



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# USCIS TODAY



## A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO T. GONZÁLEZ

I recently joined the USCIS leadership in Orlando, Florida for our 3rd annual Leadership Conference. During the conference, many mission critical topics were presented and discussed including the realignment of the management structure of the Agency's regional, district and field offices to better balance workload and personnel among USCIS field offices. The new plan will improve mission performance and customer service delivery. It does not affect the locations of or the services offered at local USCIS district offices.

Upon its establishment in 2003, USCIS inherited the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) domestic field office structure consisting of three regions and thirty-three districts. USCIS' workload and workforce distribution, however, varies greatly from that of legacy INS. Consequently, the continuation of the legacy INS field office structure resulted in one region having a workforce almost as large as the other two regions combined, and the largest districts having workforces up to fifty times larger than other districts.

As part of this realignment, USCIS will establish a new Southeast Regional office in Orlando, Florida. The placement of the regional office in Orlando will allow USCIS to balance the immigration and citizenship workload in this area of the country. This office will be responsible for managing all district and field offices in the southeast region of the United States.

USCIS is also creating two new management districts in Sacramento, California and Tampa, Florida. Under this new plan, the Sacramento district will join the Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco districts serving California. In Florida, the northern district will be based in Tampa while the southern district will be based in Miami. These additional district offices in California and Florida will dramatically improve mission performance and customer service in these states.

The realignment of USCIS domestic field operations will be phased in as office space is acquired and facilities are completed. With the realignment of domestic operations and USCIS' continued commitment to excellence, I'm convinced the future for USCIS is very bright. For more information see the [USCIS Realignment Announcement](#).

## NOVEMBER 2006

### “Securing America’s Promise”

[The New and Improved USCIS.gov](#)

[USCIS Opens New Facilities in KY and NJ](#)

[USCIS: Protecting our Communities](#)

[News You Can Use](#)

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[Adopted Valor: Immigrant Heroes](#)

[How Do I...Adopt a Child from Overseas?](#)

[Community Relations Corner](#)

[Faces of America – New Citizens, Unique Stories](#)

[Real People, Real Progress – Employee Spotlight](#)

## THE NEW AND IMPROVED [USCIS.GOV](#)

One of the most trafficked websites in the Federal government has a fresh new look. USCIS has replaced its old website with a new, more effective, redesigned Web Portal available at the same Internet address, [www.uscis.gov](#). The improved Web Portal will serve as a “one stop shop” for all immigration information needs.

Visitors to the “new” USCIS.gov will find it easier to download petitions and applications, file forms electronically, and sign up online for appointments at their local district offices using InfoPass. The new site is easier to navigate and visitors can use the built-in search engine to easily locate needed information.

Many of the pages that visitors have bookmarked have changed. Please refer to the [USCIS.gov Fact Sheet](#), for new links to your favorites: Applications & Petitions, Services & Benefits, Information for Lawful Permanent Residents & Green Cards, e-filing, Booklets & Fact Sheets and InfoPass.

**USCIS: AMERICA’S IMMIGRATION SERVICE**



# USCIS OPENS NEW FACILITIES

## RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES AT KENTUCKY RECORDS DIGITIZATION FACILITY, NEW JERSEY USCIS OFFICE

USCIS celebrated the opening of two new facilities in October, and Director Gonzalez was on hand for both ribbon cutting ceremonies at a state-of-the-art Records Digitization Facility (RDF) in Williamsburg, Kentucky and a Field Office in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

At the RDF in Williamsburg, Director Emilio Gonzalez unveiled the agency's multi-year plan to digitize more than 70 million paper files, and explained the agency's use of this type of modern data management platform to enhance national security.

"By moving from a paper-based system to an electronic platform, we will enhance security, improve efficiency and be able to better handle future immigration reforms," Director Gonzalez remarked. "This important first step to digitize more than 70 million paper records makes it easier for our officers to detect and deter fraud and protect the integrity of our national immigration system."

With this facility, USCIS positions itself at the forefront of national security as a world-class immigration organization for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The file digitization program is an integral part of ongoing USCIS efforts to transform its business practices. The Williamsburg facility will digitize millions of paper records and applications for immigration benefits and make them instantly available to the various federal agencies that need to access those records around the world. The digitized A-files (files of immigration benefit seeking individuals) will be made available to multiple users without time-consuming and costly shipping or handling of paper files. The ready availability of files will improve customer service and support the integrity of immigration applications.

