



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

USCIS TODAY



A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO T. GONZÁLEZ

At USCIS we are constantly on the look out for talented individuals to bring to our experienced team of immigration professionals. We are changing the face of USCIS, infusing our ranks with strong leadership, fresh new ideas and recruiting the best and the brightest minds in the business. I am pleased to announce the selection of a highly qualified cadre of USCIS executives with wide-ranging expertise in security, IT infrastructure, human capital management and USCIS domestic and International operations.

These innovators will be charged with leading USCIS through a time of modernization of our operations and business systems. They will also be responsible for enhancing security, increasing our efficiency as an agency, and delivering on our promise to the American public to maintain the integrity of our national immigration system.

This month, and in future issues of USCIS Today, we will introduce our new faces. I look forward to working closely with this next generation of USCIS leaders as we drive our transformative process during the coming fiscal year and prepare for future immigration reform legislation from Congress.

JEFF CONKLIN – CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO)

Jeff Conklin leads the OCIO through a critical era of technology systems modernization to facilitate USCIS' business transformation goals. Jeff joins USCIS after serving as CEO of the Washington State School Information Processing Cooperative for six years. In this role, Jeff led the management of a 110-person organization that provides cost-effective technology services and support to the state superintendent's office and 280 school districts.

Jeff has an extensive federal resume, with service at the Department of Education as Director of Technology Services and at the Department of Defense, where he was the Lead Interdisciplinary Computer Engineer. A United States Marine Corps veteran, Jeff served as an information systems management officer and platoon commander in a variety of Marine units and has also taught programming and technology courses at the National Defense University - Information Resources Management College. He holds a BS degree in Applied Science/Computer Science from the U.S. Naval Academy and a MS degree in Software Engineering from National University.

BILL TAYLOR – CHIEF IT INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT OFFICER

Prior to joining USCIS, Bill led project management review processes that incorporated IT portfolio analysis, earned value management, cost estimating and analysis, and risk management at the US Department of Housing & Urban Development. He was instrumental in drawing up the Department's first-ever IT strategic plan for its \$350 million annual IT portfolio. HUD's IT Investment Management (ITIM) process has been singled out as a best practice by OMB.

As a member of the IT Investment Team at the US Department of Justice, he oversaw significant portions of the Department's \$2 billion annual IT investment portfolio. Mr. Taylor holds a BS degree in Engineering from West Point and an MBA in Business, Economics, and Public Policy from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. He is currently enrolled in George Washington University's School of Business PhD program with a dissertation topic of decision making in IT portfolio management.

JUNE 2006

“USCIS: Delivering on the Promise”

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USCIS: AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION SERVICE

SUMMER TRAVEL PLANS?

DON'T FORGET TO FILE FOR ADVANCE PAROLE

USCIS reminds individuals who have been granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS), individuals with an application for adjustment of status to that of lawful permanent resident, an application for relief under section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA 203), or an asylum application, that they must obtain Advance Parole by filing [Form I-131](#), Application for Travel Document, with USCIS before traveling abroad.

Advance Parole is permission to re-enter the United States after traveling abroad in order to continue processing for adjustment of status. Individuals must be approved for Advance Parole before leaving the United States. Travel outside of the United States without Advance Parole has severe consequences and individuals who violate this law may be unable to return to the United States and their applications may be denied.

Applicants can apply for Advance Parole with USCIS Service Centers. Processing time for Service Centers ranges from 90-150 days. Applicants planning travel abroad should plan ahead due to the busy summer travel season. For more information on Advance Parole see the "[How Do I Get a Travel document?](#)" section of this newsletter or visit [USCIS.gov](#).

USCIS urges those eligible for Advance Parole to consult an immigration attorney, an immigration assistance organization accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals, the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283, or [USCIS.gov](#) before making any foreign travel plans.



USCIS NATURALIZES MILITARY MEMBERS SERVING IN IRAQ

USCIS naturalized more than 200 soldiers, sailors and Marines during two naturalization ceremonies in Iraq in early May. This is the fourth trip that USCIS personnel have made to the region to naturalize members of the U.S. military serving in harm's way.

