



# GOAL FOUR

Fairly and Effectively  
Administer the  
Immigration and  
Naturalization Laws  
of the United States

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# GOAL FOUR:

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Responsibility for administering the nation's immigration laws primarily rests with the Department's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). INS deters, apprehends, and removes persons who violate our immigration laws. It works with the U.S. Attorneys to investigate and prosecute violators of immigration statutes, including purveyors of fraudulent documents. At the same time, INS provides an array of services and benefits to those who legally enter and reside in the United States. These services range from providing employment authorization to processing applications for citizenship ("naturalization"). The Civil Division defends immigration laws and policies, as well as class action law suits or immigration judgments involving individuals. A separate component organization within the Department, the Executive Office for Immigration Review, provides for the independent administrative adjudication of immigration cases.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

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#### IMMIGRATION INFORMATION SERVICES

*Provide accurate, easy-to-use, readily accessible, and up-to-date information which meets the needs of internal and external customers.*

The Immigration and Nationality Act charges the Commissioner of INS with collecting and disseminating immigration information to Congress and the public. During the course of this planning cycle, the INS culled the input of more than 3,000 of its stakeholders. Accurate, easy-to-use, readily accessible, and up-to-date information was reported as a priority by a significant number of these stakeholders, including benefits applicants, other government agencies, and businesses. The demand for good information is also reflected in the large volume of visitors at INS information counters, the increasing demand placed on the INS telephone center, and growing use of the INS web site. But maintaining and providing good information does more than improve customer service; it also facilitates INS business processes. Well-informed customers make case processing easier, quicker, and often cheaper. In addition, data serves as the raw material that allows INS to make informed policy decisions, identify opportunities for improvement, and demonstrate success.

#### Strategies to Achieve the Objective

*Determine the informational needs of customers and ensure these needs are addressed through design, development and deployment of programs and systems.*

Before developing data collection systems, INS needs to inventory and assess the data it needs to ensure it collects what is both necessary and sufficient to manage operations and to meet the needs of internal and external customers. This type of review will be conducted periodically to ensure that the data INS collects are still

relevant. When new ways of doing business are instituted, data collection will also be reassessed. National case management and tracking systems will be designed to automatically collect and easily report key performance indicators. Existing case management systems will be reviewed and improved as necessary to ensure they meet this standard. To supplement these systems, data warehousing and intranet solutions will be developed which pull key data from various sources and provide them through a single, accessible, real-time system.

*Define data quality standards and build quality mechanisms directly into data collection and reporting processes to ensure reliability of data reported.*

INS must ensure it collects and uses quality data. To guarantee data quality, it must first ensure that the right data for collection have been identified. It must also clearly define quality standards. Lastly, it must build quality control mechanisms directly into its collection, review, and reporting processes.

*Create informational materials that are written or voiced in plain and understandable language, are easy to use and meet the needs of customers.*

INS stakeholders indicate that giving useful information to its customers is one of the most important services INS can provide. Customers indicate that this information should be accurate, consistent, and helpful and provided in a variety of languages.

*Continue to enhance and expand use of communication and information technology to make this information easily and readily accessible to customers.*

INS customers indicate that there are a variety of methods by which they would like to receive information from the INS, but that they particularly value easy and quick access to this information. The majority of INS customers have used or indicate they would be willing to use tools by which they can access information from INS remotely as long as they can be assured of the quality and accuracy of this information. To this end, INS will continue to enhance the features of its Internet site and its telephone services to increase the amount of information available via these sources and to increase the speed at which this information is provided.

*Coordinate and develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations on data requirements, effective collection, and reporting, and expand the electronic exchange of data with mission partners, including federal, state, and local agencies as well as private sector organizations.*

INS partners with many government agencies and private sector organizations to share data important to their missions. Concurrent to developing systems and programs to collect and analyze data, INS will work with other agencies to coordinate data collection efforts and reporting and to develop mechanisms by which data that are essential to more than one agency or organization are collected and exchanged electronically.

*Provide employers and benefit providers with the information, assistance, and tools needed to allow them to comply with the laws while safeguarding the civil and privacy rights of citizens and aliens alike.*

INS is the sole repository of status information on aliens and is called upon to provide status verification for aliens seeking benefits or employment. INS will continue to pursue means of verification which are user-friendly, secure, accurate, and timely. These enhancements will be made through improved integrity of data on aliens and their status in the United States and increased use of electronic verification methods for secondary verification. INS will continue to test and evaluate these enhancements as it continues to implement congressionally-mandated employment verification pilot projects.

