



**Homeland
Security**

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CIS OMBUDSMAN TO THE DIRECTOR, USCIS

To: Eduardo Aguirre, USCIS Director
Cc: Admiral Jim Loy
From:: Prakash Khatri, CIS Ombudsman
Date: August 16, 2004
Re: Recommendation that all USCIS employees who interface with immigration customers be required to receive formal training in customer service. As an interim measure only, recommend all USCIS employees who interface with immigration customers be required to enroll and complete the no-charge customer service training courses available at the Gov Online Learning Center (www.golearn.gov).

I. BACKGROUND

At present most USCIS personnel who deal directly with immigration customers are not required to receive formal training in customer service. Currently, the only training program at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Academy, Glynco, GA that contains any customer training within its syllabus is the Basic Training Course for Immigration Information Officers; however, USCIS District Adjudication Officers, Supervisory District Adjudication Officers, Asylum Officers and Supervisory Asylum Officers must also deal with immigration customers face-to-face as a routine aspect of their duties.

USCIS Director Eduardo Aguirre, as part of his 06/17/2004 backlog reduction presentation to the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims, identified USCIS' desire to "Develop World Class Customer Service" as a USCIS objective.

II. JUSTIFICATION

As USCIS transitions itself from a "law enforcement" to a "customer service" corporate culture, those USCIS personnel who deal face-to-face with USCIS' customers must possess the skills and knowledge necessary to provide customer service as an inherent aspect of their duties. These skills require training. Lack of these skills causes customer dissatisfaction, resulting in complaints which must be received, processed and resolved.

With regard to the use of the Gov Online Learning Center (www.golearn.gov) as a training vehicle for USCIS personnel, this recommendation was previously provided to USCIS via its training needs contractor, Bearing Point, Inc. in its Training Needs Action Plan. The Gov Online Learning Center currently has two no-charge customer service courses for government personnel: 1) Course Number CUST0104, *Advancing Your Service Expertise* which provides 4.5 hours of customer service training for all personnel; and 2) Course Number 44004, *Excellence in Service: Fundamentals for Managers* which provides 2-3 hours of customer service training for managerial personnel.

III. BENEFITS

The Ombudsman determined the implementation of this recommendation by USCIS would yield significant benefits to the immigration customer and USCIS.

A. *Customer Service:*

Customer service would increase, which would result in fewer complaints by customers to USCIS, Congressional offices, the Ombudsman and others.

B. *National Security:*

National security would benefit as a result of USCIS personnel being better able to deal with the customer base, resulting in fewer processing delays and better information received during the adjudication process

C. *USCIS Efficiency:*

USCIS processing efficiency would increase as complaints by the customer base regarding ineffective or insufficient customer service decrease as a result of USCIS personnel being better skilled in dealing with customers.