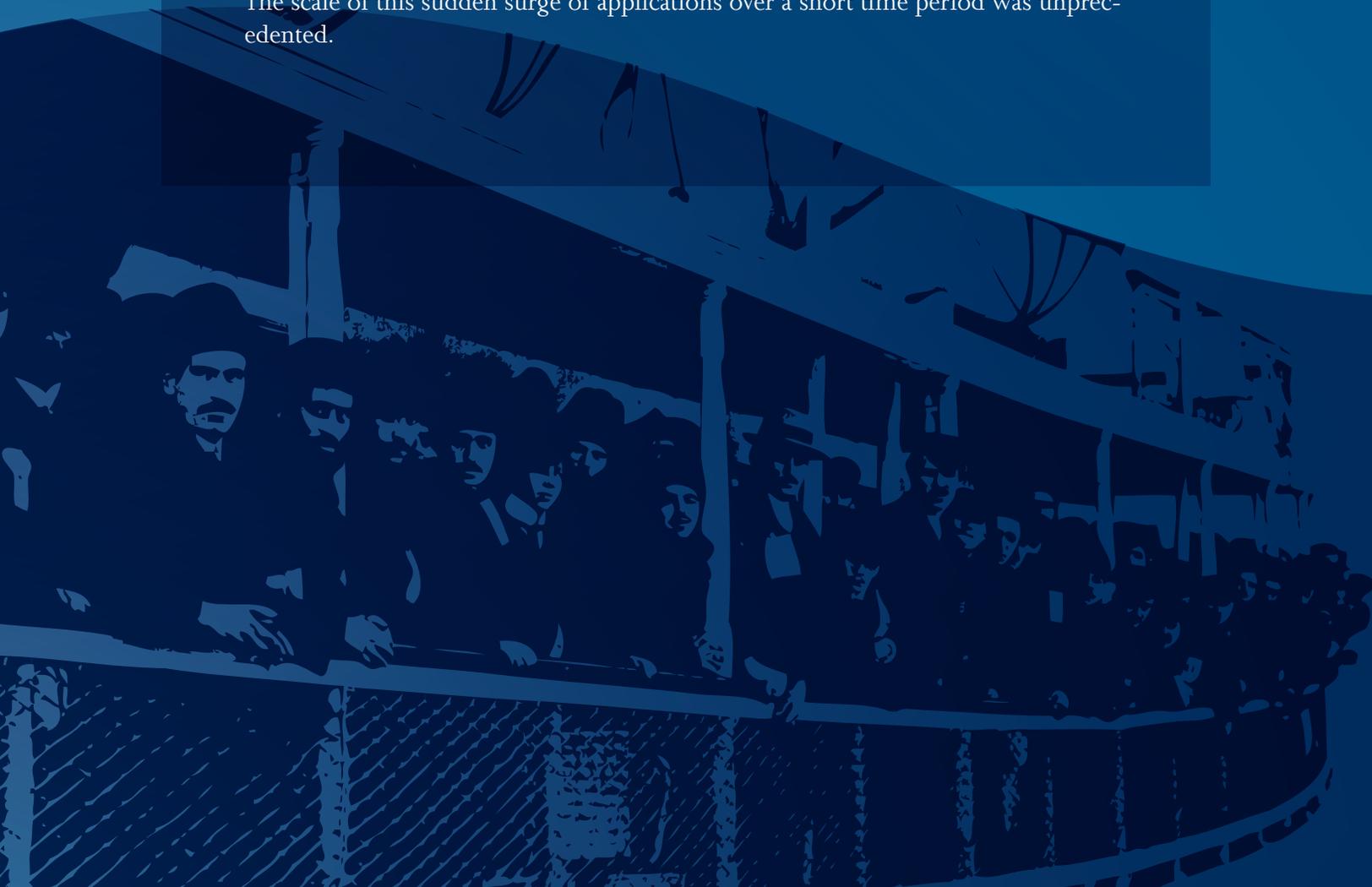


STRATEGIC GOAL 2: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER-ORIENTED IMMIGRATION BENEFIT AND INFORMATION

OBJECTIVE 2.1: IMPROVE TIMELY PROCESSING OF IMMIGRATION BENEFITS

As a customer-oriented agency, one of the greatest responsibilities we face at USCIS is to ensure the highest quality service. It is our mission to make certain that the right person receives the right benefit in the right amount of time.

During the fourth quarter of FY 2007, USCIS received an unprecedented number of applications and petitions for immigration benefits. Nearly 2.5 million immigration benefit applications and petitions of all types were received, compared to 1.2 million applications and petitions received in the same period the previous year. The scale of this sudden surge of applications over a short time period was unprecedented.



