



**Homeland
Security**

Engagement Readout

Fireside Chat

On September 21, 2022, [Citizenship and Immigration Services \(CIS\) Ombudsman Phyllis Coven](#) and [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\) Director Ur Jaddou](#) sat down for an hour-long conversation to discuss challenges and accomplishments from Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and look ahead to FY 2023. USCIS Chief of Staff, Felicia Escobar-Carrillo, provided opening remarks, and Deputy CIS Ombudsman Nathan Stiefel provided closing remarks.

During this session, CIS Ombudsman Coven and Director Jaddou discussed how their professional backgrounds and experiences have helped them in their current roles and moved on to the current challenges facing USCIS. As the conversation progressed, they delved deeper into several topics, including challenges that may have not been visible to the public over the last year and FY 2023 goals for an effective, efficient immigration benefits system.

USCIS addressed the following issues:

- Backlog reduction efforts, processing time delays, and progress towards meeting new cycle time goals;
- Responding to humanitarian crises, specifically Operations Allies Welcome for Afghan evacuees and Uniting for Ukraine;
- Successful efforts to use all available employment-based immigrant visas in FY 2022 and what to expect regarding usage in FY 2023;
- The agency's budget and use of appropriated funds; and
- Hiring updates.

The CIS Ombudsman highlighted the following:

- 2022 Annual Report to Congress in which we explored the “snowball-like” effects of USCIS’ backlogs and their impacts;
- Two [formal recommendations](#), one in March regarding notice to certain beneficiaries of Form I-129, *Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker*, and one in June on USCIS’ fee-for-service funding model;
- Several informal recommendations to help alleviate employment authorization delays that resulted from USCIS’ backlog;
- Types of assistance that we provide to the public and how casework and public engagement help inform the office’s policy work and recommendations to USCIS;
- The volume and types of cases that we receive and how we prioritize them; and

- FY 2023 priorities and areas of interest, including erroneous RFEs, disability access issues, and USCIS' digitization efforts.

Speakers:

- Phyllis Coven, CIS Ombudsman
- Ur Jaddou, USCIS Director
- Felicia Escobar-Carrillo, USCIS Chief of Staff
- Nathan Stiefel, Deputy CIS Ombudsman

[Video will be embedded here](#)