

FACILITIES REVITALIZATION: IMPROVING WORKSPACE TO IMPROVE SERVICE

In 2003 USCIS was established as an independent agency with legacy facilities and minimal funding. As the first face and contact all immigrants experience with the federal government, it is critical USCIS make a positive first impression.

USCIS committed to bring the national immigration system into the 21st century and provide quality services from professional, convenient and modern facilities. Five years later, under excellent leadership and employee dedication, that commitment is being realized.

USCIS has started a number of initiatives to modernize our facilities. These initiatives were incorporated into a singular Model Office Concept that was unveiled in Fiscal Year 2007 and began implementation in Fiscal Year 2008. The Model Office combines architectural, engineering, business philosophy, and customer service concepts in order to provide better, more efficient offices with greater benefit to our customers.



FACILITIES REVITALIZATION

USCIS has developed a regional office stamp through the use of color palettes, layouts, and unique signage that provide a pleasing atmosphere for employees and customers alike, and a cost savings through economies of scale. USCIS has developed a consistent and standard interior office design that provides easy navigation for our customers and better work flow for our employees. In addition, this standard office design is intended to decrease architectural and engineering costs and provide scheduling savings in future projects.

The location of USCIS Field Offices has been closely examined in the Model Office Concept. Through the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS), USCIS has compared customer location and filing data, availability of public transportation, and other factors to select sites for future offices that best support the customer and the community. Through research into office efficiency, USCIS has determined that smaller offices, geographically distributed based on customer location, are more effective than one large central office. Decentralization projects have been initiated in Miami, Boston, New York, and Los Angeles to improve our services.

As a result of the Fee Enhancements approved in Fiscal Year 2007, USCIS experienced marked growth in both employee base and project inventory in Fiscal Year 2008. USCIS began Fiscal Year 2008 managing 5.5 million square feet of space and 21 ongoing Lease Acquisition Projects. By the end of the Fiscal Year an additional 3,000 employees had to be housed and 26 new Lease Acquisition Projects had been started. These projects are setting the groundwork for USCIS to usher in a new era of immigration.

USCIS is transforming the way we do business by streamlining outdated processes to make us a more effective and efficient agency. USCIS is a fee-based agency that receives no appropriated funds to accomplish this transformation or to revitalize our outdated and overcrowded facilities. Therefore approximately 3.5% of the Fee Enhancement has been set aside for nearly a dozen facility renovation or new construction projects each year, for the next three years. This year alone USCIS managed a record setting 47 projects, over half of which were new starts.



The following projects are highlights from the Fiscal Year:

HARRISONBURG REMOTE FILE MAINTENANCE FACILITY

(HARRISONBURG, VA)

The Harrisonburg Remote File Maintenance Facility was a major multi-phase renovation project that began in July 2005. Phase 1 was an overhaul for the Records office, Phase 2 the installation of the USCIS Continuation of Operations (COOP) and Phase 3 renovation completion. The project was completed in March 2008.

HARTFORD FIELD OFFICE

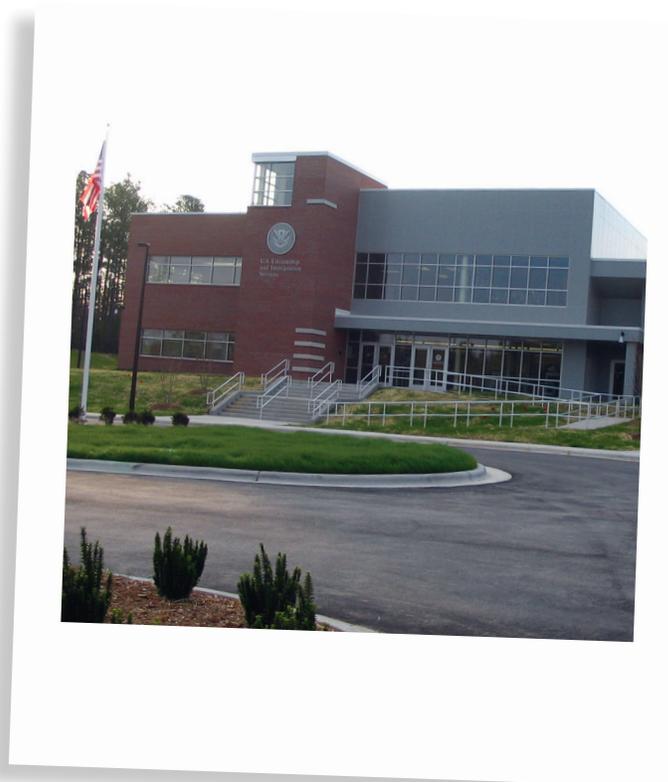
(HARTFORD, CT)

The Hartford Field Office moved from the 4th floor of the A.A. Ribicoff Federal Building to the renovated 1st floor. The new space is a larger, more customer friendly office. Construction started in January 2007 and was completed in November 2007.

RALEIGH-DURHAM FIELD OFFICE

(DURHAM, NC)

The USCIS Raleigh-Durham Field Office marks the culmination of many years of hard work in opening a second Field Office in North Carolina. This office reduces the travel distance for customers in the state and is also one of the first offices to use several design elements from the “model office”. On top of that, it is certified LEED-Silver* for sustainable design. *LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It is a point based system where projects earn points for satisfying specific green building criteria within six credit categories. The six categories include Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality and Innovation in Design. The number of points the project earns determines the level of LEED Certification. USCIS currently has one LEED-Gold and one LEED-Silver facility. There are 18 LEED projects on the books over the next three years as USCIS strengthens its commitment to environmental stewardship.





SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

(ORLANDO, FL)

In Fiscal Year 2007 Domestic Operations was restructured to improve management of the USCIS offices. A new “Southeast” Region was established. The Southeast Regional Office moved into their location in July 2008.

REGIONAL VERIFICATION CENTER

(BUFFALO, NY)

The USCIS Regional Verification Center was established in Buffalo, NY to support USCIS’s growing Employee Eligibility Verification Program. The office opened in February 2008 with plans for expansion already underway.

The Agency’s growth has not been limited to the USCIS Field Offices. The fee enhancements have helped Headquarters

undergo a massive expansion in both responsibility and personnel.

To accommodate this growth USCIS has initiated new Headquarters projects in both Washington, DC and Burlington, VT.

In 2003 Washington consisted of two Headquarters facilities and Burlington only one. By the end of Fiscal Year 2009 Washington will have expanded to six facilities and Burlington to three. The new facilities include the Office of Security and Integrity, Records, Employment Eligibility Verification, Administrative Appeals, and a Training and Technical Center.