During a May 12th ceremony held at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, 123 soldiers took the Oath of Allegiance and became American citizens. Three days later, 73 soldiers, one sailor and nine Marines became U.S. citizens at Camp Victory in Baghdad. The service members naturalized came from 70 different countries.

Because of recent changes to the law governing U.S. citizenship, USCIS is able to conduct naturalization interviews and ceremonies overseas exclusively for U.S. military service members. Last year, USCIS employees interviewed and naturalized 1,006 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines at US military installations worldwide. USCIS employees volunteer for these assignments to combat zones.

Walter Haith, a USCIS Adjudications Officer in Frankfurt, Germany, Anne Corsano, the Deputy Director of the USCIS Rome District Office and Darryl Perez, an Immigration Specialist from the Rome District Office made the trip to Iraq.

"These soldiers have willingly put themselves in harm's way to defend our country," says Haith. "For me, the chance to travel to Iraq and help naturalize these soldiers is an immense honor." This was Haith's second voluntary trip to Iraq to conduct military naturalizations.



Among the new citizens was Private First Class (PFC) Gilbert Njuguna of Garland, Texas. A native of Kenya, PFC Njuguna came to the United States from Nairobi when he was 15 years old. Originally from Kenya's Maasai Tribe, he is the first among his generation of the tribe to become a U.S. citizen. "I don't have words to describe how I feel," Njuguna said after his ceremony. "I can't believe that this is actually happening to me. I feel proud to have obtained my U.S. citizenship on my own." A combat medic in Iraq, Njuguna plans to become a doctor.

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER WELCOMES NEW U.S. CITIZENS AT NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was the guest speaker at a May 23rd naturalization ceremony in San Francisco, welcoming 1,148 new citizens from 101 countries.

Schwarzenegger noted that he had the same experience in October 1983, when he took the Oath of Allegiance and became an American himself. "I will never forget the actual day when I became a citizen in 1983, 15 years after arriving here in America. I remember raising my hand and repeating the oath, and I had chills. I had kind of like goosebumps all over my body, I was so excited about it. I was smiling from ear to ear because I was so excited about now being officially called an American."

He remarked that of all the titles he has received - bodybuilding champion, action hero, governor - he's proudest to be called an "American." He said that from age 10 in his native Austria, he dreamed of coming to "the place of freedom and unlimited opportunity, the place where if you worked hard and if you played by the rules and did the right thing, you could make your dreams become a reality."

The governor's remarks also touched on the importance of immigrants to our national economy and social fabric. "When you hear this day so much about the cost of immigrants in this country, let's not forget of all the great things that immigrants contribute. Millions work hard, start businesses, raise families, help improve their communities and lead solid and productive lives," Schwarzenegger said to applause during his eight-minute address.

Before stepping down into the audience to greet the new citizens and to help hand out certificates, Schwarzenegger recognized other notable immigrants in politics including Henry Kissinger and Madeline Albright, praised the ingenuity of Intel Founder Andrew Grove, and the artistic creativity of Carlos Santana and Isaac Stern. "I know there are many of you out there that will also change history, that will have that kind of an impact. I know there are some of you out there that maybe will entertain millions of people worldwide. I know there are some of you out there that will make billions of dollars. I know there are a lot of best-selling authors out there. I know there are some out there that even maybe one day will become Governor of the great State of California. Hey, how about that?"



DON'T WAIT IN LINE...GO ONLINE!!!

[USCIS.gov](http://uscis.gov) features an evolving suite of Internet based services that decrease waiting times for customers. The [INFOPASS](#) Online appointment system, our 24-hour [National Customer Service Call Center](#), the ability to file and check the status of applications online using our [E-Filing Online Application Center](#), and other electronic media have improved our ability to both tackle the existing backlog of cases, while handling an increasing number of applicants.

USCIS: INTEGRITY, RESPECT, INGENUITY

OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE – CARLOS GUTIERREZ

The newly launched *Outstanding American by Choice* initiative recognizes the outstanding achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to their country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Throughout the year, USCIS Director González will continue to recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their communities and adopted country.



