

TSA's Adjudication Resources are Inadequate to Meet TSA PreCheck Enrollment Goals





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

December 5, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable David P. Pekoske
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration

FROM: John V. Kelly 
Acting Inspector General

SUBJECT: *TSA's Adjudication Resources are Inadequate to Meet
TSA PreCheck Enrollment Goals*

For your action is our final report, *TSA's Adjudication Resources are Inadequate to Meet TSA PreCheck Enrollment Goals*. We incorporated the formal comments provided by your office.

The report contains two recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication process. Your office concurred with the two recommendations. Based on information provided in your response to the draft report, we consider recommendations 1 and 2 resolved and open. Once your office has fully implemented the recommendations, please submit a formal closeout letter to us within 30 days so that we may close the recommendations. The memorandum should be accompanied by evidence of completion of agreed-upon corrective actions.

Please send your response or closure request to
OIGInspectionsFollowup@oig.dhs.gov.

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we will provide copies of our report to congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post the report on our website for public dissemination.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Jennifer L. Costello, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and Evaluations or Angela Garvin, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and Evaluations, at (202) 254-4100.



DHS OIG HIGHLIGHTS

TSA's Adjudication Resources are Inadequate to Meet TSA PreCheck Enrollment Goals

December 5, 2017

Why We Did This Inspection

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) intended to expand TSA PreCheck to 25 million air travelers at a rate of more than 5 million enrollments per year. We evaluated whether the current TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication process will allow TSA to meet its enrollment goals.

What We Recommend

We are making two recommendations to improve the efficiency of TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication.

For Further Information:

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

What We Found

In 2015 and 2016, TSA significantly ramped up its TSA PreCheck marketing campaign. In addition, TSA and its enrollment services contractor expanded the number of enrollment centers, increased staff, and extended hours of operation. However, TSA did not allocate additional resources or staff to the Adjudication Center tasked with manually processing about 26 percent of TSA PreCheck Application Program applications. To make matters worse, in June 2016, TSA PreCheck applications surged, leaving the Adjudication Center overwhelmed with applications to manually process. As the application queue grew, TSA brought on detailees from other Federal agencies to assist with adjudications part time, but they did not have a significant impact. Further, the Adjudication Center relies on a manual caseload assignment and reporting process, which is inefficient for the volume of TSA PreCheck applications needing adjudication. In summary, TSA developed a strategy to meet its ambitious goal of expanding TSA PreCheck to 25 million air travelers by the end of 2019 that focused on the front-end application phase of enrollment, but did not adequately plan for the anticipated influx of applications to the Adjudication Center at the back end.

TSA Response

TSA concurred with all of our recommendations and described corrective actions it has taken and plans to take. We consider recommendations 1 and 2 resolved and open.



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Background

The *Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001*¹ authorizes the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to establish requirements to implement trusted passenger programs and use available technologies to expedite security screening of participating passengers. According to TSA, TSA Pre✓® (TSA PreCheck)² allows airport security to focus on high-risk and unknown populations at security checkpoints.

In October 2011, TSA piloted TSA PreCheck to expedite airport security screening for passengers it considered low risk, such as frequent flyers and members of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Trusted Traveler Programs. After the pilot, Congress directed TSA to (1) certify by the end of December 2013 that 25 percent of air passengers were eligible for expedited screening without lowering security standards and (2) outline a strategy to increase the number of eligible air passengers to 50 percent by the end of December 2014.

TSA PreCheck Application Program Enrollment and Adjudication

In December 2013, TSA established the TSA PreCheck Application Program. To apply, an applicant must be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. Applicants may pre-enroll online or visit one of 392 enrollment centers nationwide to provide biographic information and immigration status, as well as answer questions regarding criminal history. All applicants must visit an enrollment center to provide identity documents and fingerprints.

TSA has contracted out TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment services to a contractor that currently operates the nationwide network of enrollment centers. The contractor is responsible for the associated enrollment system, equipment, personnel and associated training, the website, and the customer service call center. The contractor transmits applicant enrollment information to TSA's Screening Gateway system to begin the security threat assessment.