The opening of a new 17,000 square foot USCIS Office in southern New Jersey will assist immigrants applying for citizenship, legal permanent residence or seeking information on immigration benefits at a customer friendly new location. One of the first offices in the nation designed solely for providing immigration services and benefits, the new USCIS Cherry Hill Office boasts a spacious waiting area, a special venue for daily naturalization ceremonies, and an innovative layout that allows more efficient service to the public. The new office is accessible by public transportation and nearby major traffic routes. The one story building offers not only an efficient design, but also space for expansion as the workload of USCIS grows.

The five-year, \$1 million project replaces the 7,600 square foot USCIS office in Cherry Hill that was overcrowded. The new Cherry Hill Office is the result of a national effort by USCIS to transform into a more secure, efficient and customer friendly agency. This innovative space demonstrates the agency's commitment in investing in its people and infrastructure to more effectively provide services in a professional setting.

"This is the new office our staff and our customers have been waiting for," said Andrea Quarantillo, USCIS Newark District Director. "This year we will help nearly 4,000 men, women, and children fulfill their dream of becoming U.S. citizens. This new office will provide a very comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for our customers, as well as a wonderful work environment for our employees."

The USCIS Cherry Hill Office provides immigration services and benefits to the residents of the southern New Jersey counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, and Salem.



USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez joins (from left) Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher, Datatrac Information Systems CEO Kathi Yaeger and U.S. Congressman Hal Rogers at the opening of the new USCIS Records Digitization Facility in Williamsburg



USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez joins (from left) Eastern Regional Director Greg Smith and Officer in Charge Michael Borgen at the new USCIS office in Cherry Hill, NJ

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# USCIS: PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

## BACKGROUND CHECKS REVEAL CRIMINAL HISTORIES



On October 4, a man was taken into custody after USCIS officers uncovered an outstanding warrant for his arrest on charges of selling cocaine. Officers from the Federal Protective Service took Franklin Gonzalez into custody after he appeared at the USCIS Boston Office to apply for an immigration benefit. An Adjudications Officer with USCIS discovered Gonzalez was also known by the alias Chevez Rodriguez. Further investigation revealed there was an outstanding warrant for Gonzalez's arrest issued by the Fitchburg Police Department under his alias.

A man wanted for sexual assault in Ohio was arrested October 27, at the USCIS Houston District Office. The arrest of Saul Bautista-Martinez, a native of Mexico, came after a USCIS officer discovered the outstanding warrant following routine background checks conducted on every applicant requesting an immigration service or benefit. Officers from the Federal Protective Service took Bautista-Martinez into custody for extradition to Ohio without incident.

"Public safety is paramount to this agency," said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. "When we encounter a person at a USCIS office who has violated the law, we will work with our law enforcement partners to take the appropriate action."

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE...

### FROM USCIS COMMUNICATIONS

#### [Public Notice: USCIS Announces Filing Change for Student Reinstatement Form I-539, 10/25/06](#)

Beginning October 30, 2006, local USCIS offices will forward any new filings for Form I-539, Application to Extend or Change Nonimmigrant Status, for F-1 and M-1 student reinstatement, to the California Service Center or the Vermont Service Center, depending on where the student is engaged in academic or vocational study.



[USCIS Announces Extension of Returning Worker Exemption to the H-2B Numerical Limitation, 10/23/06](#) - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that the "returning worker" exemption to the H-2B numerical limitation has been extended and will remain in effect until September 30, 2007.

#### [Public Notice: USCIS Notifies Clients of Case Transfers for Certain Cuban Adjustment Act Applications, 10/20/06](#)

Beginning July 1, 2005, the USCIS National Benefits Center (NBC) transferred certain Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA) Applications (Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status), that do not require an interview to the California Service Center (CSC) for processing.

[USCIS and Department of State Launch Joint Effort to Promote USCIS Immigrant Guide Overseas, 10/5/06](#) - The USCIS publication, *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* contains practical information on finding a place to live, getting involved in the community, learning English, looking for a job, the rights and responsibilities of permanent residents, and becoming a U.S. citizen.

[USCIS Reminds Applicants for Adjustment of Status and Other Benefits to Obtain Advance Parole Before Holiday Travel Abroad, 10/4/06](#) - USCIS reminds individuals to obtain Advance Parole by filing [Form I-131, Application for Travel Document](#), from USCIS before traveling abroad.

