



August 25, 2010

Executive Summary

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Background

On August 25, 2010, the Office of Public Engagement hosted a national stakeholder engagement for state, local, tribal, and territorial government partners. The Office of Public Engagement, along with the Office of Citizenship and the Verification Division, provided updates on USCIS programs and initiatives that impact state and local government stakeholders.

Principal Themes

- **Office of Public Engagement Updates**

- **USCIS Initiative to Combat the Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL)**

USCIS is developing a UPIL initiative, which includes expanding public education efforts to warn applicants about immigration scams and ensure that immigrants know how to find legitimate and trustworthy legal advice; increasing the number of Board of Immigration Appeals recognized organizations and accredited representatives, particularly in underserved areas; and preventing the occurrence of UPIL and ensuring that individuals know how to report having been a victim of an immigration scam.

- **Immigration Options for Victims of Trafficking, Domestic Violence, and Other Crimes and Special Immigrant Juveniles**

USCIS conducts outreach with state and local partners on the immigration options available to victims of trafficking, domestic violence, and other crimes, and provides training for state and local law enforcement on their role in certifying crime victims who are applying for immigration benefits. In addition, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) has created a computer-based, interactive training that is available for free to 200,000 law enforcement officers per year. USCIS also offers training on immigration options for special immigrant juveniles.

- **Public Charge**

The Office of Public Engagement is committed to working with state benefit granting agencies to dispel myths about USCIS public charge policy and increase the use of public benefits by eligible immigrants and U.S. citizen children regardless of their parents' immigration status.

- **Office of Citizenship Programs and Resources**

- **Citizenship and Integration Grant Program** - In FY 2010, USCIS offered two competitive grant funding opportunities—a Direct Services Grant and a National Capacity Building Grant. Fiscal year 2011 opportunities will begin in early 2011. Both local and state governments are eligible to apply for the Direct Services Grant, provided the state or local

agency or entity meets certain requirements. For the National Capacity Building Grant, only a state agency or entity, with an organizational structure that includes subordinate offices in different cities or localities, can apply. Local governments are not eligible to apply for the National Capacity Building Grant.

- **Teacher/Volunteer Training Workshops** - The Office of Citizenship provides training on the naturalization process, the naturalization test, rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and the principles of American democracy to volunteers and other immigrant-serving organizations. USCIS often partners with state and local agencies when hosting these events. To request a training event in your area, please send an e-mail to office.of.citizenship@dhs.gov. USCIS also offers a start-up guide for local communities on designing and implementing ESL and civics/citizenship classes for immigrants, which is available at www.uscis.gov.
- **Educational Resources** - The Civics and Citizenship Toolkit is available for free to all immigrant-serving organizations, including state and local governments. The Toolkit contains a set of educational materials designed to help permanent residents learn more about the United States and prepare for the naturalization process. Organizations can register to receive one free copy of the Toolkit at www.citizenshiptoolkit.gov. USCIS also maintains www.welcometousa.gov, the federal government's primary web portal for new immigrants to find basic information on how to settle in the United States. An orientation guide entitled, "Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants" is also available in 14 languages at www.uscis.gov/newimmigrants.
- **Naturalization Outreach Initiative** - Through the Naturalization Awareness, Education, and Outreach Initiative, USCIS field offices hold naturalization information sessions for immigrants and potential applicants to provide information on citizenship, the naturalization process and requirements, and the naturalization test. These sessions can be hosted either onsite at a USCIS office or offsite in cooperation with a local organization or state or local government agency. If you are interested in hosting a naturalization information session with USCIS, please contact your local USCIS office or send a message to public.engagement@dhs.gov.
- **Outstanding American by Choice Recognition** - Through the Outstanding American by Choice initiative, USCIS recognizes naturalized citizens who have demonstrated their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. The initiative is a positive way to highlight the contributions of immigrants. More than 70 individuals have received this honorable recognition since 2006. To nominate an individual, please contact a local USCIS field office or the Office of Public Engagement at public.engagement@dhs.gov.

- **Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program**

The SAVE Program provides immigration status information to benefit granting agencies to help enable those agencies to determine whether an individual is eligible for certain public benefits. SAVE verifies an applicant's immigration status by checking an applicant's immigration documentation against DHS databases. More than 94% of queries that resolve with an immigration status resolve on the initial verification. In those cases that do not verify immediately, the benefit granting agency can submit a request for additional verification, which is processed within 10-20 days. SAVE offers a Train the Trainer interactive program for agencies currently enrolled in SAVE, which is available in the Online Resources section of the SAVE website. In-person and webinar training are also available, and can be requested at

www.uscis.gov/SAVE. SAVE recently hosted its first user forum, which included information on training opportunities, customer service, and an open forum for suggestions to improve the program. Customer service and support is available by calling (888) 464-4218 or writing to save.help@dhs.gov.

- **E-Verify**

E-Verify allows employers to verify work authorization for newly hired employees by comparing the information on the Form I-9 to information in government databases. As of August 2010, 210,000 employers, representing 779,000 hiring sites, were enrolled in E-Verify, with a total of 14 million queries to the E-Verify system. E-Verify has recently expanded its outreach to employees by launching a new employee hotline and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Justice, Office of Special Counsel Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC), that allows workers to report discrimination to OSC. There are many resources available on the E-Verify website, www.dhs.gov/e-verify, including videos on employee rights and three new videos for employers on using E-Verify. In addition, a new section for I-9 users will be added to the website in the fall of 2010. The E-Verify outreach team offers training and webinars on E-Verify, SAVE, and the Form I-9 for existing users and others that are not yet enrolled in E-Verify. In addition, the E-Verify outreach team works with state workforce agencies, chambers of commerce, and small business development centers and has brochures and information in multiple languages to promote the understanding of employee rights and employer responsibilities.

E-Verify Resources:

- General information for employers on E-Verify, SAVE, and Form I-9: (888) 464-4218
- Employee Hotline: (888) 897-7781
- Email addresses for information on webinars or in-person training or to request copies of videos: E-verify@dhs.gov or veroutreach@dhs.gov