Carlos Gutierrez has come a long way from selling Frosted Flakes to small stores in Mexico City. President Bush's Secretary of Commerce is a man with a remarkable story and a business resume that exemplifies the American dream in action.

Secretary Gutierrez was born in Havana, Cuba. His father was a pineapple merchant who lost his business to Castro's regime and moved the family to the United States in 1960. Gutierrez learned his first words of English from the bellhops at the hotel where they initially stayed and, later, he and his family acquired United States citizenship. From this humble beginning, Gutierrez rose to become one of the most respected and influential leaders in American business today.

Gutierrez first joined Kellogg in Mexico City at age 20 with an entry-level sales job, delivering cereal in Mexico City's roughest neighborhoods. By age 30, Mr. Gutierrez was general manager of Kellogg's Mexican operations. In this role, he transformed the Kellogg's Mexican plant from the company's least productive to its most productive.

In 1982, Kellogg promoted and transferred him to the corporate headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan. There, he continued to rise through the executive ranks to become Kellogg's youngest president and chief executive officer at age 46. Despite never graduating from college, Gutierrez was selected as one of the most powerful Hispanic-Americans in business by Fortune magazine in 2004 after increasing net sales at Kellogg by 43 percent and making the company the number-one cereal maker in the United States.

Secretary Gutierrez was sworn into office on February 7, 2005 as the 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce. A Cabinet level position, he serves as the voice of business in government and a key member of President Bush's economic team.

Secretary Gutierrez oversees a diverse Cabinet agency with some 38,000 employees and a \$6.5 billion budget focused on promoting American business at home and abroad. His Department gathers vast quantities of economic and demographic data to measure the health and vitality of the economy, promotes U.S. exports, enforces international trade agreements, regulates the export of sensitive goods and technologies, issues patents and trademarks, protects intellectual property, fosters minority business development and promotes economic growth in distressed communities.



Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez receives the Outstanding American by Choice Certificate from USCIS Director Gonzalez at a Naturalization Ceremony in Philadelphia on May 15, 2006

VISIT THE [OFFICE OF CITIZENSHIP](http://www.uscis.gov) TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

FACES OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS... UNIQUE STORIES

SARA BA - SENEGAL

[SHARE YOUR STORY: CONTACT USCIS](#)



Sara Ba, (pronounced Saada) a student aide at the Oregon District Office in Portland, emigrated from Senegal as a winner of the visa lottery 10 years ago. He became a U.S. citizen in August 2002. Portland employees admire his high energy level, joking that he delivers the District's mail so quickly that they often find themselves leaping out of his path.

Sara, 30, has worked in the Records Section for three years. He will graduate from Portland Community College with an associate degree in computer information systems on June 9th. This fall, he begins his Business Management Information Systems studies at Portland State University.

His supervisor, Portland's Records and Information Supervisor Paula Brinkman, says "he has raised the bar of excellence and has unknowingly challenged his peers and the Records Section Staff to work smarter, harder and faster."

Quite an accomplishment for a young man who helped his father run a farm in Senegal, working from sunrise to sunset every day. Brinkman ascribes his unusually strong work ethic to this early training.

"Sara is an outstanding individual who always keeps the government's interests first and foremost," said District Director Bill McNamee. Last year, while on annual leave, he paid his own way to Washington, D.C. and visited USCIS offices to get a more comprehensive understanding of record information resources. During his four-day visit, employees Roxann Dzur, Johnny Stokes, Mike Quinn, Craig Avery, Teddy Davis, and Federick Gaskins showed him the ropes, in what he calls a "cordial and remarkable visit." He came away impressed by their professional approach as, no doubt, they were by his.

"I would like to share with everyone about my feeling," he said in his report to Brinkman. "United States is a great country. God has blessed America. Together, let's work for America and together let's secure this great nation."

As if all this were not enough, Sara went on to lead the Combined Federal Campaign and Hurricane Katrina relief drive for the Portland Office. He collected \$5,253, which included donations by USCIS and ICE employees, plus money donated by his friends. He was the only CFC worker in this small-sized office and he used creativity to gather dollars, checks – even spare change.

NEWS YOU CAN USE...

FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

[USCIS Reaches H-1B Cap, 6/1/06](#)

USCIS announced today that it has received a sufficient number of H-1B petitions to meet the congressionally mandated cap for fiscal year 2007 (FY 2007). The "final receipt date" for H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2007 annual cap was May 26, 2006. Affected H-1B petitions received on that date will be subject to the random selection process described below. H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2007 annual cap that are received by USCIS after the "final receipt date" will be rejected. Additional information regarding the specific number of H-1B petitions processed is available at: www.uscis.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/cap.htm.



VISIT THE [OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS](#) FOR THE LATEST NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM USCIS

USCIS: IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE



“How Do I...?”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT USCIS

HOW DO I...APPLY FOR A TRAVEL DOCUMENT?

What is a Travel Document and Who Needs One?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you may need permission to return to the United States after traveling abroad. This permission is granted through a travel document. Travel documents are also given to people who want to travel, but cannot get a passport from their country of nationality.

Where Can I Find the Law?

The legal foundation for requiring these travel documents comes from the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). [INA § 211](#) discusses documents required to admit aliens and control their travel. [INA § 212](#) states that any immigrant who does not have the correct travel documents will not be admitted to the United States.

How to File

The alien must file USCIS Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, complete with supporting documentation, photos and applicable fees. This form can be downloaded from our [Forms and Fees](#) page. See the application for filing instructions. An alien in the U.S. applying for an Advance Parole document must attach:

- ✓ A copy of any document issued to the alien by USCIS or former INS showing present status in the United States.
- ✓ An explanation or other evidence demonstrating the circumstances that warrant issuance of Advance Parole.
- ✓ If the alien is basing his or her eligibility for Advance Parole on a separate application for adjustment of status or asylum, he must also attach a copy of the filing receipt for that application.
- ✓ If the alien is traveling to Canada to apply for an immigrant visa, he or she must also attach a copy of the consular appointment.

The “**How Do I...?**” Section of USCIS Today contains answers to frequently asked questions from USCIS customers. Additional information and more answers are available English and Spanish on the [How Do I...?](#) section of USCIS.gov.

How Can I Find Out the Status of My Application?

To check the status of your application, please contact the USCIS office that received your application. You should be prepared to provide the USCIS staff with specific information about your application. Please click here for complete instructions on checking the [status of your application](#). Please click here for more information on [USCIS field offices](#).

How Can I Appeal?

If your application is denied, the denial letter will tell you why the application was not approved and how to appeal the decision. You may appeal within 33 days of receiving the denial. Your appeal must be filed on USCIS Form I-290B with the office that made the original decision. You will not be allowed to appeal a negative decision to a *higher* authority. However, you may submit a motion to reopen your case with the office that made the original decision.

By filing these motions, you may ask the office to reexamine or reconsider their decision. A motion to reopen must state the **new facts** that are to be provided in the reopened proceeding and must be accompanied by affidavits or other documentary evidence. A motion to reconsider must establish that the decision was based on an **incorrect application of law or USCIS policy**, and further establish that the decision was incorrect based on the evidence in the file at the time the decision was made. For more information, please see [How Do I Appeal the Denial of Petition or Application?](#)

Can Anyone Help Me?

If advice is needed, you may contact the USCIS District Office near your home for a list of community-based, non-profit organizations that may be able to assist you in applying for an immigration benefit. Please see our [USCIS field offices home page](#) for more information on contacting USCIS offices.

Frequently Asked Questions

Click here for [Frequently Asked Questions](#). You may also want to read the [State Department's Returning Resident Alien Leaflet](#).

USCIS SHINES AT PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK ON THE NATIONAL MALL

USCIS participated in Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) from May 4th to May 6th on the National Mall, giving more than 2,000 visitors an up-close view of the agency's products and services. USCIS was one of 48 federal agencies that hosted an exhibit.

20 USCIS employees, representing Information and Customer Service, Office of Citizenship, Office of Communications, Human Capital, Field Operations, Fraud Detection and National Security and Refugee, Asylum and International Operations served as PSRW Mall committee members. The large corner exhibit marketed USCIS services through interactive displays and video presentations, take-away literature, a genealogy station and USCIS-branded educational products and giveaways.