[Lori Scialabba to Lead USCIS' Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate, 10/2/06](#) - USCIS Director Emilio T. Gonzalez announced the appointment of Lori Scialabba to oversee the asylum and refugee programs, and the administration of USCIS international operations.

[Public Notice: USCIS Notifies Refugee and Asylee Applicants of Filing Changes, 9/29/06](#) - USCIS announced changes to the filing procedure for Refugee and Asylee Relative Petitions (Form I-730).

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## USCIS: ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY

# OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

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 the 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.



## MARINA BELOTSEKOVSKY

Marina Belotserkovsky is currently the Director of Russian Communications and Community Outreach at the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), where she is responsible for assisting over one million members of the Russian-speaking community in America. She produces and hosts "HIAS Answers" for both radio and television. The program was developed to provide information for new immigrants when they arrive in the United States. Together with her HIAS colleagues, Ms. Belotserkovsky has been instrumental in the success of Local Russian-speaking Émigré Organizations (LOREO) and The Civic and Voter Educational Initiative, HIAS' key national outreach programs for Russian Americans.

Ms. Belotserkovsky immigrated to the United States in 1989 as a refugee from the Former Soviet Union. In 1996, she became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Before coming to the United States, Ms. Belotserkovsky founded and ran a school for gifted children in St. Petersburg, Russia. She has a graduate degree in linguistics and teaching from the Pedagogical State University in St. Petersburg.



**Marina Belotserkovsky** is recognized as an Outstanding American by Choice by USCIS Director González and U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez during a ceremony in New York City

VISIT THE OFFICE OF CITIZENSHIP  
TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER  
OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

## ON ANY GIVEN DAY AT USCIS...

...the 15,000 federal and contract employees of USCIS accomplish the following at our 250 offices worldwide:

- Capture **8,000** sets of fingerprints at 130 Application Support Centers
- Answer in-person inquiries from **19,000** visitors to information counters at 92 local offices
- Receive **135,000** visitors to our Internet site (USCIS.gov)

Check the next issue of [USCIS Today](#) or the [USCIS Day in the Life](#) profile for more statistics on what we do every day to effectively and efficiently administer our nation's immigration system.

[www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov)



# ADOPTED VALOR: IMMIGRANT HEROES

## FOREIGN BORN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

### CORPORAL TIBOR “TED” RUBIN – KOREA

Tibor “Ted” Rubín was born in Paszto, Hungary, one of six children to a shoemaker in a village of 120 Jewish families. During the Nazi campaign to wipe out Hungary’s Jews, the 13-year-old Rubín was separated from his parents and siblings and transported to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. His parents and two sisters perished in other camps. After 14 months at Mauthausen, Rubín was liberated by American troops and U.S. Army medics whom he credited for saving his life. Rubín later came to the United States in 1948 as a wiry 19 year old with a hardened, but optimistic spirit. A born fighter, Rubín enlisted in the Army and quickly found himself on the front lines in Korea. There, in combat, his iron will to survive under extreme conditions would be tested again.

While his unit was retreating to the Pusan Perimeter, Corporal Rubín was assigned to stay behind to keep open the vital Taegu-Pusan Road link used by withdrawing American forces. During the ensuing battle, overwhelming numbers of North Korean troops assaulted a hill defended solely by Corporal Rubín. Single-handedly, for 24 horrendous hours, he fought off wave after wave of enemy soldiers. He ran around and around the crest of the hill, tossing hand grenades down and firing from different directions so the North Koreans would think they were battling more than just one man.

In another battle, Rubín volunteered to man his battalion's last remaining machine gun, at which three other gunners had already died, and protected his unit from surging Chinese soldiers. Later, he disobeyed his sergeant's orders to leave a wounded GI behind, and crawled several hundred yards under sniper fire to help his shrapnel-filled buddy. “Rubín saved my life by carrying me to safety,” Corporal Leonard Hamm wrote in a nomination of Rubín for the Medal of Honor.

As the battle raged, Corporal Rubín was severely wounded and captured by the Chinese. Choosing to remain in the prison camp despite offers from the Chinese to return him to his native Hungary, Corporal Rubín used what he had learned as a Holocaust survivor to aid his fellow comrades. At night he disregarded his own personal safety to break into enemy food storehouses and gardens to steal food. He made soup from grass and picked wild plants for their medicinal and nutrient qualities. He nursed many through sickness and infections, cleaning wounds with rags and water he boiled in his helmet. Rubín provided not only food and medical care, but moral support for the sick and wounded of the POW camp. His brave, selfless efforts were directly attributed to saving the lives of as many as forty of his fellow prisoners.

