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Completing an Unprecedented 10 Million Immigration Cases in Fiscal Year 2023, USCIS Reduced Its Backlog for the First Time in Over a Decade

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New USCIS data show progress on customer experience, employment-based immigration, naturalization, and humanitarian work

WASHINGTON— Today U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is releasing end of fiscal year (FY) 2023 data that illustrate the agency’s progress in meeting its strategic priorities. The USCIS workforce has worked tirelessly over the past year to uphold America’s promise as a nation of welcome and possibility by reducing backlogs, improving customer experience, addressing humanitarian needs, and strengthening employment-based immigration.

“I’m so proud of the USCIS workforce and our dedication to fairness, integrity, and respect for all we serve,” said USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou. “We’ve completed a record number of cases, responded to emerging crises around the globe with essential humanitarian relief, and applied innovative solutions to improve customer experience and reduce backlogs.”

Reducing Backlogs

In FY 2023, USCIS received 10.9 million filings and completed more than 10 million pending cases– both record-breaking numbers in the agency’s history. In doing so, [USCIS reduced overall backlogs by 15%](#). Among USCIS’ record number of case completions in FY 2023, the agency administered the Oath of Allegiance to more than 878,500 new U.S. citizens, including 12,000 members of the military, effectively eliminating the backlog of [naturalization applications](#) . The median processing time for naturalization applicants decreased from 10.5 months to 6.1 months by the end of the fiscal year, achieving the agency’s longstanding goal and significantly reducing waiting times for most individuals seeking U.S. citizenship.

Improving Customer Experience

USCIS implemented several new technology solutions that meaningfully advance the [customer experience](#) for those navigating our immigration system. Our new self-service tool for online rescheduling of biometrics appointments was used to reschedule over 33,000 such appointments in FY 2023. Our new enterprise change of address capabilities enabled over 430,000 address changes to be submitted online

through Dec. 2023. This tool is expected to reduce USCIS Contact Center phone inquiries by up to 31%, or approximately 1.5 million inquiries annually. From August to September 2023, USCIS received more than 16,000 field office appointment requests using our online request form, while a new text-ahead capability for callers to our 1-800 number gives them a more predictable call-back window and reduces missed calls.

Strengthening Immigration for Workers and Employers

In FY 2023, USCIS and the Department of State helped meet the needs of U.S. employers by issuing more than 192,000 employment-based immigrant visas – far above the pre-pandemic number – and, for the second year running ensured that no available [visas](#) went unused. The agency further [supported U.S. employers and noncitizen workers](#) in FY 2023 by increasing the maximum validity period of Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) to five years for adjustment of status applicants. We clarified eligibility for a range of immigration services, including the International Entrepreneur Rule, the EB-1 immigrant visa for individuals of extraordinary ability and outstanding professors and researchers, and the waiver of the two-year foreign residence requirement for J-1 cultural and educational exchange visitors (including foreign medical graduates). We proposed a new rule to strengthen worker protections and the integrity of the H-2 temporary worker program.

USCIS also removed the biometrics fee and appointment requirement for applicants for a change or extension of nonimmigrant status and updated the agency’s interpretation of the Child Status Protection Act to prevent many child beneficiaries of noncitizen workers from “aging out” of child status, allowing them to seek permanent residence along with their parents.

Fulfilling Our Humanitarian Mission

USCIS continues to address growing humanitarian needs around the globe, as individuals seek protection in the United States from oppression, violence, and other urgent circumstances. At a time when the world is experiencing the greatest displacement of people since World War II, our agency’s dedicated employees continue to [advance our humanitarian mission](#) and provide protection to vulnerable populations.

USCIS interviewed over 100,000 refugee applicants – more than double the amount completed in the previous fiscal year – resulting in the admission and resettlement of over 60,000 refugees. As of the end of FY 2023, USCIS completed more than 52,000 asylum cases; this included prioritizing process of asylum cases for Afghan alliance and their families. USCIS also completed a record-breaking 146,000 credible fear and reasonable fear screenings of individuals expressing a fear of return after being encountered at the border.

In FY 2023, USCIS continued to support Biden-Harris Administration efforts to establish lawful pathways that allow for the safe and orderly processing of individuals into the United States through the implementation of new processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV); the creation of new family reunification processes for individuals from Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and the modernization of existing processes for Cuba and Haiti; and by maintaining support for the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) process. As of the end of FY 2023, more than 150,000 Ukrainian nationals and their immediate family members had entered the United States under the U4U process and nearly 238,000 individuals through the CHNV process. USCIS is also a key partner in the Safe Mobility Office initiative, one of the many ways the United States is facilitating access to safe and lawful pathways in partner countries in Central and South America to prevent refugees and vulnerable migrants from undertaking dangerous journeys and discourage criminal smugglers who endanger the lives of vulnerable noncitizens. USCIS also announced enhancements to the Central American Minors Program, including

expanding eligibility criteria for such children to qualify for access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

USCIS announced the creation of its sixth service center, the Humanitarian, Adjustment, Removing Conditions, and Travel Documents (HART) Service Center, which focuses on adjudicating benefits requests filed by vulnerable populations. USCIS made significant strides in recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training new hires, growing the HART Service Center by almost 90% in FY23, and enhancing agency capabilities to adjudicate humanitarian and related cases.

Looking Ahead

In FY 2024, the agency is continuing to build on this progress while monitoring and addressing remaining processing delays. USCIS will work to maintain the median processing times of 30 days for certain EAD applications filed by individuals who entered the United States after scheduling an appointment through the CBP One mobile application or through the CHNV processes. The agency also proposed new rules to modernize and improve the efficiency and integrity of the H-1B program for specialty occupation workers. USCIS will work to maintain naturalization processing times and utilize all available employment-based visas.

As a fee-funded agency, USCIS achieved all these accomplishments within the constraints of a fee schedule that was last updated in 2016. We [announced a new fee schedule](#) that allows USCIS to more fully recover our operating costs, reestablish and maintain timely case processing, support the development and implementation of tools that further increase our efficiency and improve the customer experience, and help prevent the accumulation of future case backlogs. We continue to call on Congress to pass the Administration's supplemental funding request, including additional resources for USCIS to cover projected shortfalls and hire additional personnel.

USCIS will continue to build capacity for processing historically high referrals for protection screenings at the southern border, while focusing remaining resources on the unprecedented number of pending affirmative asylum applications. USCIS will continue to increase refugee adjudications to support the target of admitting 125,000 refugees this fiscal year. USCIS also plans to increase refugee processing in the Western Hemisphere through the Safe Mobility Office initiative and is on track to admit between 35,000 and 50,000 refugees from the Western Hemisphere this fiscal year, the largest number from this region in history.

To enhance accessibility for those we serve, USCIS will also continue efforts to expand our international footprint outside the United States and remains committed to Operation Enduring Welcome for Afghan allies. USCIS will also invest additional resources to stand up the HART Service Center.

Finally, USCIS will implement new online filing tools to enhance the customer experience, including adding organizational accounts, launching online filing of H-1B petitions on Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, and adding an additional electronic intake channel for submission of forms and evidence in PDF format.

For more information on USCIS and our programs, please visit uscis.gov or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](https://twitter.com/uscis)), Instagram ([/uscis](https://www.instagram.com/uscis)), YouTube ([/uscis](https://www.youtube.com/uscis)), and Facebook ([/uscis](https://www.facebook.com/uscis)).

Progress on Reducing Backlogs



Naturalizing New U.S. Citizens



Enhancing Customer Experience



Strengthening Immigration for Workers and Employers



Fulfilling Our Humanitarian Mission



 Close All  Open All

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