The security threat assessment for the TSA PreCheck Application Program comprises automated intelligence-related checks, as well as checks of citizenship status and criminal history records. According to TSA data, at the time of this report, the system for the TSA PreCheck Application Program automatically approved about 74 percent of applicants because TSA did not receive disqualifying information. TSA received potentially disqualifying information for the remaining 26 percent of applications. Applications with potentially disqualifying information move to a "Ready to Adjudicate" queue for manual review and adjudication at the Adjudication Center.

¹ Pub. L. 107-71, § 109(a)(3)

² TSA uses TSA Pre✓® when referring to this program, which we refer to as TSA PreCheck in this report.



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Adjudicators review all “Ready to Adjudicate” applications, comparing the applicant’s information to submitted identity documents and returned criminal and immigration records. Additional research may be required to determine whether the results returned are disqualifying according to TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment criteria. TSA’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis operates the Adjudication Center which, as of January 2017, had 29 positions dedicated to TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication.

There are three levels of adjudicators — initial, mid-level, and senior. Mid-level or senior adjudicators review all initial adjudicators’ cases. Adjudicators must pass an assessment to gain self-approval rights — the authority to approve their own cases without second-level review when results contain no disqualifying information. Designated branch managers or senior adjudicators adjudicate all applications with potential matches to intelligence-related database records. Senior adjudicators approve Preliminary Determination of Ineligibility letters issued to applicants.

As of January 29, 2017, about 12.8 million travelers were eligible for TSA PreCheck, of which about 4.3 million enrolled through the TSA PreCheck Application Program. TSA has determined 15 other populations to be low risk and therefore eligible for TSA PreCheck, such as the aforementioned members of the Trusted Traveler Programs.

Results of Inspection

In a November 2015 memo to the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (OIG), the then-TSA Administrator detailed TSA’s plan to expand TSA PreCheck to 25 million air travelers at a rate of more than 5 million enrollments per year. In 2015 and 2016, TSA significantly ramped up its TSA PreCheck marketing campaign. In addition, TSA and its enrollment services contractor expanded the number of enrollment centers, increased staff, and extended hours of operation. However, TSA did not allocate additional resources or staff to the TSA Adjudication Center, which had multiple vacancies and was tasked with manually processing about 26 percent of TSA PreCheck Application Program applications. To make matters worse, in June 2016, TSA PreCheck applications surged, leaving the Adjudication Center overwhelmed with applications to process. As the application queue grew, TSA brought on detailees from other Federal agencies to assist with adjudications part time, but they did not have a significant impact. Further, the Adjudication Center relies on a manual caseload assignment and reporting process, which is inefficient for the volume of TSA PreCheck applications needing adjudication. In summary, TSA developed a strategy to meet its ambitious goal of expanding TSA PreCheck to 25 million air travelers by the end of 2019 that focused on the



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front-end application phase of enrollment, but did not adequately plan for the anticipated influx of applications to the Adjudication Center at the back end.

TSA Focused on Increasing the Number of TSA PreCheck Application Program Applications

TSA intended to expand TSA PreCheck to 25 million air travelers by the end of 2019. Plans to reach this goal included “changes to [TSA’s] existing enrollment process, increasing marketing and communications efforts, and expanding the number of contractors providing enrollment services....” For example, multiple airlines and hotel loyalty programs offer their members the opportunity to redeem their miles or points to pay the TSA PreCheck application fee.

TSA’s fiscal year 2015 outreach efforts primarily targeted business travelers, and its marketing campaign ran in seven markets (U.S. geographic areas) chosen based on top travel by volume, population, and geographic distribution across the country. In FY 2016, TSA expanded its focus to include leisure travelers, and its marketing campaign ran in 19 markets with the longest security wait times as determined by TSA. The marketing campaigns ran from May 2015 through November 2015 and from May 2016 through November 2016, respectively, to complement the timing of partner marketing efforts, travel purchasing, and actual travel.

