



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# USCIS TODAY

A MESSAGE FROM  
USCIS DIRECTOR  
EDUARDO AGUIRRE:



It has been a distinct honor and a privilege to serve my country alongside the outstanding men and women at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. From our inception just two and a half years ago through to where we stand today, we have made great progress toward our objectives and we are well on our way to improving customer service, eliminating the backlog, modernizing our systems and ensuring national security. USCIS' future is bright.

Today, USCIS stands tall as a model of success for DHS and for government at large; a distinction that is a testament to the dedication of the most professional and committed employees that I have had the pleasure to lead in my entire career. As I leave USCIS to begin my posting as the U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra, please give Acting Director Michael Petrucelli and soon to come, future leaders, the same dedicated support that you gave me.

Thank you for your service and God Bless America!

Eduardo Aguirre Jr.

## JULY 2005 INAUGURAL ISSUE

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From the Office of Customer Service

## THE USCIS STRATEGIC PLAN

USCIS is pleased to announce the release of the *USCIS Strategic Plan: Securing America's Promise*. The Strategic Plan document provides a total departmental overview and incorporates the USCIS Vision and Mission with key business objectives and goals. The twenty-page document is a blueprint of the current organizational structure and sets a clear, consistent direction for USCIS into the future by providing an outline of upcoming initiatives and programs, including the IT and business modernization, human capital strategy and management improvement plans.

Created by individual employees from office components across USCIS, the Strategic Plan includes the following sections:

- USCIS Mission, Vision and Values
- Themes, Goals, Objectives and Strategies
- Context for Strategic Planning
- Framework of The USCIS Strategic Plan



To view an online copy of the *USCIS Strategic Plan*, click [HERE](#). Print copies will also be available through General Printing Office's online bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> or by calling 1-866-512-1055.

INTEGRITY . RESPECT . INGENUITY

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# FROM THE OFFICE OF CITIZENSHIP

## WELCOME TO THE UNITED STATES: A GUIDE FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS

Designed for permanent residents and organizations that serve them, *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* contains practical information to help immigrants settle into everyday day life in the United States, as well as a wealth of information about our system of government, the American people, and the responsibilities that come with the freedoms we enjoy. In addition, the guide also provides new immigrants with ideas on how to become involved in their new communities, find employment, housing, and schools for their children.



*Welcome to the United States* is available for free, and can be found online in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese at:

<http://ucis.gov/graphics/citizenship>

Copies will soon be available online in Tagalog, Korean, Russian, Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

Print copies of English and Spanish guides are available through the Government Printing Office by calling 1-866-512-1800 or by ordering through their website at: <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

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## BY THE NUMBERS...

### BACKLOG ELIMINATION EFFORTS

The chart to the right shows the progress made to eliminate the backlog since the establishment of USCIS. This report focuses on the progress made during the first Quarter of FY 2005.

The backlog at the end of the first Quarter of FY 2005 stands at just under 1.4 million cases. USCIS completed nearly 1.5 million cases during the first Quarter while receiving 1.3 million new cases in receipts. Historically, the first Quarter of the fiscal year is the least productive for USCIS. The beginning of FY 2005 was not considerably different, as USCIS experienced a decrease in completions.

USCIS completed 154,891 more applications than it received during the first Quarter of FY 2005.

Date	Number of Backlog Cases	Percent Reduction
May 2003	3,612,222	
		5%
May 2004	3,419,039	
		69%
May 2005	1,047,096	

Although completions were higher than receipts, completions were significantly below backlog elimination targets. Higher completion levels are expected for the coming months that will set the pace for future Backlog Elimination efforts.

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## USCIS CONTENT NOTIFICATION SERVICE

To sign up for a subscription to *USCIS Today* or for more information on upcoming events, press releases and policy changes, please visit the USCIS Content Notification Service webpage: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/exec/cns/index.asp> and fill out the requested information to receive information specialized to your needs.

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# FACES OF AMERICA

## NEW CITIZENS, UNIQUE STORIES

One of America's top contenders for Gold in the 2006 Winter Olympics, Denis Petukhov, is also one of our newest American citizens with a unique story to tell.

An internationally acclaimed ice dancer, Denis, a Russian national, posted a message on the Internet looking for ice dance partners. Chicago resident and professional ice dancer Melissa Gregory responded to his message, and in 2000, Denis traveled to the U.S. to meet her. Denis not only found a capable ice dance partner in Melissa, he also found his life's partner, and the two were married in February of 2001.

In February of 2005, the Denis and Melissa shared another milestone, with Denis' naturalization as an American Citizen. "This was my dream and a dream shared with my wife. Hopefully all of our dreams will come true," Denis said. Citizenship makes the team eligible to compete at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games for the United States, however Denis dreams of more than just the luster of Olympic Gold.

"I was thinking more about the meaning of becoming an American citizen and what becoming an American means to me than about the Olympics," he said. "To be an American to me means to be free in my thinking, in my religious beliefs, and to be who I am. I am very proud to be an American."

ARE YOU ONE OF THE "FACES OF AMERICA?"

USCIS wants to hear from you!!! Click [HERE](#) to submit your story!!!



Denis receives his citizenship certificate with Melissa



Denis and Melissa compete at the 2004 U.S. Championship

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE...

### FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

#### [USCIS Implements L-1 Visa Reform Act of 2004, 6/23/05](#)

USCIS announced the implementation of new provisions to the L-1 temporary worker program, commonly known as intracompany transferees.

#### [DHS Issues Rebranded Form I-9, 6/21/05](#)

USCIS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced that they have updated the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) to eliminate outdated references to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service and its parent agency, the Department of Justice.