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*Create a culture in which everyone values performance and demographic information and effectively uses data to make decisions, identify opportunities for improvement, and recognize successes.*

INS will create a culture in which all employees understand how important performance and demographic information are and in which all managers effectively use performance data to make decisions, identify opportunities for improvement and celebrate successes. From a cultural perspective, information will be viewed as an organizational asset.

### **Key Crosscutting Programs**

*IDENT/IAFIS Integration.* INS is working with the FBI on the integration of the INS' automated biometric identification system (IDENT) and the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS). The goal of this collaboration is to improve the timeliness and accuracy of criminal identification. This initiative will ensure that thousands of persons entering the U.S., both legally and illegally, can be promptly checked for the existence of criminal records maintained by the FBI.

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## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.2**

### **IMMIGRATION BENEFITS**

*Deliver services to the public in a professional and courteous manner and ensure that correct immigration benefit decisions are made in a timely and consistent fashion.*

INS has experienced substantial increases in applications for benefits since the early 1990s. To succeed at this work, INS must ensure that correct decisions are made—that people who are eligible for benefits receive them and those who are ineligible are denied. To ensure that the right decisions are made, INS must ensure that the right processes are in place and documented and that INS employees adhere to these processes. In addition, before, during and after the adjudication process, INS must ensure that excellent customer service is provided. Timely, consistent, professional, and courteous treatment are service priorities that are important to all of INS customers, including benefit applicants, the community-based organizations who represent them, and businesses.

### **Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

*Establish quality assurance, timeliness and customer service standards for all immigration benefits applications processing, and ensure that mechanisms are in place to meet these standards.*

INS stakeholders indicate that the integrity of benefits processes, including naturalization, is particularly important, especially with regard to the outcome of these processes. Nearly all INS stakeholders also report that the speed with which INS processes cases is a high priority as well as the courtesy and respect they are given as they navigate benefits processes. This includes cultural sensitivity on the part of INS employees. To meet the needs of its stakeholders and customers, INS will create standards and mechanisms by which to meet those standards in the areas of quality of processing, timeliness, and customer service.

*Maintain fair and timely refugee and asylum case processing that denies meritless claims quickly without discouraging legitimate seekers of refuge.*

INS will continue to build on the successful reform of the asylum system implemented in 1995. Due to the urgency of many refugee and asylum cases, it is

imperative that INS maintain a system by which cases can be processed quickly and fairly. However, the process must also preserve the integrity of the refugee and asylum programs by ensuring that only those who are eligible for such protection receive it.

*Complete reengineering of the naturalization process, redesign processes for immigrant and non-immigrant applications processing, and institute documented standard operating procedures nationwide.*

In 1997, INS undertook a reengineering of the naturalization process to improve the way in which services are delivered to the customer and enhance the integrity of the process. INS will document and monitor compliance with this new process. It will also apply lessons learned from the naturalization reengineering to the redesign of other benefits processes in order to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction. To ensure consistent application of these redesigned procedures on nationwide basis, INS will document the new processes and monitor compliance.

*Introduce electronic filing for applications processes.*

Consistent with stakeholders' expressed interest in timely and user-friendly processing, the INS will develop an electronic filing capability. This will enable processing to be conducted more quickly, at a lower cost and with fewer errors.

*Create a culture of customer service as an integral, permanent component of INS benefits application processing.*

Customer service is one of the highest priorities of INS customers and stakeholders. INS will continue to move toward creating an organizational culture that supports customer service by providing employees with guidelines, training, and adequate tools and resources to provide high quality service to customers.

### **Key Crosscutting Programs**

*Alien Status Verification.* In providing alien status verification services to employers under the new pilot programs authorized by Congress, INS is working closely with the Social Security Administration (SSA) on two of the three prototype approaches being piloted. Additionally, INS provides information on alien status to SSA under a longstanding agreement to assist SSA in processing benefit applications under their legislation.

