



## **Vermont Service Center Update - October 2013**

### **Updates on new and ongoing initiatives**

The VSC is experiencing rapid growth as we hire additional employees. This growth required us to implement a 2<sup>nd</sup> shift, which began on February 25, 2013. Management worked closely with our local union to ensure that this shift was fully supported and mirrored the flexibility granted to 1<sup>st</sup> shift employees. We anticipate that the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift will last through March 2014, at which time the Essex employees will move into a new facility adjacent to the current Essex facility.

As of October 2013, the VSC has 956 federal employees, 531 (56%) at the St. Albans site and 425 (44%) at the Essex site. This includes 608 ISO1s, ISO2s and ISO3s, who make up 64% of the workforce. The VSC has a thriving telework program, with 271 (28%) employees currently in telework status. There are 437 contract employees supporting the VSC, with 365 (84%) at the St. Albans site and 72 (16%) at the Essex site. A total of 82 employees are working the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift.

Below is a brief summary of the new and ongoing initiatives for individual divisions.

### **Business Division**

- USCIS reached the statutory H-1B cap of 65,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2014 within the first week of the filing period
- USCIS received approximately 124,000 H-1B petitions during the filing period. In addition to the 65,000 cap-subject petitions, USCIS received another 20,000 petitions filed on behalf of persons exempt from the cap under the advanced degree exemption

### **Humanitarian Division**

#### T/U/VAWA Section

- Trained additional Immigration Services Officers in the I-360 self-petition and Form I-918 to address workload
- On August 19, 2013, the U visa cap of 10,000 was met, for the fourth consecutive year
- Participated in outreach activities in conjunction with law enforcement partners, including WebEx trainings, in-person engagements, and quarterly stakeholder teleconferences

#### Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Section

- Continued adjudicating the remaining re-registration applications for the 2013 Central American TPS re-registration period. Nearly 90% of the Central American I-765 re-registration applications were adjudicated in sixty (60) days or less. In all, 192,438 applications were adjudicated in less than 60 days and 20,361 were adjudicated between 60 and 90 days.
- Continued adjudicating re-registration and re-designation Initial TPS applications for Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan
- Continued adjudicating Liberian Deferred Enforced Departure



## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

- Modified Casepro for the ingestion of Syrian re-registration casework and embarked on the adjudication of casework for the simultaneous new designation period and re-registration period for 2013 Syrian TPS

### **Family Division**

- Implemented a process to significantly reduce the number of I-751 refunds
- Hosted a training with the Department of State (DOS) Consular Affairs Division to ensure high quality and responsive Consular Return decisions. This ongoing engagement has allowed USCIS to partner with DOS and provide comprehensive training to Consular Officers and reduce the number of returned petitions to USCIS
- Eliminated the I-751 backlog and reduced cycle time to 5 months with ongoing analysis of Request for Evidence on I-751 petitions
- Continued participation in Humanitarian Reinstatement workshops. Developed customer response templates to ensure consistency and uniformity, as well as a case tracking mechanism for customer inquiries

### **Customer Service Division**

- Successfully reduced paper correspondence backlog
- Completed over 163,000 SRMTs in FY13 with a continued focus on maintenance of processing times
- Maintained processing times for all Form I-765s, including student classifications during the spring surge
- Coordinated VSC hosted Naturalization Ceremony in April at the Essex High School
- Published Customer Service User Guide for use across all VSC Divisions

### **Operational Strategy Division (Data Reporting Group, Quality Unit, Transformation & Center Training Unit)**

- Completed 9697 ELIS cases at the VSC; USCIS as a whole completed 17618 cases
- Increasingly used Lean Six Sigma tools to improve our processes and products
- Since January of 2013 the CTU and Employee Services have onboarded 185 external new hires through a comprehensive one week New Employee Training Program (NEOP)