



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Questions & Answers: USCIS Launches Agency-Wide Policy Review

Introduction

The USCIS Policy Review is a new, comprehensive effort to review all Agency policies with the engaged participation of both the workforce and the public. This effort will help us ensure that USCIS policy serves our fundamental mission and reflects our core values of consistency, integrity, transparency, and efficiency.

The success of the USCIS Policy Review depends on the engagement of both the Agency's workforce and its external stakeholders. USCIS is already surveying its workforce to help identify the highest-priority issue areas. Now, the Agency's external stakeholders have an opportunity to complete the same survey. The compiled survey results will help USCIS set the order of the Policy Review, including the first issues targeted for review in 2010. Throughout the Policy Review, USCIS will continue to seek feedback from its workforce and external stakeholders to ensure that the resulting policies are informed, responsive, and effective.

Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the USCIS Policy Review?

A1. The USCIS Policy Review is a comprehensive review of all policy, guidance, and procedures that guide the work that we do. The Policy Review will be divided into four stages: (1) assembling and categorizing all existing policy documents; (2) prioritizing the issue areas for review, with input from surveys of the workforce and external stakeholders; (3) completing review of policies in each identified issue area; and (4) consolidating and publishing updated policy documents (as appropriate), once approved.

Q2. How does the Policy Review advance major goals already established for USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)?

A2. In the 2010 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR), DHS identified the effective administration of the immigration system as a key priority. In particular, the QHSR emphasized the

importance of a system that produces fair, consistent, and prompt decisions for the public it serves. The Policy Review is designed to ensure that USCIS meets that standard in all of its work.

Q3. How does the Policy Review relate to USCIS's responsibilities and authority under federal law?

A3. By law, USCIS is charged with setting policies and priorities for the administration of immigration services. USCIS will be reviewing those policies in our current effort. If the Policy Review identifies the need for proposed regulatory changes, we will fully engage in the federal rulemaking process. The purpose of the Policy Review is not to develop proposed changes to the immigration statutes established by Congress.

Q4. How will USCIS solicit input from external stakeholders?

A4. In keeping with our commitments to customer service and transparency, the Policy Review will succeed only with thorough input from the public that we serve. USCIS will engage practitioners, advocates, businesses, applicants, and other interested stakeholders throughout the course of the initiative. The survey is the first opportunity for stakeholders to participate.

Q5. How does the survey fit into the Policy Review?

A5. We have already assembled all existing policies and categorized them into useful issue areas. Our next step is to determine the order in which the Policy Review should proceed. To this end, we are asking our workforce, as well as our external stakeholders, to complete a survey that will help us identify priorities.

Q6. Who should fill out the survey?

A6. All interested external stakeholders are encouraged to complete the survey. The USCIS workforce is already completing the same survey.

Q7. Where is the survey available?

A7. You may access the survey at www.uscis.gov.

Q8. When will the survey be available?

A8. The survey will be available to the public for two weeks, from April 15 to April 29.

Q9. What does the survey ask?

A9. The survey asks respondents to identify their overall priorities among all general policy issues, as well as their top priorities for review within several key areas. The survey also includes comment sections, and we encourage participants to take the time to give as much helpful feedback as possible.

Q10. Will USCIS share the survey results with the public?

A10. We will post a summary of the survey results from external stakeholders on www.uscis.gov later this spring. Individual survey responses will remain anonymous, as we will show the survey results in aggregate form only.

Q11. How will USCIS use the survey results?

A11. The survey results will help USCIS ensure it is reviewing policy issues in the order of their importance to the Agency's mission, to the workforce, and to the public.

Q12. How long will it take USCIS to complete the Policy Review?

A12. It will take USCIS a significant amount of time to work thoughtfully through all of the Agency's policies in collaboration with the workforce and external stakeholders. For that reason, it is critical that USCIS accurately identify the highest priorities for review at the beginning of this effort. The participation of Agency stakeholders in the survey is essential to setting those priorities.

Q13. What happens to existing policies during the course of the Policy Review?

A13. While the Policy Review is underway, all policies already in place remain in full force and will be honored.

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