



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

RAIO DIRECTORATE – OFFICER TRAINING

RAIO Combined Training Program

**CORE VALUES AND GUIDING
PRINCIPLES FOR RAIO EMPLOYEES**

TRAINING MODULE

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CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RAIO EMPLOYEES

Training Module

MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module provides an overview of the RAIO Directorate, its structure, mission, core values, and guiding principles.

TERMINAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE(S)

In working to fulfill the mission of the Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate (RAIO), you, as an officer at RAIO, will recognize the core values and guiding principles of the Directorate, and understand how the concrete goals set by management are used to measure success in fulfilling the mission.

ENABLING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the mission of RAIO.
2. Examine the goals that RAIO endeavors to achieve consistent with DHS and USCIS strategic goals and USCIS core values.
3. Explain the guiding principles and core values to which RAIO adheres.
4. Identify the unique role that RAIO plays within USCIS and the overall protection environment.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Interactive presentation

Discussion

Practical exercises

METHOD(S) OF EVALUATION

N/A

REQUIRED READING

Required Reading – International and Refugee Adjudications

Required Reading – Asylum Adjudications

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional Resources – International and Refugee Adjudications

Additional Resources - Asylum Adjudications

SCHEDULE OF REVISIONS

Date	Section (Number and Name)	Brief Description of Changes	Made By
9/10/2014	Entire Lesson Plan	Lesson Plan published	RAIO Training
10/21/2019	Throughout document	Updated mission statement, description of program offices, and RAIO structure	Associate Director's Office
12/20/2019	Entire Lesson Plan	Minor edits to reflect changes in organizational structure of RAIO; no substantive updates	RAIO Training

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Throughout this training module, you will come across references to adjudication-specific supplemental information located at the end of the module, as well as links to documents that contain adjudication-specific, detailed information. You are responsible for knowing the information in the referenced material that pertains to the adjudications you will be performing.

For easy reference, supplements for international and refugee adjudications are in pink and supplements for asylum adjudications are in yellow.

You may also encounter references to the legacy Refugee Affairs Division (RAD) and the legacy International Operations Division (IO). RAD has been renamed the International and Refugee Affairs Division (IRAD) and has assumed much of the workload of IO, which is no longer operating as a separate RAIO division.

1 RAIO OVERVIEW

The Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate (RAIO) is responsible for assessing requests for protection and humanitarian assistance, and providing other immigration services to eligible persons both domestically and internationally. Our officers play a critical role in determining whether individuals are eligible for requested immigration benefits while exercising vigilance in matters involving fraud detection and national security. RAIO also maintains effective intergovernmental liaisons; engages in consultations for capacity building of protection systems in other countries; implements bilateral information sharing agreements for identity management and confidentiality; and helps to advance the U.S. government's strategic priorities in the international and refugee protection arenas.

RAIO's mission fits comfortably within the broader USCIS mission, while filling a distinct role within USCIS:

USCIS MISSION

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services administers the nation's lawful immigration system, safeguarding its integrity and promise by efficiently and fairly

adjudicating requests for immigration benefits while protecting Americans, securing the homeland, and honoring our values.

RAIO MISSION

The Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate leverages its domestic and international presence to assess protection, humanitarian, and other immigration benefits and service requests throughout the world while combatting fraud and protecting national security.

In fulfilling its mission, RAIO works to support the strategic goals set by USCIS:

1. Strengthen our investment in an empowered workforce to better accomplish the agency's mission;
2. Safeguard the homeland by deterring, detecting, and addressing vulnerabilities in the immigration system;
3. Ensure fair and efficient adjudication of benefits and delivery of information; and
4. Continuously improve key processes, programs, and systems.

In order to understand RAIO's role in helping the agency realize these strategic goals, it is important to be familiar with the [RAIO Operating Plan](#). The goals and objectives set out in the RAIO Operating Plan are aligned with the USCIS strategic goals and informed by the DHS strategic goals. Reviewing the RAIO Operating Plan will assist you in understanding your specific role and how it contributes to the RAIO mission.

[RAIO's organizational structure](#) consists of two operational divisions and a directorate-level management support organization made up of seven program offices and the Associate Director's office. RAIO is authorized positions for over 2,000 employees, with offices located throughout the United States and internationally ([click here for global map of RAIO operations](#)). Domestically, there are eight Asylum field offices and 3 sub-offices, a Vetting Center, and Headquarters units in Washington, D.C. Internationally, RAIO maintains field offices and conducts refugee interviews on processing trips to countries around the world.