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## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.3**

### **BORDER ENFORCEMENT**

*Secure the ports-of-entry, land border and coast of the United States against unlawful entry.*

Sovereignty presumes the right of all nation-states to defend their borders and regulate the people and commerce that cross them. Increasing sophistication of alien smuggling and the threat of international terrorism require a comprehensive, coordinated approach that begins beyond U.S. borders and follows through to the interior of the United States. It also requires the flexibility to tailor an enforcement response to the unique situations of each border area. To be truly effective, aggressive border enforcement calls for a careful balance between control and compassion and an ongoing commitment to personal and community safety.

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## Strategies to Achieve the Objective

*Prevent and deter illegal entry by phased implementation of a comprehensive border enforcement strategy that concentrates resources to control corridors of illegal entry.*

This strategy extends the multiyear effort initiated in 1994 to strengthen enforcement of the nation's immigration laws and to disrupt the traditional illegal immigration corridors along the nation's southwest border. Under the strategy, new personnel, backed with equipment and infrastructure improvements, are deployed in targeted areas, starting with the most vulnerable areas. INS will continue to tailor enforcement approaches to the unique situations of each border area, including the northern border.

*Pursue border safety initiatives that create a safe border environment.*

Seeking to avoid detection, smugglers often lead migrants to dangerous terrain, where they may become lost or are abandoned. In cooperation with the Government of Mexico and state and local officials in border communities, INS will continue border safety initiatives aimed at educating migrants about the dangers associated with illegal crossings and assisting those who do not heed these warnings.

*Strengthen the capabilities of host and transit countries to combat illegal migration and prevent and deter illegal immigration at the source.*

In keeping with the international crime control strategy of the U.S. Government announced in May 1998, INS will build its first line of defense beyond U.S. borders. It will work with other governments to prevent illegal entry by identifying and intercepting mala fide travelers and migrants before they enter the United States. This includes assisting with offshore prosecutions and providing assistance to foreign governments in prosecuting cases within their own judicial systems.

*Enhance and maintain an effective intelligence capability through coordination with other agencies and integration of INS worldwide intelligence resources.*

Recognizing that the first line of defense is beyond U.S. borders, intelligence on activities planned abroad before they occur is critical to accomplishment of this objective. INS can build upon the intelligence efforts of other U.S. Government agencies as well as international agencies and organizations in order to obtain intelligence information. Intelligence will allow INS to make more informed decisions on where and when to concentrate resources. To this end, INS will pursue partnerships with these agencies and organizations.

## Key Crosscutting Programs

*Operational Alliances.* In accomplishing its border management mission, the INS has relationships with other federal, state, local and international law enforcement agencies where operational initiatives are crosscutting among various entities. Such initiatives include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DEA, particularly with respect to a delegation of legal authority to enforce drug laws under Title 21. A similar MOU is in place with the United States Customs Service (USCS) where cross-designated authority is provided to both INS and Customs officers to enforce their respective laws.

The INS also is involved with a number of federal, state and local joint-agency task forces with missions such as antiterrorism, drug interdiction, alien smuggling, fraud, and other illegal activities. On the international front, the INS coordinates its border enforcement efforts with its land neighbors to both the north and south through such special programs as Operation Alliance with Mexico and Project Northstar with Canada.

*Information Sharing.* INS agents in offices worldwide work closely with the Department of State, the USCS, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the DEA, and the FBI, as well as with foreign governments, in order to exchange information with their foreign immigration counterparts, and to better identify and disrupt organized alien smuggling activities.

*Maritime Smuggling.* INS personnel support the maritime interdiction activities of the USCG by providing investigatory assistance and conducting asylum interviews. Maritime interdictions reduce the chances that illegal immigrants will successfully enter the United States. Moreover, interdiction and a quick repatriation by the USCG saves in detention and processing costs and helps to deter future attempts.

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## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.4

### BORDER FACILITATION

*Facilitate lawful travel and commerce across the borders of the United States.*

In an era of growing interdependence of economies and ideas, border integrity involves a proper balance between controlling movement and facilitating exchange. Because the vast majority of individuals who enter the country do so legally, it is incumbent upon INS continuously to seek improvements in its facilitation function. In addition, our expanding global trade obligations require innovative ways to facilitate the movement of international personnel across the nation's borders without compromising border security.

#### **Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

■ *Promote the expeditious movement of travelers by conducting critical enforcement functions prior to the primary inspection process.*

INS will expand the use of prescreening approaches for passenger and vehicle traffic at both land and airport venues through the early review of passenger information, using techniques such as pre-enrollment programs or pre-arrival information review. This is critical to the improvement of traveler service at land borders and international airports and the enhancement of our ability to identify and prevent criminal and other illegal aliens from entering the United States.