In FY 2014, TSA allocated \$273,000 to its marketing contractor for TSA PreCheck. The allocation increased to \$1.35 million in FY 2015 and to \$2.1 million in FY 2016. In FY 2016, TSA expanded its paid digital media campaign with Google and added social media as part of its TSA PreCheck marketing strategy. TSA also planned to expand the number of enrollment service providers to four by the second quarter of FY 2017, but TSA withdrew its Request for Proposals in October 2016.

Beginning in mid-May 2016, within weeks, TSA experienced a near 100 percent increase in enrollments. According to TSA, the summer 2016 increases in enrollment were related to the summer surge of travelers and security wait time increases due to adjustments in airport security screening. To handle the influx of travelers wanting to enroll in the TSA PreCheck Application Program, TSA expanded enrollment services. In high-demand areas, TSA and its enrollment services contractor quickly added capacity by opening about 15 new enrollment centers, increasing enrollment center hours of operation, and adding workstations and staff to existing enrollment centers. In June 2016, TSA also launched a summer enrollment tour, using a mobile enrollment capability to offer temporary enrollment events in TSA’s top markets. To support the tour, 39 TSA government detailees served as TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment greeters.



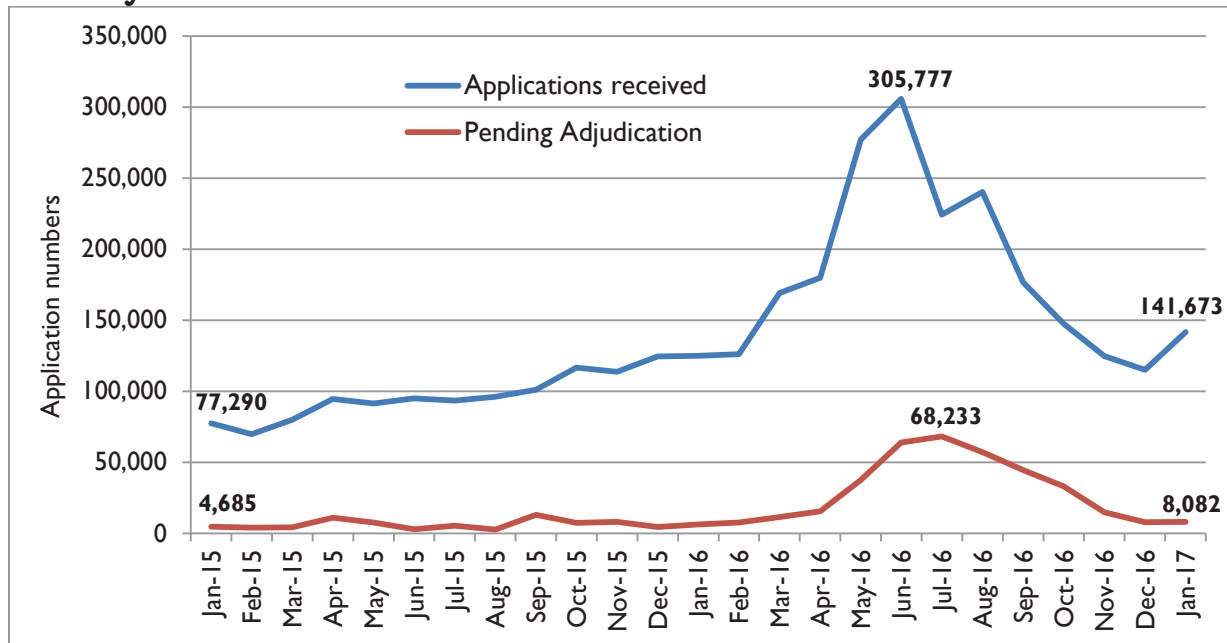
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TSA Did Not Adequately Plan for Handling the Influx of TSA PreCheck Application Program Applications at the Adjudication Center

In the summer of 2016, TSA PreCheck Application Program applications increased significantly, but the Adjudication Center was not equipped to handle the influx. As shown in figure 1, the number of applications pending adjudication more than quadrupled from April 2016 to July 2016.

