


**Year in Review Session
with Director Mayorkas**

Dec. 9, 2009

Purpose of Meeting: To discuss accomplishments for the agency in fiscal year 2009 as well as progress to date since the last meeting with stakeholders.

Director's Remarks:

- We want to respond to concerns and issues of stakeholders to better serve the people they represent
- What have we done in the engagement arena:
 - Responded to the issues raised at the prior meeting regarding the form N-648
 - Held engagements to discuss in person and over the phone
 - Created an initial draft for comment
 - Revised version based on comments will be published in the Federal Register for public comment
 - Internal engagements have mirrored the external
 - Commenced engagement on the fee waiver
 - Responded to issues about RFEs primarily raised by the business community
 - Dedicated to issuing field guidance
 - This will be informed by stakeholder guidance
 - Lack of precedent decisions
 - With new AAO chief, Perry Rhew, committed to getting these published

Comments and Questions from Stakeholders

- Customer Service/Access
 - Stakeholders are largely pleased with the new web but raised concerns with access to information in the context of case resolution
 - Concerns regarding access of attorneys to the field offices and service centers – ie, cannot email or call directly
 - With limited resources, need to balance access for non-represented customers and those represented
 - NCSC has been adjusted so that the first question asked is whether or not a person is a representative and then bypasses the rest of the menu and goes directly to making a service request
 - No backlog in service requests and we are looking at improving quality of responses
- Transparency/Accountability
 - Will the policy on uncertified LCAs be extended?
 - Policy was implemented for 90 days and subject to review based on DOL processing times
 - If the problem persists, it is unlikely we would remove the remedy
 - Concerns with site visits conducted by FDNS – reflect that a high percentage of employees are not present at the work site
 - Inconclusive data could be perceived badly due to the nature of the site visits
 - Acknowledge element of surprise is integral to the inspection
- Consistency
 - Creating inventory of policy and procedures internally


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- NSEERS – can a memo be issued to the field regarding the willful failure to register
- Material support issues affect a vulnerable population
 - Secretary Napolitano has exemption authority
 - Priority issue for USCIS
- Efficiency
 - While processing times have been reduced for such cases as naturalization, some stakeholders are experiencing delays with Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) and travel documents
 - Acknowledge delays may be due to lengthy security checks
 - Stakeholders applauded the hard work done on the U visas by the VSC but questioned if resources were diverted from the VAWA Unit since there seems to be a backlog of VAWA cases
 - No resources were removed from the VAWA Unit although these adjudicators provided training and mentoring
 - USCIS will look into the backlog
 - Delays with I-730s: is there a resource issue at the NSC?
 - Suspension of the E3 program is putting stress on the I-730 as the remaining avenue of family reunification
 - As of October, the average processing time was 6 months but we know that this needs to be a priority
 - Readjudication process on consular returns is delayed and backlogs exist
 - Area of underperformance but both the CSC and VSC have made huge reductions in the backlog
 - Set a processing time goal of 6 months to avoid future backlogs
 - CSC humanitarian parole cases taking 18-24 months
 - Resources were allocated to bring down backlogs in high volume applications
 - Need to shift resources now to bring down backlogs in lower volume applications
- Comprehensive Immigration Reform
 - Secretary Napolitano has articulated her dedication to CIR
 - USCIS will be responsible for implementation and will be properly resourced and prepared
 - Possible increase in applications from CIR will not offset budget shortfall since it will also include a dramatic increase in costs
 - CIR will create a logistical issue for access to people and field offices
- Funding Model
 - Concerns expressed at the possibility of raising fees and cutting staff
 - Despite receiving appropriate funds, cannot bridge the revenue gap caused by lower receipts
 - Options for meeting budget shortfall are unfortunate and USCIS is mindful of the impact on our goals and objectives
 - Relatively short timeline for analysis of possible increases
 - Will provide notice as far in advance as we can
 - Conscious that a fee increase has a greater impact on certain benefit requests
- Opportunities for Future Collaboration
 - Stakeholders would like to provide further input on public policy issues
 - Deal with issue of notario fraud in advance of Comprehensive Immigration Reform



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- Capacity building especially in underserved areas
 - Concerns about the infrastructure for immigration services in agricultural areas and the lack of BIA accredited agencies
- Transformation – need engagement from stakeholders and customers
 - Should we continue to receive paper applications
 - Mindful of inaccessibility aspect
 - Does CBO capacity bridge the divide
 - Would place a strain on CBOs during periods of high demand such as with CIR
- Religious worker regulation – conference call to discuss the regulation one year after
- Promote citizenship and integration with community groups
 - Expand and capacity build to improve naturalization education
 - Highlight and elevate public awareness of citizenship
 - Administration has appropriated funds and USCIS will be staffing a grants division in the Office of Citizenship
- Work in partnership with CBOs and advocacy groups to advocate for better programs