■ *Maximize the use of techniques and technologies that promote and expedite lawful entry and exit, including cooperative strategies with local authorities, the travel industry and foreign governments.*

INS will continue to develop and test automation and other technologies that facilitate lawful traffic and commerce as well as enhance our ability to identify and prevent criminal and other inadmissible aliens from entering the United States.

■ *Continue to develop, improve and integrate alternative inspection processes.*

INS has successfully implemented alternatives to traditional inspection processes and will continue to improve these processes and integrate them at ports-of-entry (POEs). These automated processes will contribute to increased efficiency and decreased wait times at the borders and ports-of-entry.

■ *Work cooperatively with other federal agencies at POEs to create a secure and seamless federal inspection process.*

INS shares responsibility for inspecting foreign travelers at the borders with other federal agencies including the Department of State, the USCS, and the Department of Agriculture. INS will continue to develop partnerships with these agencies to improve

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traveler service and enhance enforcement. This will include data sharing approaches, such as the DataShare Initiative with the Department of State which improves the identification of fraudulent visas and enhances the visa issuance process.

*Establish traveler service standards and ensure mechanisms are in place to meet these standards.*

First-class customer service requires that travelers are processed within acceptable time frames and in a courteous and professional manner. To this end, INS will develop standards for timely service and treatment of travelers at the borders and ports-of-entry, as well as mechanisms to ensure that those standards are met. INS will work with its partners in the travel industry to identify strategies to ensure that appropriate resources are available to support their common interest in meeting these standards.

### **Key Crosscutting Programs**

*Data Sharing.* At land POEs, INS collects data on processing times and shares the information with the USCS. At air POEs, USCS and INS receive passenger data from the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), which allows the agencies to perform enforcement checks and identify high-risk passengers before they arrive in the United States.

*Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI).* INS coordinates with the USCS and the General Services Administration on port modifications and construction necessary for the SENTRI system. INS also coordinates with the Government of Mexico on construction of access roads for SENTRI. INS works with local airport authorities to open enrollment centers and kiosks for the INS Passenger Accelerated Service System (INSPASS).

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.5**

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### **INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT**

*Preserve the integrity of the legal immigration system and promote public safety and national security by deterring illegal immigration, combating immigration-related crimes and removing individuals, especially criminals, who are unlawfully present in the United States.*

Interior enforcement complements the global and border components of the INS enforcement strategy. INS' interior enforcement strategy concentrates resources on investigations of cases having the broadest impact on the criminal networks and the infrastructure supporting alien smuggling, fraud and illegal employment. This strategy also emphasizes internal coordination among the various INS enforcement functions and forging closer ties with other federal agencies and state and local law enforcement.

### **Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

*Identify and expeditiously remove criminal aliens and develop approaches to minimize recidivism.*

Illegal immigrants who commit a crime during their stay inside the country pose the most significant risk to U.S. communities. By identifying and removing these aliens, INS can significantly lower the number of incarcerated criminal aliens and their associated costs to local communities. INS will continue to identify and remove criminal aliens who are in the criminal justice system and will concentrate resources on high-volume areas in order to achieve the greatest impact. INS will also continue to use the Institutional Removal Program (IRP) which identifies and processes deportable

inmates prior to their release from federal, state, and local institutions. Criminal aliens who are removed from the United States are more likely both to return to the United States and to commit more crimes. In recent years, prosecutions of re-entry after deportation cases have increased. INS will work with the U.S. Attorneys to prosecute these cases and will expand use of the IDENT fingerprint system and the INS Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) to identify repeat migrants and repeat offenders.

■ *Disrupt and dismantle alien smuggling and trafficking organizations.*

The INS will concentrate on disrupting and dismantling the criminal infrastructure that encourages and benefits from illegal migration in order to achieve a greater long-term impact on the consequences and effects of illegal migration. INS will focus on smugglers, counterfeit document producers, transporters, and employers who exploit and benefit from illegal migration. INS will also introduce innovative tactics such as wiretaps, made possible by new law enforcement authority.