Figure 1: TSA PreCheck Application Program Volume, January 2015 – January 2017



Source: OIG analysis of TSA data

Although the Adjudication Center had 27 positions dedicated to the TSA PreCheck Application Program, 12 were vacant when TSA's marketing campaign began in May 2016. Despite efforts to fill these vacancies, the Adjudication Center has experienced high attrition. According to Adjudication Center officials, adjudicators left for other Federal Government jobs and because they were dissatisfied with the type of work they were performing. Therefore, the Adjudication Center could not fill vacancies quickly enough, and an attempt to address the application queue with detailees was not wholly successful. Both the queue and the number of workdays it took to begin adjudicating applications grew. TSA must ensure that the Adjudication Center has enough experienced staff to handle application volume because manual review and adjudication are vital to guaranteeing only low-risk travelers are approved for the TSA PreCheck Application Program.

TSA's performance measures for TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudicators split production goals into cases involving checks with the



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National Crime Information Center (NCIC)³ and Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE)⁴ and cases involving checks with the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS).⁵ Adjudication Center officials consider IAFIS checks to be more complex and time consuming than NCIC/SAVE checks, hence the different production goals. We determined that, based on these production goals, if adjudicators received only NCIC/SAVE cases, then a fully staffed Adjudication Center of 27 adjudicators would have been able to keep pace with the number of applications pending adjudication in the summer 2016. But, based on production goals, if they received only IAFIS cases, even if fully staffed, the Adjudication Center would not have been able to keep pace with the number of applications pending adjudication. Because the Adjudication Center cannot predict the mix of cases requiring NCIC, SAVE, and IAFIS checks TSA cannot be certain whether 27 adjudicators would have been sufficient to handle the workload in the summer of 2016.

Assuming 26 percent of TSA PreCheck Application Program applications require manual review and adjudication, if TSA realized its estimated annual growth of 5 million enrollments, the Adjudication Center would receive about 112,500 applications for manual review and adjudication each month. In comparison, in July 2016, the Adjudication Center had about 68,200 applications pending adjudication. TSA's Office of Intelligence and Analysis has proposed adding 21 TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudicator billets, but as of January 2017, only 2 billets have been added for a total of 29. Further, depending on the mix of cases and required checks, based on production goals, TSA cannot be certain that 21 more adjudicators would be enough to keep pace with the estimated number of TSA PreCheck Application Program applications needing manual review and adjudication with this annual growth in enrollments.

Because TSA could not quickly fill the many vacancies at the Adjudication Center, it sought to increase TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication staffing using detailees. First, the TSA PreCheck Application Program borrowed staff from within TSA, including adjudicators from other programs in the Adjudication Center. For example, employees responsible for adjudicating Transportation Worker Identification Credential⁶ applications helped with TSA PreCheck Application Program applications during their overtime hours. Then

³ Adjudicators review NCIC results for open wants and warrants, and other information, based on an applicant's biographic information.

⁴ Adjudicators review SAVE results to verify an applicant's citizenship/immigration eligibility information.

⁵ Adjudicators review Federal Bureau of Investigation rap sheets in their entirety via IAFIS, based on an applicant's biometric information (fingerprints).

⁶ Transportation Worker Identification Credential is a common identification credential for all personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas of Maritime Transportation Security Act-regulated facilities and vessels, and all mariners holding United States Coast Guard-issued credentials.



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on May 28, 2016, TSA requested surge support of 40 adjudicators from DHS for 6 months and shortly thereafter received about 30 detailees from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for part-time adjudication starting in June 2016. Finally, in October 2016, TSA entered an agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs for about 30 detailees to support TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication part time for 1 year with an option for annual renewal.