In the end, although two unit commanders recommended him three times for the Medal of Honor, the 1st Sergeant in command of Rubín's unit never prepared the papers. A half-dozen of Rubín's fellow GIs later signed affidavits stating that the virulently anti-Semitic sergeant snubbed Rubín because he did not want the combat honor to go to a Jew. It was not until 1985, after Rubín attended a convention of former prisoners of war, that an effort began to rectify the oversight. Several ex-POWs, who had thought Rubín was dead, formally recommended him for the Medal of Honor, and Jewish and Korean War veterans groups signed on as well.

In September, 2005, President Bush presented the 76 year old Rubín with the Medal of Honor, long overdue, but well deserved.



Rank and organization:  
Corporal, U.S. Army  
**Birth: Hungary**



Tibor Rubin wearing the Medal of Honor at age 76



## “HOW DO I...?”

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT USCIS

## NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

### HOW DO I...ADOPT A CHILD FROM OVERSEAS OR HELP MY ADOPTED CHILD BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT?

Adopting a child is a major decision for a family, and USCIS has several programs to help. Over 20,000 inter-country adoptions are taking place per year in addition to the more than 200,000 foreign-adopted children already living in the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security and USCIS are proud to play a key role in this family-building process.

There are two ways to bring an adopted child into the United States. The fastest and easiest way is to adopt an orphan who automatically becomes eligible to enter the United States as an immediate relative. Only U.S. citizens are eligible to immigrate a child as an orphan. The second way is to adopt a child and reside with that child for two years prior to petitioning for the child. U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents may immigrate a child with whom they have lived for two years.

Prospective adoptive parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with inter-country adoptions processes before they begin filing applications for a particular child. A good place to start is with the booklet, [The Immigration of Adopted and Prospective Adopted Children](#). Prospective adoptive parents may find the services of an adoption agency helpful for guidance and assistance with the immigration of orphans and adoptive children.

While USCIS cannot recommend specific agencies, we strongly advise prospective adoptive parents to seek out a reputable agency with established foreign adoption experience and/or competent legal representation in their efforts to bring foreign-born orphans into the United States.

The adoption of a foreign-born orphan does not automatically guarantee the child's eligibility to immigrate to the United States. The adoptive parent needs to be aware of U.S. immigration law and legal regulatory procedures. An orphan cannot legally immigrate to the United States without U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services processing.

If you are considering adopting an older child, you should be aware of the age limits on eligibility for adoptions and immigration, regardless of whether or not your state laws permit the adoption of older children (or even adults).

US law allows the adoption and immigration of children who are under 16 years of age, with two exceptions:

- Siblings of a child adopted by the same parents may be adopted if under 18 years of age; and
- Orphans over the age of 16 may be adopted, as long as the [I-600](#) petition was filed on their behalf before their 16th birthday (or in the case of an orphan who is the sibling of a child adopted by the same parents, before their 18th birthday).

There are two ways to immigrate an adopted child:

- Immigration/Adoption of child based on 2-years residence through submitting Form [I-130](#):

If you adopt a child before the child turns 16 (or 18, as described above), and you live with the child for two years as the child's primary caregiver, then you may file an I-130 petition for an alien relative. Please note that, generally, all qualifying criteria must be established BEFORE the child may enter the U.S.)

- Immigration/Adoption of an orphan through submitting Form [I-600](#):

If you adopt or intend to adopt a child who meets the legal definition of an orphan, you may petition for that child at any time prior to the child's 16th (or 18th, as described above) birthday, even if the adoption takes place subsequently (and in many cases, the adoption does not occur until the child comes to the US).

Additional information is available on the new and improved [USCIS.gov](#) homepage. Visit today and use the built-in Search Engine to find the answers to all of your important immigration questions.



# COMMUNITY RELATIONS CORNER

Sometime this past year, the community outreach program celebrated its 10th birthday. It's not easy to calculate exactly when the first Community Relations Officer (CRO) joined legacy INS, but it was sometime in 1996. Our tenth anniversary passed without any fanfare, but the contributions of the program are evident throughout the agency. Effective community outreach has resulted in:

- Better forecasting of problems and understanding of customer service delivery issues;
- Faster dissemination of important messages about policies and procedures to customers at the grassroots level;
- Enhanced communication and problem-solving capabilities with stakeholders and advocates, even when we disagree;
- More timely correction and control of misinformation, and the ability to move through a crisis with sustained credibility.

