



January 24, 2006

# Public Notice

## **USCIS to Decouple Naturalization Applications**

In order to speed the processing of naturalization cases, USCIS will no longer group naturalization applications (a systems function known as Group Management) unless specifically requested by a family.

Following a careful study of the operational impact of the Group Management option upon our naturalization case processing system, USCIS learned that the function is adversely affecting our ability to provide timely customer service. This adverse impact is primarily a result of the many system stages that a naturalization application must pass through before processing has been completed. The Group Management option requires that all applicants in a group successfully complete each processing stage before the group as a whole can move on to the next stage. For example, all members of a group must have their background checks completed before the group can proceed to the interview stage. If one individual in a group of 50 hasn't successfully completed this stage, the remaining 49 cases cannot proceed and their processing will unnecessarily stall.

USCIS has identified more than 10,000 naturalization cases currently affected by the Group Management function. Effective immediately, USCIS will decouple, or "ungroup," all currently established groups allowing individual cases to proceed through the process independently.

Upon request, group management will remain a customer service option for USCIS family applicants who desire group processing. This will allow our customers the option to schedule interviews for family members on the same day. Family applicants who wish to take advantage of Group Management should submit a written request for grouping when their naturalization application is mailed to the Service Center with jurisdiction.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.