

IT Program Assessment

USCIS – CLAIMS-4 Naturalization Program

Review

The DHS CIO conducted a comprehensive program review of the USCIS CLAIMS-4 program during September 2011. Program observations include the following:

CLAIMS4 continues to be the primary case processing system for naturalization services that meets the vision and mission of the USCIS. The program has met all assigned milestones and its ongoing projects are on schedule. By the end of first quarter of fiscal year 2012, CLAIMS-4 will be capable of adjudicating forms N600, N600K and N336 applications for military naturalizations, foreign child adoptions, and better documentation of citizenship services. Most importantly, the program is on schedule in meeting the remediation plan/goal for migration to the USCIS Transformation program providing naturalization adjudication services.

CLAIMS4 risks evolve around the following technical obsolescence concerns:

- If the CLAIMS-4 Fat Client-Server architecture continues to be used, then the associated development environment will result in costly code maintenance and limitations in extending functional capabilities.
- CLAIMS-4 data base design is facing issues with standards—resulting in a lack of sound conceptual and logical models
- CLAIMS-4 faces critical design flaws and architectural deficiencies—without correction, the current 2 Tier connection strategy for linking to other systems will not support direct data interfaces

Mitigation Strategy

In order to mitigate the technical obsolescence risks in the CLAIMS-4 architecture associated with its user interface, software design and its database design; CLAIMS-4 stakeholders are engaged through a monthly IPT meeting with program personnel. A bi-weekly tag up meeting is scheduled with the business owner to discuss the status of the releases and any outstanding issues. A Bi-weekly Quad Chart is provided to OIT senior leadership to address the CLAIMS-4 business needs, strategies and progress. In order to improve the current maintenance schedule of CLAIMS-4, future releases will include more Agile based enhancements for quick turnaround times in addressing respective business needs. CLAIMS-4 is interacting with field users to incorporate their emerging needs into future releases. CLAIMS-4 has automated the manual applicant checking process with the release of Just in Time (JIT) Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS). CLAIMS-4 is re-

engineering the Customer Relationship Information System (CRIS) Interface that will provide real time application status updates to the applicants. CLAIMS-4 is updating the Oracle 9i database to 11g R1 to enhance the security & integrity of the application and improved performance.

Assessment:

CLAIMS-4 must maintain the capability to support Naturalization application processing until replacement capabilities are fielded by the USCIS Transformation program. CLAIMS-4 has an aging technical architecture that makes maintenance costly and extending its capabilities to meet immediate or mandated needs difficult and is not consistent with National Information Exchange Model and the Enterprise Architecture. On the other hand, CLAIMS-4 continues to be one of the primary case processing system that meets the vision and mission of the USCIS. The program status continues to be green on cost and schedule as well as meeting its remediation goals. Considering the risk posed by the aging technical architecture to keeping CLAIMS-4 properly maintained and responsive to user needs, the CIO assesses the USCIS CLAIMS-4 program as a Level 3—Medium Risk.

Score: 3