

The following USCIS response was received as part of a collective response to several recommendations submitted by the CIS Ombudsman. The following response has been extracted from the original document received by the CIS Ombudsman for display and readability purposes.

**Whenever USCIS implements a pilot program which directly impacts customer service, USCIS either: 1) at the onset of the pilot program publishes public notice of when the pilot program will begin and terminate, including specific information to customers on the subsequent handling of receipted petitions/applications affected by the pilot program; or 2) provide 30-days notice before terminating a pilot program, during which USCIS shall provide its customers with specific information as to the subsequent handling of receipted petitions/applications affected by the termination.**

We are generally in agreement with this recommendation. The New York City District Office Pilot was an internal pilot aimed at determining whether we would be better able to detect fraudulent filings through upfront interviews, in addition to determining whether we could adjudicate adjustment cases within 90 days or less. Thus it was substantively different than the other pilot programs that have had more of an external customer service orientation. Also, this pilot program was never promoted as a rapid adjustment program, and so, its initiation and termination without public notice was not considered a customer service issue. In retrospect we believe that advance notice of termination would have been a better course of action.

It is our intention to provide such a public notice via the Federal Register or press release as appropriate whenever the processing of benefits forms directly impacts the way the applicants submit them for future pilots unless there are law enforcement considerations associated with the pilot program that would be negatively impacted by such notice. It is our belief that in the case of the New York City Pilot the lack of public notice at the commencement was the correct approach as it was an internal process, but notice of cessation of the pilot would have been appropriate.