

IT Program Assessment USCIS - Benefits Provision – Verification Information System (VIS)/Employment Eligibility Verification (EEV)

Review

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

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. The E-Verify and Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) applications verify work authorization and immigration status of potential employee eligibility to work. These verification services are used extensively across the nation by more and more employers. The program has deployed 11 improvements to the level of service provided to users during fiscal year 2011. The program has been rebaselined and incremental development releases will occur approximately every six months with new capabilities that address the needs of the Department and the user community. The timeline is realistic assuming that the migration to a DHS Data Center occurs as planned.

Risk that require monitoring are identified below:

- If Data Center migration delays continue, program critical path may be affected and VIS functionality requirements/deadlines may not be met.
- If Data Center (DC1) infrastructure supporting development is not ready, then delays to response times and a decrease in system availability will result.
- If legislative (Immigration policy) reforms change VIS usage requirements, then accommodation of mandated scope changes may not be executed on schedule.
- If program scope changes due to an increase in new (legislative) requirements, then contractor cost and schedule changes may require renegotiations

Mitigation Strategy

The VIS program needs to remain engaged with strong management controls in the data center migration efforts. The program will work with OIT to ensure all communication processes and procedures are documented and disseminated prior to the DC1 go live date. CIS should ensure there is incorporation of a redesign of the VIS technical architecture while completing migration to the DHS Data Center and recompute the major contract supporting the VIS system to favor the migration effort. Validate baseline requirements and employ earned value management to manage cost. Lastly, develop a flexible contingency plan for possible legislative changes to

include ongoing communications with congressional liaison to monitor and influence legislative reform impacting the Verification Division.

Assessment

The program is well managed with respect to configuration management, architecture, and testing considerations. There remain the above mentioned external factors that pose potential unknown scope risks for VIS. Many of the systems and data sets that feed VIS will be concurrently undergoing modernization under the USCIS Transformation Program. A moderate risk is associated with increased demand for 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, but are being managed and planned for mitigation. The CIO assesses the VIS program as a Level 3—Medium Risk.

Score: 3