance and decision-making processes while maintaining transparency and ensuring leadership is actively involved. In addition, OTC is utilizing all of the recruitment and staffing tools available to fill its vacancies, and ensuring that all divisions and staff members possess necessary skills.

We consider all three recommendations to be resolved and open.

#### For Further Information:

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

## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Progress in Transformation

### What We Determined

We conducted a follow-up audit to determine USCIS' progress in implementing its business and information technology transformation. Since our 2009 report, USCIS has completed a number of activities to prepare for its first transformation deployment and improved its coordination and communication with its stakeholders. However, implementation of the transformation program has been delayed because of changes in the deployment strategy and insufficiently defined system requirements. Other challenges, such as governance and staffing problems, further delayed the program. USCIS has taken steps to address these challenges by moving to a more agile information technology transformation approach, improving its program monitoring and governance, and focusing on staffing issues. However, USCIS continues to rely on paper-based processes to support its mission, which makes it difficult for USCIS to process immigration benefits efficiently, combat identity fraud, and provide other government agencies with the information required to identify criminals and possible terrorists quickly.

### What We Recommend

We recommend that the Chief, Office of Transformation Coordination, USCIS:

- 1) Complete business and technology process documentation to provide the detail necessary to implement the transformation program effectively.
- 2) Revise its current governance structure to enable more streamlined program decision making.
- 3) Ensure that transformation program staff possess the necessary skills to implement the transformation program.