

Spotlight

Department of Homeland Security



Office of Inspector General

July 2013 OIG-13-105

Why This Matters

In October 2010, the Department of Homeland Security established a Watchlisting Cell (WLC) in the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) to serve as the coordination point for departmental watchlist nominations. As such, the WLC provides oversight and guidance to nominating Department operational components, communicates Intelligence Community policy and procedural changes, and ensures all nominations satisfy the threshold for inclusion in the watchlist, while protecting individual privacy, civil liberties, and civil rights. Ensuring the WLC performs its required duties efficiently and effectively has a direct effect on national security.

DHS Response

DHS concurred with all recommendations to assist in improving the Watchlisting Cell's efficiency and effectiveness. Based on I&A's response, all recommendations are resolved and open.

DHS' Watchlisting Cell's Efforts to Coordinate Departmental Nominations

What We Determined

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) interacts with, observes, and gathers information from individuals during law enforcement, transportation security, and immigration and border security screening operations. The Department contributes some of this information to the Federal Government's watchlisting efforts, which are used to inform government interaction with U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. In October 2010, DHS established a Watchlisting Cell in the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis to serve as the coordination point for departmental watchlist nominations. We determined that the Watchlisting Cell has had a positive effect on DHS and the interagency watchlisting community, as it increased the number and quality of DHS nominations, and provided oversight, guidance, and required watchlisting overview training to DHS components; however, organizational, programmatic, and operational challenges remain.

What We Recommend

We made ten recommendations to the Acting Under Secretary of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis to improve program efficiency and effectiveness by: developing performance metrics; streamlining internal procedures; evaluating decentralization effects; developing training, oversight, and quality assurance processes for decentralization; and developing financial and sustainability plans for the Watchlisting Cell.

For Further Information:

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