#### [USCIS Announces New "Green Card" Filing Procedure, 5/25/05](#)

USCIS forwarded to the *Federal Register* a notice announcing that starting May 31, 2005 aliens must mail applications to renew or replace Permanent Resident Cards, commonly known as "green cards," directly to the Los Angeles Lockbox.

#### [USCIS Announces Update Regarding New H-1B Exemptions, 5/24/05](#)

USCIS announced that it has received more than 6,393 H-1B petitions that will count against the Congressionally-mandated exemption cap for fiscal year 2005.



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"SECURING AMERICA'S PROMISE"



# USCIS CELEBRATES THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

MORE THAN 15,000 TO BECOME NEW  
AMERICANS AT NATURALIZATION  
CEREMONIES NATION-WIDE

More than 15,000 men, women and children in cities across the United States will celebrate Independence Day a little differently this year. That's because they'll raise their right hands and take the Oath of Allegiance to become America's newest citizens during special July 4<sup>th</sup> events hosted by USCIS.

From coast to coast, USCIS will commemorate the United States' 229<sup>th</sup> birthday during a weeklong schedule of Naturalization Ceremonies designed to "Celebrate Citizenship, Celebrate America." Each of the ceremonies will feature a new video entitled: "Faces of America: A Tribute to Citizenship," highlighting the 229 years of America's history as a nation of immigrants, to view the video, visit the Office of Citizenship website at: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/index.htm>.

"The week of July 4<sup>th</sup> gives us an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the freedoms and liberties we enjoy as Americans," said DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. "There is no better way to truly celebrate our Independence Day than by welcoming our newest Americans."

For more information on USCIS 4<sup>th</sup> of July events, or to find the Naturalization Ceremony taking place nearest you, please visit the USCIS website at: [http://uscis.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/newsrels/July4\\_06\\_27\\_05.pdf](http://uscis.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/newsrels/July4_06_27_05.pdf)

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## NEW FROM THE OFFICE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE: THE "HOW DO I" SERIES

At USCIS, it is one of our ongoing priorities to simplify the immigration process for our customers and make the path to Citizenship as user-friendly as possible.

In these efforts, the USCIS Office of Customer Service has created the "How Do I" Series of fact sheets, featuring informative and detailed answers to frequently asked immigration questions.

The "How Do I" Series provides general guidelines for customers on how to process citizenship and immigration applications, matching the proper forms and paperwork necessary to achieve the desired immigration benefit.

To date, fact sheets have been created for two series. The "A" series focuses on benefits and services for U.S. citizens; the "B" series focuses on permanent residents

Additional fact sheets series are scheduled to be completed this summer. They include the "C" series for non-immigrants; the "D" series for persons already granted refugee or asylee status; the "E" series for employers; and the "F" series, which highlights case services. A "G" series about unique USCIS products and services also is being developed.

The "How Do I" Series is available in English and Spanish, online at the USCIS website: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/factsheet/index.htm>

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# REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

## USCIS RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

### Background:

Despite speaking limited English, Mike Chan left Hong Kong in 1976 to begin a new life in the United States. Only five years later, Mike graduated with a Masters degree in Social Work from the Jane Addams School of Social Work at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He also met his wife Sarah, an immigrant, who had escaped Vietnam in 1979 on a fishing boat after the Communists occupied Saigon. Mike became a naturalized citizen in 1986 and in 1987 went to work for Legacy INS. Starting as an Immigration Examiner, Mike is now a Supervisory District Adjudications Officer in the USCIS Chicago Office.

### Describe what its like to be a naturalized citizen working for USCIS:

"We all belong to the same USCIS family, despite our countries of origin. U.S. Citizenship instills in us a tremendous sense of pride, gratitude and security. Citizenship opens up a window in our souls, through it, we are free to explore, to pursue, to express, to create, to believe and to love. I feel great pride in being able to help others who long to make the United States their permanent home, just as I did so many years ago.

### Which of your contributions to USCIS are you most proud of?

"Being active in the Chicago Chinese Community, I spend some evenings and weekends hosting community forums explaining changes in immigration law and procedure, or participating in Chinese radio or television. I think this helps to promote a positive picture of USCIS in the immigrant community and improves my ability to help customers with their requests.

### What's the most memorable moment you've experienced at USCIS?

"The time I get to spend interviewing naturalization candidates, learning their personal histories, their life's stories, these are all memorable and rewarding experiences for me. There's the Ukrainian woman who cried and kissed my hand after passing the citizenship test – even though I kept stressing I had nothing to do with it, or the mother of four who told me how horrified she was witnessing relatives get shot right in front of her eyes during an ethnic cleansing raid in an Albanian village, and the story of the Korean soldier preparing to go back to duty defending the United States. To realize just how much of an impact an immigration officer can make on a person's life, it's something I know first hand, and working at USCIS allows me the opportunity to give back to my community.



**Name:** Mike Chan  
**Position:** Supervisory District Adjudications Officer  
**Location:** Chicago, Illinois

### How has USCIS changed since March 2003?

"I think the significant changes since March 2003 is that CIS has given full attention to enhance Customer Services, worked extremely hard to address the backlog adjudications, and tried every effort to reaching the goal of 6 month processing time on many applications. At the same time, we continue to maintain a high alert on National Security issues, to prevent granting benefits to those who have violated the laws and intend to exert harms to the United States, through collaborative efforts with ICE, CBP, FDNS and other law enforcement agencies."

### Looking for the nearest USCIS Office?

For locations, hours of operation and general information about USCIS offices click here: [uscis.gov/graphics/fieldoffices/Statemap.htm](http://uscis.gov/graphics/fieldoffices/Statemap.htm)

Need to make an appointment?  
Don't wait in line, go online!

Make an appointment at the USCIS office near you by clicking here: <http://infopass.uscis.gov/>

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200