To manage the filing surge, USCIS initiated a detailed work plan that resulted in the agency exceeding processing goals. Over the course of FY 2008, USCIS naturalized a record number of applicants while improving processing times for other core applications. USCIS employees completed 1.17 million naturalization applications, an increase of 56% compared to FY 2007. Through July, USCIS processed and adjudicated a total of 6.5 million applications for all types of benefits and petitions - 1.6 million more than we received.

Naturalization processing times, which were once as high as 16-18 months, were down to 10 to 12 months at the close of FY 2008, with many local offices processing cases in 5 to 6 months. This success put USCIS on track to reduce national processing time averages to our goal of 5 months by the summer of FY 2009.

The USCIS Asylum Division exceeded its target for the percentage of credible fear screening determinations completed within 14-days of referral, completing 93 percent of cases within that timeframe. The Asylum Division achieved a 3.38 receipts-based cycle time for asylum applications and a 3.16 receipts-based cycle time for NACARA applications. During the fiscal year, the Asylum Division reduced its pending caseload by 58 percent.

USCIS deployed officers to 71 countries to interview more than 99,000 refugee applicants from 59 nations, a 44 percent increase over FY 2007. In addition, USCIS increased refugee processing circuit rides by 26 percent, supporting the admission of 60,192 refugees from around the world, the highest level of admissions since FY 2001.



USCIS officers conducted 29 circuit rides to the Middle East to interview more than 23,000 Iraqi refugee applicants. Ultimately, 13,823 Iraqi refugees were admitted to the United States in FY 2008, exceeding the admissions goal of 12,000 Iraqis. Our efforts also resulted in a robust pipeline of approved Iraqi refugee applicants for admission in FY 2009.

USCIS successfully adjudicated 149,667 employment-based adjustment-of-status applications during FY 2008. This amount accounted for more than 92 percent of total available employment visas.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: USE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

USCIS is committed to providing immigration services and benefits to eligible applicants as expeditiously as possible and providing for a convenient and personalized immigration experience. Through the use of innovative information products and focused community outreach initiatives, USCIS improved stakeholder relations and provided for more frequent and more meaningful interactions with customers.

USCIS introduced a toll-free (1-800) Military Help Line with specially trained USCIS customer service representatives and a web page to assist service members, military families, and military points-of-contact with all immigration and citizenship issues. The Help Line handled approximately 38,000 calls for assistance during the fiscal year. USCIS also naturalized more than 6,800 immigrant service members.

A new, fee-for-service, Genealogy Program was opened as a dedicated method for researchers to obtain information and copies of historical records over the internet. This initiative improved customer service for researchers and individuals requesting genealogy information, eliminated the need to file a Freedom of Information/Privacy Act request to obtain genealogy information, and improved that program's service to traditional agency customers.

USCIS Congressional Liaison staff managed over 12,000 telephone inquiries, 2,600 formal written inquiries and 4,600 electronic/e-mail inquiries from U.S. House and Senate offices relating to immigration policy and casework in addition to organizing nearly 130 meetings and briefings with Members of Congress or staff. The Office of Congressional Relations was recognized by DHS leadership for having no overdue congressional correspondence.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

OBJECTIVE 2.3: FOSTER A CUSTOMER-CENTERED, SCALABLE APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Over fifty different types of immigration benefits are processed through USCIS. Every case is unique and requires specialized attention from experienced USCIS immigration officers.

USCIS established an interactive, web-based tool for use by the general public to check the status of their Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with USCIS. The USCIS FOIA Office received 80,000 FOIA requests and closed over 84,000 cases.

The Asylum Division translated standard notices into the languages most commonly spoken by asylum applicants and established procedures to distribute these translated documents with decision letters to help USCIS customers better understand the decisions in their cases.

The Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program (CFRP) was launched, benefiting Cuban nationals who reside in Cuba and who are the beneficiaries of an approved Petition for Alien Relative, Form I-130, but for whom an immigrant visa is not yet immediately available. The CFRP accounted for 5,569 travel documents issued.

USCIS opened a regional office in Buffalo, N.Y. consisting of Status Verification Operations and Monitoring/Compliance functions to support E-Verify and SAVE customers. A contract was put in place with the National Call Center to create a formal in-bound call center functionality, develop formal scripts, and train call center personnel.

A Community Relations webpage was established on USCIS.gov in addition to a public email address for Community Relations Officers (CROs) to ensure that stakeholders have access to the CROs in their jurisdictions.

