



Homeland Security

IT Program Assessment USCIS – FOIA/PA Information Processing System (FIPS)

Review

The DHS Chief Information Officer conducted a comprehensive review of the USCIS Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA/PA) Information Processing System (FIPS) program on April 30, 2010.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), individuals may request certain information or documents from the government. FIPS was first deployed in 1998 to track, process and store such requests. In 2005, FOIA request processing was centralized at the National Records Center, and now FIPS processes the Department's heaviest volume of FOIA requests (third largest in the federal government) with approximately 80,000 a year. Currently located in a DOJ Data Center, the program is scheduling migration to a DHS Data Center in FY10, but expressed concern with meeting schedule milestones on time.

Assessment

The program has had very positive results in improving efficiency by centralizing FOIA processing and DHS would like to explore opportunities to leverage FIPS Department-wide. USCIS is upgrading FIPS to provide the public with the capability to submit FOIA requests online, in addition to the current capability to check status of ongoing FOIA cases online. New technology upgrades plan to provide this service and enhance capabilities in workflow and document management.

The program is directed to have FIPS tested against federal standards through the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC). If FIPS is deemed to be compliant by JITC, it will be a candidate to provide enterprise capability and a DHS standard for managing FOIA requests.

Score: 4