

## **FY 2010 Conference Agreement**

### **TITLE IV--RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND SERVICES**

#### **UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

The conference agreement provides \$224,000,000 in discretionary appropriations for United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) instead of \$298,000,000 as proposed by the House and \$135,700,000 as proposed by the Senate.

#### **USER FEE FUNDED PROGRAMS**

The current estimate for fiscal year 2010 of USCIS fee collections, which constitute a majority of the agency's resources, is \$2,503,232,000. These fee revenues support adjudication of applications for immigration benefits and fraud prevention activities and are derived from fees collected from persons applying for immigration benefits. The conferees understand that fee receipts have decreased significantly in fiscal year 2009 largely due to prevailing economic conditions, and are also likely to be below projections for fiscal year 2010. Since it is unclear how the expenditure estimates will change to align USCIS costs with anticipated revenues, the conferees cannot accurately modify the budget presentation of fee-funded expenditures. Instead, the conferees direct USCIS to submit, within 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, an operating plan for fiscal year 2010 accompanied by a reprogramming notification, if necessary, that details how and at what levels USCIS will fund its operations in fiscal year 2010 based on revised fee collection estimates.

Within the total fees collected, the conferees direct USCIS to provide no less than \$51,755,000 to support National Customer Service Center operations and to dedicate the entirety of premium processing revenue to business system and information technology transformation. USCIS is also directed to provide no less than \$29,000,000 to convert immigration records to digital format, as requested for fiscal year 2010. No more than \$10,000 of the fees collected shall be used for official reception and representation expenses.

#### **BASIC PILOT PROGRAM (E-VERIFY PROGRAM)**

The conference agreement provides \$137,000,000 for the basic pilot program (E-Verify Program) instead of \$162,000,000 as proposed by the House and \$118,500,000 as proposed by the Senate. Of this amount, \$30,000,000 is available until September 30, 2011, for continued improvement of the E-Verify system, including an identity assurance tool, additional capacity to investigate fraudulent use of the system, and development of a 'self-check' tool to allow authorized workers to validate the accuracy of their records on

file with federal government agencies. The conferees make all appropriations for compliance investments available for fiscal year 2010 only to reflect the emphasis the conferees expect USCIS to place on E-Verify improvements that strengthen compliance with system operating requirements.