Overall, the detailees brought on in 2016 had little impact on the queue of applications pending adjudication due to several factors. First, cases assigned to new adjudicators and detailees initially must all be reviewed, so all TSA PreCheck Application Program senior adjudicators shifted their efforts to reviewing detailees' cases. Second, detailees may also perform collateral duties for their home agency, which takes away from time available to adjudicate applications. Even though the Adjudication Center added more than 40 detailees during the summer 2016 surge, the number of "effective" full-time equivalents (FTE) increased only slightly. TSA considers adjudicating applications at least 30 hours a week effective. So, in August 2016, for example, the TSA PreCheck Application Program had 32 detailees, but the number of effective FTEs only increased by 5. Finally, one Adjudication Center official considered only about 7 percent of the detailees to be proficient in application processing.

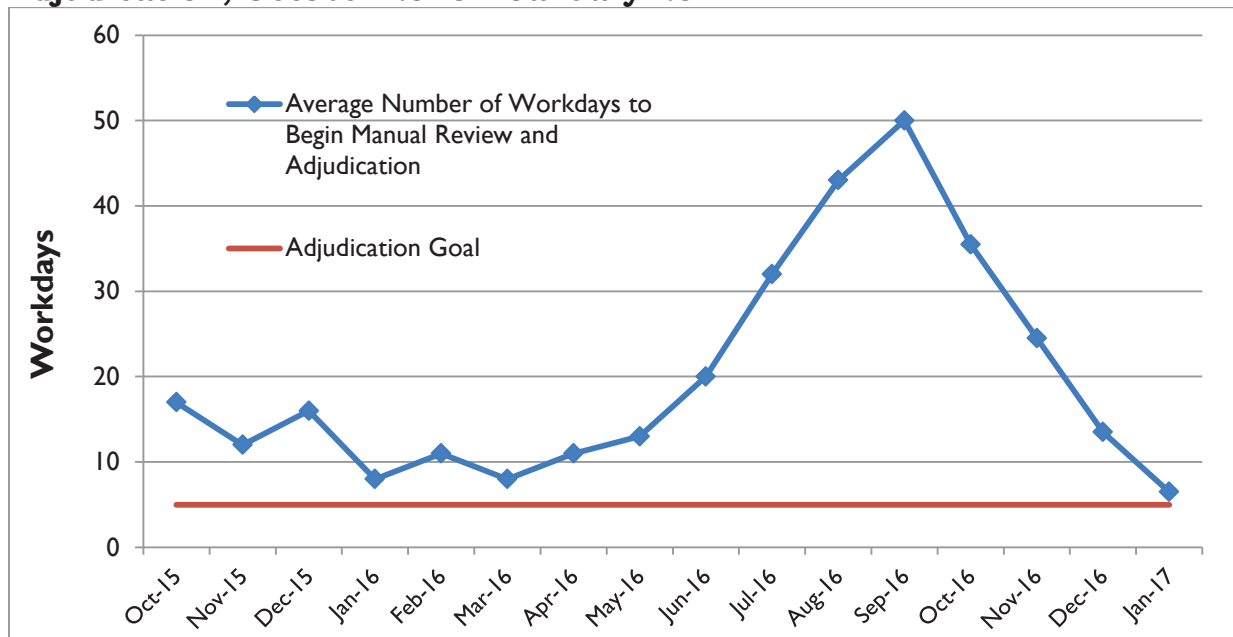
The lack of experienced staff combined with application volume contributed to the Adjudication Center's inability to meet its monthly goal of adjudicating all "Ready-to-Adjudicate" applications within 5 workdays. TSA data shows that the Adjudication Center's average number of workdays to begin adjudication rose significantly following TSA's summer 2016 efforts to increase TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment. As shown in figure 2, even with the detailees, from June to September 2016, TSA PreCheck Application Program applications were pending manual review and adjudication for an average of 20 to 50 workdays.



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Figure 2: Average Number of Workdays to Begin Manual Review and Adjudication, October 2015 – January 2017



Source: OIG analysis of TSA Adjudication Center data

Manual review and adjudication are vital to guaranteeing only low risk travelers are approved for the TSA PreCheck Application Program; therefore, TSA must ensure that the Adjudication Center has sufficient, experienced staff to handle application volume.