1.1 Operational Divisions

The **Asylum Division (Asylum)** is responsible for adjudicating affirmative asylum applications; conducting credible fear, Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP), and reasonable fear screenings; adjudicating applications filed under Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (“NACARA 203”); and processing domestic I-730 follow-to-join petitions filed by refugees. In performing this work, Asylum preserves the integrity of its processing by incorporating mandatory biographic and biometric security checks and deploying Fraud Detection and National Security teams to each of its offices and jurisdictions.

The **International and Refugee Affairs Division (IRAD)** is the DHS entity responsible for administering the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, along with the Department of State and other stakeholders. IRAD also manages RAIO’s international offices and overseas workloads. Officers in IRAD interview refugee applicants identified for possible resettlement to the United States; conduct protection screenings for migrants interdicted at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard; and adjudicate immigration petitions and applications, including international adoptions and requests for parole for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. IRAD works regularly with anti-fraud, law enforcement, intelligence, and national security colleagues to protect adjudication integrity.

1.2 Program Offices

The **RAIO Adjudication Programs Coordination (APC) Program Office** provides programmatic oversight for cross-divisional work, including children’s issues, Form I-730 Refugee/Asylee Relative Petitions, Form I-131A Applications for Travel Document, and I-131 Refugee Travel Documents.

The **RAIO Chief of Staff (COS) Program Office** promotes a cohesive approach to managing essential support functions for RAIO in order to ensure that resources are efficiently used, messaging is consistent, and procedures are standardized. The Chief of Staff’s Program Office has three branches: the Resource Management Branch, the Mission Support Branch, and the Communications and Operational Readiness Branch. The RAIO Travel Unit, within the Resource Management Branch, oversees all international travel for USCIS and administers RAIO’s extensive travel requirements.

The **RAIO Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) Program Office** implements and coordinates USCIS’s fraud detection and national security priorities within RAIO’s divisions and programs, coordinating closely with the USCIS FDNS Directorate, which establishes and manages these priorities for USCIS overall. RAIO

FDNS also coordinates national security and law enforcement activities with RAIO's partners within and external to DHS.

The **RAIO Office of Innovation and Design for Enhanced Adjudication (IDEA)** aims to elevate the role of technology at RAIO by building tools that focus on adjudication efficiencies and process improvements, bridging connections between RAIO's technology and operational expertise, and further strengthening the culture of innovation and creativity among RAIO's staff. The IDEA Program Office serves as the main RAIO representative to USCIS' Office of Information Technology, coordinates RAIO's transition to digital processing, and assists with office automation and workflow enhancements, large and small.

The **RAIO Performance Management and Planning Program Office (PMP)** promotes a consistent approach to training, quality assurance, and performance management across the RAIO Directorate. PMP's RAIO Training Branch runs the RAIO Combined Training Program for new RAIO officers, as well as the Middle-Eastern RAIO Processing (MERP) Training. PMP's Quality Assurance Branch leads the RAIO Quality Assurance program, which measures and improves the quality and consistency of RAIO case adjudications. PMP's Performance Management Branch develops and implements the RAIO Annual Operating Plan, and it conducts analysis of RAIO's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results and other employee feedback mechanisms.

The **RAIO Research Unit (RU) Program Office** compiles and disseminates information used by officers to adjudicate asylum and refugee applications. The Research Unit primarily reports on persecution of persons in other countries on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The Research Unit also provides country conditions information used by DHS leadership when considering temporary protected status designations.

The **RAIO Terrorism-Related Inadmissibility Grounds (TRIG) Program Office** supports all USCIS offices that adjudicate cases and chairs the USCIS TRIG Working Group. The TRIG Program Office is responsible for coordinating TRIG-related operational guidance and for serving as the USCIS point of contact on all TRIG-related matters for both internal and external partners.

RAIO also has two ongoing Directorate-level initiatives:

RAIO Ignite promotes employee innovation through a culture of openness to change, a willingness to welcome diverse opinions and ideas, and the desire to provide support to employees. RAI0 Ignite provides an opportunity to better and more deeply understand root causes for the challenges we face and help unlock employees' ingenuity, skills and talents to address them.

RAIO Thrive provides traditional and innovative tools and resources to create a culture of resilience, support greater work-life harmony, and move from surviving to thriving.