■ *Support global and border enforcement efforts to intercept illegal immigration-related activities before they occur.*

In keeping with the international crime control strategy of the U.S. Government announced in May 1998, INS will coordinate its enforcement activities, beginning overseas in source and transit countries and continuing inside the United States, to create a seamless web of immigration law enforcement. This includes such initiatives as building partnerships with other U.S. Government agencies as well as international agencies and organizations to coordinate intelligence information and investigations; assisting with offshore prosecutions; and working with other governments to reduce recidivism by monitoring and controlling foreign travel of deported aliens.

■ *Respond to community reports and complaints about the negative consequences of illegal immigration and build partnerships to help address these concerns.*

INS will continue to respond to stakeholder concerns in the communities it serves. This includes building partnerships with other federal, state, and local law enforcement organizations to prevent crimes involving illegal aliens. In addition, INS will continue to maintain a law enforcement presence in every state, utilize Quick Response Teams (QRT) to respond to the impact of criminal alien and smuggling activity on local law enforcement, and contribute to joint investigations and task force projects with other agencies. INS will also use input from the offices of the U.S. Attorneys, local government and law enforcement officials, community leaders, and advocacy groups to develop local threat assessments and action plans to address local problems and their impact on the community. Finally, INS will maintain a continuous dialogue with communities to evaluate the effects of its enforcement actions.

■ *Minimize immigration benefit fraud and other document abuse.*

In order to maintain the integrity of the legal immigration system, INS will employ an aggressive investigation and prosecution strategy against benefit fraud and document abuse. Priority will be given to investigating and prosecuting complex fraud schemes and other cases having the broadest impact on criminal networks and the infrastructure supporting benefit fraud and document abuse. In addition, INS will take advantage of new technology and methodologies, such as data mining and biometric identification, to identify criminal fraud schemes.

■ *Block and remove employers' access to undocumented workers and help reduce worker exploitation.*

INS will pursue a comprehensive approach to deterring unauthorized employment that will include building relationships with employers, openly conducting audits

and surveys, inviting employer cooperation and continuing to work with employers after unauthorized workers are removed to ensure continued compliance with immigration laws. Based on institutional experience and current data, INS will also identify and target notorious and egregious violators. In addition, INS will concentrate on removing aliens with criminal convictions, many of whom hold jobs that could be held by citizens or legal residents.

### **Key Crosscutting Programs**

*Removals.* To facilitate removals and repatriations, INS works in conjunction with BOP, USMS, state and local law enforcement, and foreign governments. INS also works to develop additional agreements with foreign governments to facilitate repatriation.

*Investigations.* INS conducts international investigations to prevent, identify, disrupt, and dismantle criminal organizations that facilitate illegal migration. INS' anti-smuggling strategies are coordinated with the FBI. In addition, INS works with the U.S. Attorneys to prepare cases and receives information on work-site enforcement activities from the Department of Labor.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.6**

### **IMMIGRATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Ensure the effective and efficient operational capability of the INS workforce.*

The INS experienced unprecedented growth and change during fiscal years 1994-2000. These changes include major reforms of the immigration laws, dramatic increases in workload, a doubling of the agency's budget, and a 50 percent increase in the size of the INS workforce. As a result, INS is facing unique and pressing infrastructure needs. For example, the growth in the size of the workforce and the budget has been targeted at very specific areas, and over time these changes have resulted in backlogs, shortfalls, imbalances and inconsistencies in the infrastructure that supports the INS workforce. In addition, these changes have created a need to redefine the corporate culture to ensure that all employees share a common vision of the INS mission, values and goals. This Immigration Infrastructure Strategic Objective provides a focal point during this strategic planning period to address these critical needs.

### **Strategies to Achieve the Objective**

#### **■ *Develop and maintain a high-quality workforce.***

The rapid growth of the INS workforce and the competitive employment market pose a challenge for INS in attracting and retaining capable employees and in providing the initial and ongoing training that is essential for employees to meet their responsibilities. INS will continue to pursue innovative approaches to streamline the hiring pipeline and to attract and retain a highly qualified workforce. In addition, INS will increase its training capacity both through conventional training facilities and through the use of alternative delivery methods.

#### **■ *Balance the workforce for effective utilization of mission-essential operational personnel.***

The growth of INS has largely emphasized the front-line mission workforce with the result that the mix of mission and support personnel no longer represents an efficient or effective balance. Mission operations are hampered because of inadequate support staff. This includes administrative, technical, legal, compliance and performance review support as well as a strong supervisory structure needed to

oversee INS operations. To improve the effectiveness of the workforce, INS will provide sufficient administrative staff and technical support so that mission-essential operational personnel may perform their mission-related duties instead of being diverted to handle administrative tasks or waiting for them to be done. In addition, INS will provide training and other management support to supervisory personnel to ensure the agency has a highly qualified, cohesive and accountable leadership team.

