



IT Program Assessment USCIS – Verification Information System (VIS)

Review

The DHS Chief Information Officer conducted a comprehensive review of the USCIS – Verification Information System (VIS) program on April 30, 2010.

VIS provides services to its customers through two programs:

- E-Verify enables private sector employers and government agencies to verify an employee's eligibility to work in the U.S. E-Verify is an appropriations-funded program.
- Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) enables government agencies to verify the immigration status of benefit-seeking individuals. Customers are benefit-granting federal, state and local agencies and licensing bureaus. SAVE is a fee-funded program whereby customers pay a fee to USCIS for SAVE queries.

VIS allows users to confirm whether or not individuals are eligible to receive specific benefits by checking data sets maintained by USCIS, other DHS Components and other federal agencies.

Assessment

The VIS program has demonstrated value to an assortment of public and private organizations in meeting its mandates and providing services, including responding to an increasing scope and customer base. However, the USCIS Verification Division is facing several challenges moving forward that will require close coordination and effective management to continue its success. In the next year VIS is planning a redesign of its architecture, while completing migration to the DHS Data Center and having a recompetition of a major contract supporting the VIS system. The aggressive schedule for implementing the new architecture is under further evaluation to ensure a realistic timeline exists that addresses the various needs of the Department and the user community. DHS OCIO will work with the VIS program office to develop a plan to effectively mitigate risk as VIS moves forward with these initiatives.

In addition, there are other external factors that may increase risk for VIS. Many of the systems and data sets that feed VIS will be concurrently undergoing modernization under the USCIS Transformation Program. VIS is also anticipating increased demand for its SAVE services due to REAL ID and healthcare reform. Any immigration reform legislation that Congress may pass could also potentially have a substantial effect on the demand for VIS services. All of these factors represent varying degrees of risk to VIS going forward. Finally, the OCIO is also concerned with VIS program costs. Program spending appears to be out of proportion to what would be expected for similar investment activity. The VIS Program Manager will provide the DHS CIO with a more detailed breakdown of the funding profile for VIS going forward.

Score: 3