

The current processing time reporting provides less information to customers and makes the processing times more opaque. Transparency inherently leads to more efficient government services and greater accountability. USCIS should strive to be transparent and provide as much information to customers as possible.

#### **CASE PROBLEM**

*In 2004, a foreign national and his U.S. citizen wife applied for removal of the conditions of residence using Form I-751 (Petition to Remove the Conditions of Residence) at a field office. The petition was forwarded to a service center. Over 25 months later, the petition remained pending. Without providing the applicant any reason for the delay, USCIS informed him that his file was transferred to another service center. The individual contacted the Ombudsman in the middle of 2006 because the case was outside normal processing times. The case eventually was approved.* 

#### **RECOMMENDATION AR 2007 --03**

*Currently, USCIS provides processing times based on agency goals, rather than actual processing time as it previously provided. In addition to the agency's responsibility to be transparent, green card applicants in particular should know if applications will be processed within 90 days, rather than the 180-day target time, to avoid applying unnecessarily for interim benefits. The Ombudsman recommends that USCIS return to providing the public with actual processing times for each field office.* 

#### **D. Customer Service**

During the reporting period, USCIS made important strides in customer service. USCIS increased the number of appointments available via INFOPASS and began two new contracts in the effort to improve its toll-free customer service line.