

Recommendation #12
InfoPass

The Ombudsman recommended that USCIS issue national policy guidance on the implementation of InfoPass to ensure equitable access to immigration services. The bold statements are the specific recommendations from the Ombudsman and the USCIS responses immediately follow the recommendation.

All Districts should schedule as many InfoPass appointments as possible.

InfoPass is fully deployed to all USCIS offices. On December 30, 2004, Field Operations issued instructions (see enclosure) to all offices on how to manage InfoPass. The memo reminded all offices that USCIS had moved to a service-by-appointment scheduler, and gave guidance on maximizing the number of people to schedule.

Each field office must either reserve some time each week for walk-in appointments or implement clear procedures for emergency, same-day appointments due to exigent circumstances. To ensure standard implementation nationwide, USCIS Headquarters should promulgate a definition for “exigent circumstances” and provide examples of situation that would warrant same-day appointments.

The memorandum issued on December 30, 2004 instructed all field offices to accommodate emergency same-day walk-in appointments. Field Operations did not issue specific guidance on what dictates “exigent circumstances,” opting instead to give field offices the flexibility to apply the general guidance as circumstances required.

Each field office must either have a kiosk or computer available to help customers make an InfoPass appointment. If the local offices are not immediately capable of providing this service they must at least compile and provide a list of public libraries, legal services providers, and/or community-based organizations that can help immigration customers make InfoPass appointments. Local offices should not simply use their current list of immigration legal services providers, but should compile a new list with the prior consent of each listed entity.

Kiosks have been developed and a contract vehicle for offices to procure them has been set up. Network connection funding is currently being worked out. Most offices have established alternative access sites with public libraries, and Community Based Organizations.