



OFFICE OF THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FY 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan is one of three main elements required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 (P.L. 103-62) and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-352). This strategic plan defines our mission, goals and the means by which we will measure our progress in addressing specific initiatives over a four-year period.

Who We Are

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman) is dedicated to improving the administration of immigration services and benefits delivered to the public by providing individual case assistance, identifying systemic issues and making recommendations to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Statutory Authority

Section 452 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 provides the legal authority for the CIS Ombudsman.

Mission

To serve as a champion for the transparent and efficient administration of immigration benefits and services through casework, stakeholder engagement and policy recommendations.

Vision

A reliable source of relevant, balanced and actionable recommendations informed by our office's conduit to the immigration community and a deep understanding of the work of USCIS.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Reliability
- Accountability
- Efficiency
- Trustworthiness
- Balance
- Collaboration

Strategic Alignment

The CIS Ombudsman advances the guiding principles and core values outlined in the [DHS Strategic Plan FY 2020-2024](#)¹, specifically:

- Objective 2.4: Administer immigration benefits to advance the security and prosperity of the nation
- Objective 6.1: Strengthen departmental governance and management
- Objective 6.2: Develop and maintain a high performing workforce

¹ The DHS Strategic Plan is currently being revised.

Our mission, goals and objectives also strive to achieve the [President's Management Agenda](#), specifically Priorities 1 and 2:

- Priority 1: Strengthening and Empowering the Federal Workforce
- Priority 2: Delivering Excellent, Equitable, and Secure Federal Services and Customer Experience

In addition, the goals of the Administration's [Executive Order 14012, Restoring Faith in our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#) and [Executive Order 14058, Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#), and the express commitments to identify barriers that impede access to immigration benefits and to deliver services more equitably and effectively with a focus on customer experience—squarely align with the CIS Ombudsman's mission.

Lastly, our work aligns with four objectives in the [USCIS FY 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#):

- Objective 1.1: Access to the Legal Immigration System
- Objective 1.2: Fair, Efficient, and Humane Adjudication
- Objective 3.3: Quality Data and IT System Management
- Objective 3.4: Program Performance Evaluation and Evidence Building

Guiding Program Principles

Case Assistance: Provide timely and effective assistance to individuals and employers in resolving problems with USCIS.

Outcome: Implement enhanced technology and case management best practices to effectively serve as an office of last resort.

Policy: Produce timely, relevant and actionable recommendations to mitigate problems and improve the administration of immigration services and benefits, informed by our conduit to the community and deep understanding of the work of USCIS.

Outcome: Provide timely and actionable insights, proposals and recommendations to USCIS to improve the administration of immigration benefits and services.

Public Engagement: Serve as a trusted channel for stakeholder concerns and as a “go to” source for reliable information for all stakeholders with a vested interest in the U.S. immigration system.

Outcome: Gather feedback from stakeholders on issues impacting the administration of immigration benefits as well as disseminate timely information to the public using strategic channels of communication.

Operations: Support personnel management, budget, property and facilities and develop guidance for overall program operations and administrative policy.

Outcome: Comprehensively support human resources, programs and mission delivery by implementing fiscally responsible and innovative solutions.

Strategy: Cultivate strategic capabilities within the organization using data and analytics to inform planning and operational decisions.

Outcome: Develop and implement cross-cutting capabilities and effectively use data and analytics to support mission implementation.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Strengthen Our Identity and Customer Service

We will use various channels to articulate our mission, capabilities and value to the public and to those with a vested interest in the U.S. immigration system.

Impact:

Enhanced awareness of the CIS Ombudsman's mission, available services and ability to make recommendations to improve the administration of immigration services and benefits.

FY 2025 Objectives:

- Increase visibility of the CIS Ombudsman's mission and services
- Review and analyze incoming receipts to maximize efficiencies and customer service
- Ensure accountability across casework services
- Advance technological initiatives and data analysis to support casework
- Gather and analyze data to enhance public engagement processes and improve the customer experience
- Track the progress of formal and informal recommendations and proposals shared with USCIS

Goal 2: Build and Develop Our Workforce

We will recruit and retain diverse and dedicated employees and promote a culture of excellence by investing in the professional development and growth of our workforce and engaging employees at all levels of the organization.

Impact:

Increased staff productivity and an engaged workforce with a vested interest in the overall success of the office.

FY 2025 Objectives:

- Oversee human resources and personnel functions
- Support communication, change management and continued learning initiatives
- Oversee initiatives designed to improve the employee experience and support professional development and a positive workplace culture

Goal 3: Mature Our Organization

We will enhance processes, systems and capabilities to manage growth and optimize our ability to meet evolving mission needs.

Impact:

Improved capacity to plan, work and communicate across the organization.

FY 2025 Objectives:

- Manage the office's budget and financial operations
- Develop administrative policies, procedures and protocols

- Maintain facilities and enhance technological tools
- Lead consulting and business process initiatives
- Use strategic planning and performance measurement and evaluation to collect feedback, track results and mature our organization
- Oversee and manage contracts and contractor personnel
- Lead continuity of operations efforts
- Utilize technology to improve efficiencies and enhance the user experience
- Employ broad-based research strategies to investigate issues
- Research and incorporate data science tools to enhance transparency, communication and results

Goal 4: Elevate Our Stature and Expand Our Reach

We will target our engagement efforts to reach a broad array of stakeholders, explore opportunities to enlarge our footprint and support the Department’s larger mission objectives.

Impact:

Increased awareness of our mission by stakeholders across the country and expanded opportunities to contribute to key Department-level immigration priorities.

FY 2025 Objectives:

- Submit recommendations to USCIS and Congress to improve the administration of immigration services
- Develop strategic communications, outreach and social media plans
- Conduct targeted communications and stakeholder engagement
- Refine team-wide engagement strategies
- Employ a priorities/issues-based regional representative engagement strategy
- Conduct systematic engagement with USCIS on policy and process issues, as well as with other governmental partners
- Analyze casework, public engagement and other stakeholder input to identify issues and determine systemic trends or problems