But even if your District doesn't have a full-time CRO, you can still gain some benefits by doing outreach on a collateral basis. Several District Directors have assigned outreach duties to collateral CROs with lasting positive results. In other locations, the District Directors engage directly with the communities. Performing well-targeted outreach, even on a part-time basis, can reap significant rewards for both USCIS and communities. In this issue, we highlight the good work of two collateral CROs.

Jimmy X. Jackson is a Congressional Liaison Officer in the Houston District. He has performed the duties of a Community Relations Officer on a collateral basis for more than one year. He coordinates meetings for the District Director with community-based organizations, locates special speakers for naturalization ceremonies, assists foreign consulates with immigration issues concerning USCIS, ICE and CBP, and gathers community feedback to ensure that issues are resolved before they become problems. In particular, his involvement with the Houston Mayor's Advisory Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs give USCIS many opportunities to assist local government and CBOs that do not normally interact with USCIS.

The Honolulu District has assigned community outreach responsibilities to Darlene Kutara, who is a full-time Supervisory District Adjudications Officer. Darlene makes time each month to address a main concern in the Hawaiian Islands, which is international students and university liaison. She routinely meets with NAFSA and university officials to help clarify rules pertaining to foreign students. When asked to describe what she finds meaningful about her work, Darlene is quick to point out that providing quality outreach to the public ultimately helps the agency fulfill its mission effectively and efficiently.

"To be the friendly face of an overwhelmingly complex bureaucracy, and help untangle misunderstandings in an empathetic and competent manner, enriches my job and reflects positively on the agency," Kutara said. "I learn so much from working with the public and am able to see issues from their point of view." Kutara believes the biggest plus for doing outreach is greater efficiency for the agency. "The better informed the CBOs are, the better quality assistance they can provide their clients," she said. "Well-informed applicants submit properly completed applications with required evidence, appear for interviews, and submit fewer inquiries, all of which save us time and effort." This efficiency allows officers to devote more time to complex adjudications, fraud detection and identifying ineligible applicants.

If you would like more information about identifying a "collateral" CRO in your district or if you would like some ideas on how you can get more involved in reaching out to your communities, please let us know. You may reach out directly to the head of the Community Relations Program or feel free to work with the Regional Lead covering your region.

## USCIS COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICERS:

**Sally Blauvelt - Program Director**  
Kathy Lotspeich - Senior CRO  
Shannon Wheeler, PMF

**Western Region - Janna Evans**  
San Diego - John Ramirez  
San Francisco - Rosemarie Fan  
Laguna Niguel - Jorge Swank  
Los Angeles - Rico Cabrera  
Phoenix - Rudy Bustamante  
Portland - Ed Sale

**Central Region - Christine Pool**  
Denver - Barbara Melton  
San Antonio - Jacque Crouse  
Chicago - Val Obregon

**Eastern Region - Ted Albers**  
Washington - Gloria Williams-Brevard  
Philadelphia - Carol Hallstrom  
Miami - Berta Cassidy  
New York - Shyconia Burden-Noten  
Detroit - Hiwatha Greene-Janvier



# FACES OF AMERICA

## NEW CITIZENS... UNIQUE STORIES

### EMIR MULALIC - BOSNIA

Emir Mulalic was born in the town of Prijedor, Bosnia. A loving husband and father, his journey to the United States was a very difficult one and he is "so grateful to the United States for delivering him to this wonderful country." In 1992, with ethnic tensions rising between Bosnia and Serbia, Mulalic was walking outside with his 5 ½ year old daughter, when he heard a shot and quickly realized that his young daughter, whose little hand he held in his, had been hit by a sniper's bullet. He rushed her to the hospital, but unfortunately she did not survive.

His family fled to Croatia, and from there to Jordan and Turkey to a settlement camp sponsored by the United Nations. There were 10 people per camp, with a total of about 4,000 people. They had to wait 4 hours to take a bath. Mulalic had relatives in the U.S., so there was hope that perhaps they too would be able to emigrate. It didn't matter where in the U.S. – "Anywhere in America," Mulalic said.