Visitors with cases pending were able to check their status online and others inquired about employment opportunities available with the Department of Homeland Security. The "About Us: USCIS Story," video also made its debut, along with the introduction of a USCIS children's activity sheet called *Linda Liberty and Friends Take a Roadtrip Across America*. Both products were well received.

To kick-off the event on May 4th, USCIS hosted a naturalization ceremony on the Mall for 25 new citizens. Mike Aytes, USCIS Acting Director of Domestic Operations, provided the keynote address and naturalized the new citizens. Phyllis Howard, USCIS District Director, Washington, D.C. district, served as Master of Ceremonies and administered the oath of allegiance, while Mary Flores, Supervisory Adjudications Officer, Washington, D.C. district, presented the candidates for citizenship.

As part of Student Day, on May 5th, USCIS invited a group of seventh-graders from Swanson Middle School in Arlington, Virginia, to perform a re-enactment of immigrant stories as they passed through Ellis Island. The school performed its skit for USCIS headquarters employees in December 2005.

PSRW began in 1985 and recognizes the work performed by federal, state and local government employees. It also allows federal employees the opportunity to educate citizens about the many ways our government serves Americans. This is the ninth consecutive year USCIS has participated with a Mall exhibit during PSRW.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

USCIS RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Background: Myra was born and raised in the Philippines. She immigrated to the United States in 1989 and later became a naturalized U.S. Citizen. Myra began her federal service overseas in June 1975, as a Receiving Clerk and Secretary with the Department of Defense at the former U.S. Naval Base, Subic Bay, Philippines. She also held several positions in the private sector working for large law firms before accepting a secretarial position with legacy INS in 2001. Today, Myra works in an Information Technology (IT) field office as part of the Office of the Chief Information (OCIO).



Name: Myra Fernandez
Position: Administrative Assistant
Location: California Service Center

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

Working as an Administrative Assistant in an IT office has been very challenging since my computer skills were quite challenged prior to being detailed to this position. Looking back, I'm very proud of my progress and current computer skills that now enable me to provide administrative and clerical support to the IT division and staff, other Service Center divisions, as well as the Service Center's Director's office. My new skills have allowed me to become an administrator for the Travel Manager system for the entire Service Center. I would say I've come a long way from when I first started and I'm very proud to be part of the most productive Service Center in USCIS.

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

It's difficult to find one moment that I recall as the most memorable, but I feel very fortunate to be part of an organization that changes people's lives in such a major way. Having personally gone through the experience of Naturalizing, it's amazing to be part of the effort behind the scenes on a daily basis. Each time we upgrade a system I think about the impact on all the people doing business with USCIS and what it means to them.

The four USCIS Service Centers in California, Nebraska, Texas and Vermont were established to handle the mail, file, data entry, and adjudication for approximately 65% of applications received by USCIS.

One upgrade of special notice was when the California Service Center supported the I-90 pilot. It was taking more than a year to produce an I-90 due to backlogs in processing, but with some local ingenuity we were able to cut the time down to less than a week for a person to be scheduled, fingerprinted and have a Green Card produced and mailed to them. We were able to produce a card so quickly that we actually had to hang on to Green Cards for an extra 24 hours to ensure people's payments were properly deposited and cleared the bank. That is simply amazing and sticks in my mind as the type of progress technology brings to the agency. If that's not enough, my recent upgrade is also quite memorable to me!

How has USCIS changed since March 2003?

I've seen many changes, especially in technology. When I first started in this position I listened to many (many, many...) complaints about our computer systems. We were operating on Windows 95 (in the year 2005!), still using cc:Mail and operating on an old version of Novell for our network. In the last year we've migrated to Windows XP, Microsoft Exchange/Outlook and implemented Windows Server 2003 for the network. We've updated CLAIMS 3 and other core Center applications. As part of the Workstation Technology Refresh we received new workstations with flat panel monitors. We've come a long way in the last year and I rarely hear complaints about our systems anymore. That's a major change that I can live with.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

Visit USAJOBS Online for more information on openings and opportunities at USCIS and other federal agencies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200