2 CORE VALUES OF USCIS

USCIS has identified four core values to which all employees must adhere. These values are:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Innovation
- Vigilance

2.1 Integrity

We will always strive for the highest level of **integrity** in our dealings with the public, our fellow employees, and the citizens of the United States of America. We review each case before us on its own merit and reach decisions that are based on the law and facts. We will be ever mindful of the importance of the trust the American people have placed in us to administer the nation's immigration system fairly, honestly, and correctly.

2.2 Respect

We will demonstrate **respect** in all of our actions. We will ensure that everyone we affect will be treated with dignity and courtesy regardless of the outcome of their case. We will model this principle in all of our activities with each other and the public. Through our actions, USCIS will become known as an example of respect, dignity, and courtesy.

2.3 Innovation

As we meet the challenges to come, we will strive to find the most effective means to accomplish our goals. We will use **innovation**, resourcefulness, creativity, and sound management principles to strive for world-class results. We will approach every challenge with a balance of enthusiasm and wisdom in our effort to fulfill our vision.

2.4 Vigilance

In this era of increased global threats and security challenges, we will remain mindful of our obligation to provide immigration services in a manner that strengthens and enhances our nation's security. We will exercise **vigilance** as we perform our mission. We will carefully administer every aspect of our work to uphold the security and integrity of the immigration system so that new immigrants and the public can hold in high regard the privileges and advantages of lawful presence in the United States.

The core values to which all USCIS employees must adhere are directly tied to the specific mission of the RAIO Directorate. Each day RAIO employees listen to stories of human indignity and apply domestic and international law, which may or may not extend protection to these vulnerable people and those seeking a new life in the United States. Due to the severity of the consequences of making a decision that leads to *refoulement* of the applicant or a risk to U.S. national security or public safety, RAIO employees must be fully prepared to adjudicate cases with quality and integrity. RAIO places a premium on training for its employees. We have an extensive initial training program and continual training throughout one's career that keeps employees apprised of the changes in law, policies, and procedures that are necessary for adjudicating humanitarian-based immigration applications and protection requests. We also have an in-depth quality assurance review program.

3 RAIO PRINCIPLES FOR UPHOLDING THE USCIS CORE VALUES

- Respect all individuals and communities with whom we work irrespective of their culture, religion, or other customs and values.
- Be cognizant of the different cultures or customs you may encounter where you are residing or working so as not to compromise the image and interests of the U.S. Government.
- Demonstrate respect for human rights and the right of every man, woman, and child to live in dignity free from discrimination. Provide special consideration for the most vulnerable populations, e.g., children, LGBTI individuals, survivors of torture or gender-based violence.
- Uphold U.S. protection responsibilities and fully understand and adhere to the RAIO role in protection and the assessment of other immigration benefit requests.

- Enhance the integrity of RAIO programs, including ensuring public safety and the security of the United States through proper administration of our immigration laws.
- Exercise sound judgment in all matters of official business, including outside the workplace, particularly when on duty overseas.
- Understand the distinct and unique roles and responsibilities of all actors in the protection environment and immigration field.
- Work collaboratively with other entities to fulfill commitments to facilitate an effective and efficient immigration process.
- Proactively facilitate access to information that may be shared with other agencies and organizations, but safeguard access to information that must remain confidential.
- Promote the safety, health, and welfare of RAIO employees engaged in work domestically and abroad.
- Exhibit the highest standard of integrity at all times and expect the same from peers, superiors, and subordinates.
- Uphold your duty to report allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse.
- Alert proper authorities when learning of serious abuse or violations of human rights.
- Uphold your duty to immediately report allegations of misconduct to the USCIS Office of Security and Integrity (OSI) and/or the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG).

4 AS AN OFFICER OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT . . .

As an officer at RAIO, you have been entrusted with enormous responsibility by the U.S. Government. You must conduct yourself at all times, both at the workplace and at all other times, with the utmost professionalism and integrity. You may not engage in any outside activity or business that directly or indirectly conflicts with the performance of your duties.

When abroad, your workdays and personal days are similar to that of Foreign Service Officers of the Department of State or Peace Corps Volunteers – workdays and personal

days are not divided by a bright line with separate rules and responsibilities. Rather, you must maintain the highest standards of integrity and professional conduct 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, in the international environment. Conduct that shows poor judgment or lack of discretion that may affect an individual or the Agency's ability to carry out its mission is not acceptable.

