



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Memorandum

TO: January Contreras
Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman

FROM: Lori Scialabba *Lori Scialabba*
Deputy Director

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendation 46, Customer Complaints: A Tool for Quality
Customer Service and Accountability

Recommendations

The CIS Ombudsman recommends that USCIS:

- Establish a better means of informing the public how to submit general complaints; and
- Publish the collected complaint data for public scrutiny.

USCIS Response to Recommendations

USCIS appreciates the CIS Ombudsman's thoughtful review of the processing of customer service complaints. Efforts to improve service and customer experience are at the forefront of USCIS's mission. USCIS welcomes these recommendations and looks forward to working with the CIS Ombudsman's staff to improve the agency's handling of customer complaints.

1. Establish a better means of informing the public how to submit general complaints.

USCIS concurs with this recommendation. In November 2010, USCIS formed a working group to examine various issues related to customer service, including how the agency can better handle customer complaints. As part of the agency's policy review initiative, USCIS is developing standardized policies and procedures for how: 1) customers submit complaints to USCIS, 2) offices process and address complaints, and 3) the agency tracks and reports these

complaints. This policy is currently going through the internal review process and, upon completion, will be made available for public comment.

2. Publish the collected complaint data for public scrutiny.

USCIS concurs in principle with the CIS Ombudsman's recommendation to publish statistical data on complaints received. As mentioned above, the USCIS working group is currently developing a policy that establishes annual reporting requirements. There are challenges with tracking complaints, from defining and categorizing the various types of complaints received to logging and recording the data. For reporting purposes, USCIS could require that all complaints be centrally lodged through one intake process. However, as the CIS Ombudsman noted, many offices address complaints in-person the moment they arise. While recognizing the value of statistical data, USCIS does not want to sacrifice the efficiency and effectiveness of handling complaints in-person. The USCIS working group is currently exploring ways to ensure that both interests are served. USCIS will keep the CIS Ombudsman apprised of our efforts in this area.