



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

News Release

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USCIS PRIORITIZES BACKLOG REDUCTION IN FY 2005 BUDGET

Washington, D.C.— U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today requested \$1.711 billion in the FY 2005 budget, including a 60% increase in funding dedicated to the reduction of the immigration benefits backlog. The FY 2005 budget requests \$140 million in discretionary funding and \$1.57 billion in mandatory funding, or fee revenues for legal immigration benefits.

“Our progress in restoring integrity and public confidence in America’s legal immigration system allows us to further emphasize reducing the backlog. We anticipate a \$60 million increase over FY 2004 to help realize the President’s goal of six-month processing times for all immigration benefit applications by the end of FY 2006,” said USCIS Director Eduardo Aguirre.

USCIS prioritizes enhancing national security, reducing the backlog and improving customer service. In its first year, USCIS: initiated on-line options for application filing and case status updates; established the Office of Citizenship; eliminated lines at some of its highest volume offices; introduced a toll-free customer service help line; streamlined the Certificate of Citizenship process for internationally adopted children; developed a more secure travel document for permanent residents; and completed the leadership team.

The FY 2005 USCIS budget includes \$765 million for immigration services, \$400 million for nonimmigrant services, \$247 million for citizenship services, \$139 million for asylum/refugee services and a total of \$160 million for backlog reduction.

Funded almost entirely by fees rather tax dollars, USCIS is required to conduct a review every two years to ensure that adequate revenue is collected. On Tuesday, February 3rd, USCIS will announce the results of its review.

Today, and each business day, USCIS will: process 140,000 national security background checks; receive 100,000 web hits; take 50,000 calls at four National Customer Service Centers; adjudicate 30,000 applications for an immigration benefit; see 25,000 visitors at 33 district offices; issue 20,000 green cards; capture 8,000 sets of fingerprints at 130 Application Support Centers; welcome 3,000 newly naturalized citizens; greet 100 refugees; and help American parents adopt 100 foreign children.

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On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.