■ *Provide adequate physical and technological environment, support and equipment.*

Rapid growth has also created imbalances in the physical and technological environment. INS has significant backlogs in facilities, equipment, and information technology architecture needed to safely and effectively to support the workforce and people INS serves. In the area of facilities and equipment, overcrowding and inadequacies pose a problem both for mission accomplishment and for retention of qualified employees. With respect to information technology (IT), system development and operation have not kept pace with needs. This includes not only mission-based systems but also other management information systems, such as a sound financial management system. To address these imbalances, INS will acquire, modify and maintain facilities that support a safe, quality workplace and a productive workforce and will provide vehicles and other equipment that are acquired, maintained, repaired and replaced in a safe and cost-effective manner. INS will also continue to develop an adequate, cost effective and architected IT environment comprised of standards, equipment, telecommunications links, and security to ensure reliable and secure access to INS' electronic information.

■ *Establish and reinforce INS core values.*

To understand how their role, performance and conduct contribute to the INS mission, employees must understand the INS objectives, strategies, policies, procedures and practices that bear on their work and, more importantly, share a common vision of the underlying corporate values. To that end, the INS will prepare and widely disseminate a statement of its professional and ethical values. Through a variety of communication vehicles, including a central electronic repository available to all employees, it will improve information at all levels of the organization. It will improve its effectiveness through internal and external performance and compliance oversight, and ensure individual accountability at all levels.

**Key Crosscutting Programs**

None.

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## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.7

### ADJUDICATION

*Adjudicate all immigration cases in a timely manner while ensuring due process and fair treatment for all parties.*

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) provides for the review and adjudication of immigration cases. EOIR's mission is to provide a uniform and timely interpretation and application of immigration law. Although EOIR is an independent agency, its workload is largely determined by the activities and initiatives undertaken by the INS. Similarly, EOIR's ability to process cases in a timely fashion directly affects INS goals to remove criminal or inadmissible aliens expeditiously and to efficiently use limited detention space.

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## Strategy to Achieve the Objective

■ *Adjudicate priority cases within specified time frames.*

EOIR has identified three adjudication priorities and set specific processing time frames for each. The first priority is the adjudication of alien inmates incarcerated in federal, state and local institutions as a result of convictions for criminal offenses. The aim is to adjudicate these cases prior to the inmate's release so that those found by EOIR to be removable may be removed from the United States by the INS. The second priority is the adjudication of expedited asylum cases within 180 days. The third priority is the adjudication of cases involving detained aliens within 30 days. EOIR continues to look for ways to streamline the adjudications process and make more effective use of its resources.

## Key Crosscutting Programs

None.

## MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Despite significant progress, the Department continues to face major challenges in the management of its immigration programs. Many of the objectives and strategies described above are aimed at meeting these challenges by focusing on a strong customer-orientation, the provision of reliable and timely data, reengineered business processes, and infrastructure improvements.

INS is heavily dependent on information technology and significant resources have been devoted to the development and deployment of new systems. INS has had difficulty, however, in managing its automation programs effectively. To help remedy this situation, INS has established an Information Technology Investment Review Board to oversee the selection, control and evaluation of information technology investments and instituted related improvements. Nevertheless, information technology management within INS remains a management challenge carefully monitored by the Department.

Improving INS financial management systems is another significant challenge. Despite progress in this area, INS continues to experience problems in meeting federal accounting standards. To correct these problems, INS is in the process of implementing new accounting systems and procedures. This issue, too, is being carefully monitored by the Department.

Another management challenge is in the area of identifying and removing persons who are in the United States illegally, including the monitoring of alien overstays. INS is adopting new policies and procedures to improve the effectiveness of the Institutional Removal Program, a program designed to identify and remove criminal aliens by means of administrative or hearing processes before their release from custody. In addition, INS has developed a new system to aid in collecting arrival and departure information necessary for tracking possible overstays. When fully deployed, this system will provide information on individuals who arrive and depart through air ports-of-entry. Additional improvements in coordinating with the State Department's visa issuance process are still needed to fully address the alien overstay problem.