



Why This Matters

In the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) oversees lawful immigration to the United States. U.S. immigration law grants permanent resident status to aliens who legally marry a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident and to certain aliens who are family members of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. Immigration benefits may lead to the right to apply for and receive Social Security and Medicare benefits, food stamps, and the opportunity to sponsor alien spouses and relatives for permanent residency.

DHS Response

USCIS concurred and has (1) reviewed its existing procedural guidance that governs the creation and maintenance of TECS records; (2) determined that, to focus greater attention on TECS policies and procedures, it will remove TECS guidance from the current Fraud Detection Standard Operating Procedure and issue separate guidance on TECS; and (3) drafted the enhanced TECS guidance. USCIS planned to issue the enhanced TECS guidance within 30 days.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202)254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Tracking and Monitoring of Potentially Fraudulent Petitions and Applications

What We Determined

We performed this audit to determine whether USCIS recorded information about adjudicated family-based petitions and applications suspected of being fraudulent according to agency policy requirements and in a manner that deterred immigration fraud.

USCIS did not record all cases of identified fraud in the required database, TECS. For example, nationwide from fiscal year (FY) 2008 through FY 2011, USCIS denied or revoked 2,557 family-based I-130 petitions for fraud. Of these petitions, 622 were associated with a Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate (FDNS) finding of fraud, but 302 (49 percent) did not have corresponding records in TECS. During the same period, at the four offices we evaluated, 6 (21 percent) of 29 family-based I-130 petitions associated with an FDNS finding of fraud did not have corresponding records in TECS.

For the same period, nationwide, USCIS denied or rescinded 2,961 family-based I-485 applications for fraud. Of these applications, 522 were associated with an FDNS finding of fraud, but 247 (47 percent) did not have corresponding records in TECS. A similar review of data from the same period at the four offices that we evaluated showed that 3 (11 percent) of 28 family-based I-485 applications denied or rescinded for fraud had no records in TECS.

What We Recommend

We recommended that USCIS clarify and enforce policies and procedures to ensure that TECS records are created and updated for all identified cases of immigration benefit fraud.