



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Announces First Ten Areas of Focus for Agency-wide Policy Review *Public Survey Informs Selection* Fact Sheet

Introduction

On April 15, 2010, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) launched the USCIS Policy Review, an unprecedented, top-to-bottom examination of the agency's adjudication and customer service policies with the engaged participation of the USCIS workforce and the public. USCIS issued a survey that asked any interested member of the public, as well as its own workforce, to help identify the issue areas that the agency should examine first. Nearly 5,600 stakeholders [responded](#) to the survey, representing current immigrant and non-immigrant visa holders, employers, immigration attorneys and advocates, among others, in addition to responses from approximately 2,400 members of the USCIS workforce. Those responses helped USCIS select the first 10 issue areas to address in the agency-wide review. USCIS is now convening working groups to review the first 10 issue areas.

First 10 Issue Areas Under Review

USCIS considered quantitative and qualitative feedback from the surveys along with operational and programmatic needs to select the first 10 issue areas for the USCIS Policy Review to examine:

- National Customer Service Center
- Nonimmigrant H-1B (specialty occupations)
- Naturalization and Citizenship
- Employment-Based Adjustment of Status
- Family-Based Adjustment of Status
- Employment-Based Immigrants Preference Categories 1, 2 (priority workers, professionals and

holders of advanced degrees) and 3 (skilled workers and professionals)

- Refugee and Asylum Adjustment of Status
- Form I-601 (Application for Waiver of Ground of Inadmissibility)
- General Humanitarian Programs
- Employment Authorization and Travel Documents

Stages of Review

The USCIS Policy Review is a comprehensive, multi-year effort with four stages.

Stage 1: Information Gathering

- **Gather existing policy documents.** The existing policy documents were collected from national and local USCIS offices. The assembled documents consist of policies from different sources, including (but not limited to) training manuals, the Adjudicator's Field Manual, operational instructions, and other guidance memoranda.
- **Organize policies according to issue area.** The policy documents were categorized into relevant issue areas.

Stage 2: Policy Review Surveys and Issue-Area Prioritization

- **Distribute surveys to workforce and external stakeholders.** In April, a survey was distributed to the USCIS workforce and external stakeholders, allowing respondents to identify which issue areas they thought USCIS should review first.
- **Analyze, organize, and publish survey results.** Survey results were analyzed, sorted and presented to USCIS senior leadership to guide the selection of specific issue areas.
- **Identify topics.** USCIS selected 10 issue areas to address initially.

Stage 3: Completing Policy Review on Selected Issue Areas

- **Establish issue-area working groups.** USCIS is convening working groups to review policies in the 10 selected issue areas. Subject-matter experts from across USCIS have been invited to participate in the working groups and begin their review.
- **Review by working groups.** The working groups will review the content of policy documents to ensure they reflect USCIS's commitment to consistency and efficiency. Outdated policies will be revised, updated, or deleted, and inconsistent and redundant policies will be reconciled.
- **Continued engagement with internal and external stakeholders.** USCIS will continue to engage with the public and seek its feedback to ensure that the resulting policies are informed, responsive and effective.
- **Consolidate and update policies.** After considering USCIS's goals, legal requirements, and input from the workforce and external stakeholders, the working groups will determine the appropriate course of action for each policy document under review. For example, overlapping

policy documents could be consolidated, while out-of-date policy documents could be updated or deleted. In an effort to promote transparency and consistency in USCIS operations, the agency will hold public meetings with stakeholders as necessary and post drafts of many new or revised draft memoranda on its website for public comment. In addition, if the Policy Review identifies the need for proposed regulatory changes, USCIS will fully engage in the federal rulemaking process.

Stage 4: Consolidating Updated Policy Guidance

- **Compile policies into an electronic resource.** As policies receive final approval, USCIS will compile them into a single electronic resource for the workforce and the public.

From time to time in the course of the agency's operations, policy issues may arise that require immediate attention outside the course of the formal Policy Review. We will continue to give these issues immediate attention as the need arises.

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