Adjudication Center Needs an Automated TSA PreCheck Application Program Caseload Assignment and Reporting Process

The TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication caseload assignment and reporting process is manual, reducing available adjudication time and making accurate reporting of Adjudication Center metrics and performance difficult. Specifically, the Screening Gateway vetting system used by adjudicators, is a stand-alone application that does not allow the Adjudication Center to automatically assign TSA PreCheck Application Program cases to adjudicators. Instead, according to TSA managers at the Adjudication Center, every day, they must manually extract thousands of case numbers from the vetting system and enter them into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, which they email to adjudicators. In turn, adjudicators open the Excel spreadsheets and manually copy each case number back into the Screening Gateway to view the corresponding vetting results and begin adjudicating the application.

Adjudicators are responsible for tracking their daily case production on spreadsheets. Data from the spreadsheets is used to generate the Adjudication Center's activity and performance reports for TSA, Congress, and other entities,



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and help identify adjudicator performance levels. Although these spreadsheets are important to accurately report metrics and performance, the Adjudication Center relies on adjudicators to self-report start and end times for each case, without an automated way to verify the data.

The current process is not suitable for a program receiving and adjudicating thousands of applications a day. As TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment increases, so will the number of applications requiring manual review and adjudication. From January 2015 to April 2017, the Adjudication Center manually adjudicated nearly 1 million applications. Automating the caseload assignment and reporting process through technology solutions would help the Adjudication Center withstand TSA PreCheck Application Program expansion and improve application processing effectiveness and efficiency.

Recommendations

We recommend that the TSA Assistant Administrator for the Office of Intelligence and Analysis:

Recommendation 1: Align Adjudication Center resources with TSA's plans to increase TSA PreCheck enrollments.

Recommendation 2: Automate the TSA PreCheck Application Program caseload assignment and reporting process to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of adjudications.

Management Comments and OIG Analysis

TSA concurred with our recommendations and is taking steps to address them. Appendix A contains a copy of TSA's management comments in their entirety. We also received and incorporated technical comments as appropriate. We consider recommendations 1 and 2 to be resolved and open. A summary of TSA's responses and our analysis follows.

TSA Response to Recommendation 1: TSA concurred with the recommendation. In the past year, TSA has concertedly moved away from a standalone enrollment goal, such as 25 million. It is now focused on increasing TSA PreCheck screening lane utilization, targeting more frequent travelers for marketing and potential enrollment to enhance security effectiveness of airport screening. From 2018 to 2020, TSA projects an average of 2 million new enrollments per year in the TSA PreCheck Application Program.

TSA has established a TSA PreCheck Taskforce to better consolidate and coordinate communications and operational planning activities, including Adjudication Center resource management. TSA has also implemented



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technical solutions, such as enhanced filtering of criminal history responses, to reduce manual adjudication workload to about 21 percent of applications received. In October 2017, TSA approved the addition of 21 fee-funded FTEs for the Adjudication Center to support projected enrollment growth, evolving security requirements, and future surge potential. TSA is confident this will address the projected 35,000 applicants needing manual review and adjudication per month while achieving its goal of responding to applicants within 30 days. TSA's estimated completion date is June 2018.

OIG Analysis: We consider TSA's planned actions responsive to recommendation 1. We consider the recommendation resolved and open. We will close this recommendation when TSA meets its FTE hiring goals and can provide evidence as to how the staff increases, along with Taskforce activities, have enhanced Adjudication Center operations and surge planning.

TSA Response to Recommendation 2: TSA concurred with the recommendation. TSA plans to migrate the TSA PreCheck Application Program to the Technology Infrastructure Modernization (TIM) system, which offers the ability to automate the adjudication caseload assignment and reporting processes, thereby increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of adjudications. The estimated completion date for transition of June 2018 depends on the TIM Acquisition Program's progress, according to existing work plans and timelines and scheduled activities, in completing migration of TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication functions to TIM.