4.1 Oath of Office

At the end of this course, when you graduate and become an officer at RAIO, you will take an Oath of Office. In taking this Oath, you are agreeing to serve your country with integrity and vigilance, mindful of the confidence and trust placed in you by your fellow Americans.

Oath of Office

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

—5 U.S.C. § 3331

When taking the oath of office you are assuming a position of public trust. It is your duty to uphold the Constitution, laws, and regulations of the United States and never be a party to their evasion. You must put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to any persons, party, or department, and it is incumbent upon you to safeguard information that is learned in the performance of your duties.

Furthermore, when taking the oath, you are affirming your commitment to ensure the integrity of the immigration process and to conduct yourself with professionalism and integrity at all times. We must all do our part to live up to our Oath of Office and strive to protect our workplaces from the serious harm caused by cases of corruption and bribery. As a RAIO officer, you have a responsibility to abide by the core values of USCIS and guiding principles of RAIO, described in this document.

Our work is too important, and our reputation too valuable, to allow for the USCIS name to be tarnished. It's up to each of us to do our part to be vigilant and mindful of the confidence placed upon us by our fellow Americans.

—USCIS Senior Leadership

4.2 Reporting Allegations of Misconduct

You have a duty to report allegations of misconduct

All USCIS employees have a duty to report allegations of misconduct by both USCIS employees and contractors. Examples of alleged misconduct that must be reported immediately to OSI and/or DHS OIG include, but are not limited to:

- Fraud, corruption, bribery, and embezzlement,
- Theft or misuse of funds and theft of government property,
- Perjury,
- Physical assault,
- Unauthorized release of classified information,
- Drug use/possession,
- Unauthorized use/misuse of sensitive official government databases,
- Misuse of official position for private gain,
- Misuse of a government vehicle or property,
- Failure to properly account for government funds,
- Unauthorized use/misuse of a government purchase or travel card,
- Falsification of travel documents,
- Falsification of employment application documents,

- Misconduct by an employee at the GS-15 level or higher, and
- Arrest of an employee or contractor by law enforcement personnel, including your own arrest.

4.3 How to report misconduct to OSI Investigations

Allegations of misconduct are to be reported immediately to OSI by any of the following methods:

- Completing the USCIS Employee Misconduct Reporting Form online through the UCSIS intranet,
- Faxing allegations to OSI at 802-860-6916 using the printable Employee Misconduct Reporting Form, or
- Mailing allegations to OSI at the following address:

Chief, Investigations Division
Office of Security and Integrity MS 2275
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
633 Third Street NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20529-2275

An employee or contractor may also report any allegation to the DHS Office of the Inspector General by any of the following methods:

- Reporting through the online DHS Hotline Complaint Form,
- Calling the toll-free DHS Hotline at 1-800-323-8603 (TTY: 1-844-889-4357),
- Faxing the OIG at 202-254-4297, or
- Mailing the OIG at the following address:

DHS Office of Inspector General/MAIL STOP 0305
Attention: Office of Investigations - Hotline
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528-0305

What happens next?

Depending upon the nature of the allegations, OSI may:

- Refer the matter as required to the DHS OIG for review and investigative determination,
- Conduct an investigation,
- Refer the matter for an official Management Inquiry, or
- Refer the matter to the appropriate USCIS manager for information and action as necessary.

Employees may be subject to disciplinary or adverse action, up to and including removal from the Federal Service, for substantiated misconduct.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Practical Exercise # 1

In order to demonstrate your knowledge of the USCIS core values and RAIO guiding principles, please think of the types of situations you may encounter on the job that will require you to apply these values and principles.

OTHER MATERIALS

There are no Other Materials for this module.

SUPPLEMENT A – INTERNATIONAL AND REFUGEE ADJUDICATIONS

The following information is specific to international and refugee adjudications. Information in each text box contains adjudication-specific procedures and guidelines related to the section from the Training Module referenced in the subheading of the supplement text box.

There are no International and Refugee Adjudications Supplements

REQUIRED READING

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SUPPLEMENTS

<p><u>International and Refugee Adjudications Supplement</u></p> <p><u>Module Section Subheading</u></p>
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SUPPLEMENT B – ASYLUM ADJUDICATIONS

The following information is specific to asylum adjudications. Information in each text box contains adjudication-specific procedures and guidelines related to the section from the Training Module referenced in the subheading of the supplement text box.

There are no Asylum Adjudications Supplements

REQUIRED READING

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SUPPLEMENTS

Asylum Adjudications Supplement

Module Section Subheading