Luck did turn their way when the International Institute sponsored the family to come to the United States. They arrived in St. Louis on September 21, 1995 and were ecstatic about living in their own house. They didn't speak English, but it didn't matter. They were very happy. "This is the first country where I have felt comfortable," Mulalic said. "The first time I have felt at home."

After becoming eligible, Mulalic decided it was time to become a United States Citizen. Now he speaks English, he is working as a supervisor at a machine operating company, and his children all go to school. He wanted to fully be a part of this country. He studied for the citizenship test, as did his wife and oldest child who was already 21.

The day of the interview he was very nervous. "My palms were sweating – people scare you. Bosnians say it's hard, but I passed. The Immigration Officer was very nice – I like him a lot, and he gave me time to think about the answers to the questions." Mulalic was so thrilled that he passed the test and so did his daughter. Unfortunately, his wife has to retake the test, but with the family is committed to helping her study.

When asked, on the day he was sworn-in as United States Citizen, what country he was from, Mulalic, with a huge grin on his face replied, "America, of course!" Mulalic became a United States citizen on Monday, September 18 in a special Citizenship ceremony held at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis, Missouri. The ceremony was held in celebration of Citizenship Day. Mulalic maintained a smile throughout the entire ceremony and claimed this to be one of the happiest days of his life, "When you become an American you feel safe and secure. You can vote, make decisions – it makes me feel good."

ARE YOU ONE OF THE  
FACES OF AMERICA?  
[SHARE YOUR STORY](#)  
[WITH USCIS](#)

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

[USCIS.gov](http://USCIS.gov) features an evolving suite of Internet services that decrease waiting times for customers. The [INFOPASS](#) Online appointment system, 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.

# REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

## USCIS RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Ja Nel James entered on duty as a Co-Op student for legacy INS at Baltimore Washington International Airport (BWI) in May of 1998. She worked as a Co-Op for two years until graduating from University of Maryland, Baltimore County. After graduation, she was offered a job as a District Adjudications Officer (DAO) and began her career at the Baltimore District Office on August 27, 2000. Shortly thereafter Ja Nel accepted the collateral duty of Intelligence Officer and took on the added responsibility to work as an Immigration Inspector, part-time, at BWI to help the Inspections program. After 9/11, with the implementation of IBIS checks and later FBI name checks, Ja Nel's collateral duty as Intelligence Officer became a full-time job. Later, in July of 2005, she became a Supervisory District Adjudications Officer for the Baltimore District, responsible for the Naturalization Unit and district outreach. In October, Ja Nel began a new career as Assistant Director of Internal Communications for USCIS at the Washington, D.C. Headquarters Office.

### What is a typical day for you?

A typical day starts with our morning production meeting where USCIS Communications component leaders meet to discuss daily action items. After downloading what's going on from HQ and field leadership, I then begin to comprise the USCIS Daily News and Leadership Alerts. Usually, I have several meetings with different office components where I help develop strategic internal communications messaging to announce new programs and agency initiatives. Daily, I am responsible for maintaining and monitoring the comments, concerns and questions from the USCIS employees regarding internal communications items.

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

One memorable experience...no way! I have thousands of memorable experiences. Every time I conducted a naturalization ceremony and administered the oath of naturalization I was touched. Each time I was able to grant permanent resident status to a happily married couple, a battered spouse or a refugee I was humbled. Every time I had the opportunity to interact with community based organization, AILA, US Supreme Court Justices, US States Attorneys, Immigration Judges, and other law enforcement agencies, I had a sense of pride that what I do truly makes a difference. Now that I have the opportunity to help provide mission critical information to all USCIS employees, I feel honored. Every day that I serve as an employee of USCIS is special in its own way.

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

I am most proud of contributing a positive image of this Service. I believe my good-heart and sincere personality has made a difference in many people's lives. I cannot count the number of times that a customer would come to the Baltimore District Office, sometimes years after being interviewed, adjusting status or being naturalized, and say to me "I remember you. You were so nice to me at my interview," or "I really appreciate how special you made my ceremony." One naturalized applicant came to me and said "I am so happy that you conducted my ceremony, I sent your picture to my son in Eritrea. You are now world famous." I don't know about that, but touching one person's life is more than enough for me.

### How has USCIS changed since March 2003?

It just keeps getting better with time.



**Name:** Ja Nel C. James

**Position:** Assistant Director of Internal Communications

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

Visit [USAJOBS Online](http://USAJOBS Online) for more information on openings and opportunities at USCIS and other federal agencies.

**OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE, APPLY NOW!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200**