OIG Analysis: We consider TSA's planned actions responsive to recommendation 2. We consider the recommendation resolved and open. We will close this recommendation when TSA provides evidence that it has migrated the TSA PreCheck Application Program to TIM and automated caseload assignment and reporting processes.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

DHS OIG was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (Public Law 107-296) by amendment to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*.

We evaluated whether the TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudication process will allow TSA to meet its enrollment goals.

To achieve our objective, we reviewed and assessed TSA PreCheck Application Program enrollment data and determined whether TSA's adjudication of applications has kept pace with application submissions. We also interviewed officials from TSA's Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Security Threat Assessment Operations Division, and TSA's enrollment services contractor. We



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did not examine the quality of TSA PreCheck Application Program adjudications.

We conducted this review between July 2016 and January 2017 under the authority of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

The Office of Inspections and Evaluations major contributors to this report are Angela Garvin, Chief Inspector; Natalie Fussell Enclade, Policy Advisor; Amy Burns, Supervisory Lead Inspector; Ayana Henry, Senior Inspector; Ian Stumpf, Inspector; Punitha Cloud, Inspector; Kelly Herberger, Communications and Policy Analyst; and Ryan Nelson, Independent Referencer.



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Appendix A
TSA Comments to the Draft Report

NOV 9 2017

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598-6028



**Transportation
Security
Administration**

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Roth
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FROM: David P. Pekoske *David P Pekoske*
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration

SUBJECT: Management's Response to DHS OIG Draft Report:
"TSA's Adjudication Resources Are Inadequate to Meet PreCheck
Enrollment Goals," Project No. 16-078-ISP-TSA

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject draft report. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) appreciates the effort of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in planning and conducting this review and issuing this report.

TSA Pre✓® (referred to as *PreCheck* in the draft report) is a risk-based, intelligence-driven measure and is a critical element in TSA's aviation security system. To this end, TSA relies on all of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Trusted Traveler programs, including the TSA Pre✓® Application Program, for entry into TSA Pre✓®. Additionally, TSA has established additional mechanisms to identify travelers who may be deemed low-risk and who are thus eligible for TSA Pre✓® expedited screening, including individuals belonging to eligible populations, such as United States military personnel. These efforts enhance aviation security by permitting TSA to focus its limited security resources on passengers who are either of unknown risk to TSA or who are determined to be higher risk, while also facilitating and improving the commercial aviation travel experience for the public.

Background

TSA Pre✓® Application Program, Adjudication, and Equivalence with Other Programs

As of mid-October 2017, there are over 12 million individuals who are part of the TSA Pre✓® Application Program and other DHS Trusted Traveler programs, including Global Entry, NEXUS, and SENTRI, administered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Specific to the TSA Pre✓® Application Program, TSA has approved more than 5.5 million travelers. The majority of applicants to the TSA Pre✓® Application Program have no disqualifying information revealed during the security threat assessment (STA) process requiring manual TSA adjudication. Approximately 21.6 percent of applicants require a manual review by TSA's Adjudication Center to determine if the applicant's data contains potentially disqualifying information.



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TSA Pre✓® Application Program Enrollments and Adjudication Backlogs

The DHS-OIG draft report refers to a November 2015 memo from then-TSA Administrator Neffenger to DHS-OIG stating that the TSA Administrator “provide[d] information on the methodology and assumptions used to establish the goal of attaining 25 million individuals participating in a DHS Trusted Traveler Program by the end of calendar year 2019 and therefore eligible to participate in TSA Pre✓®.” In the past year, TSA has concertedly moved away from a standalone enrollment goal, such as the 25 million enrollment number, and is now focused on increasing TSA Pre✓® screening lane utilization, targeting more frequent travelers for marketing and potential enrollment to enhance security effectiveness of airport screening.

The 2015 enrollment goal was tied to the growth of all DHS Trusted Traveler programs, of which the TSA Pre✓® Application Program is a subset. The adjudication staff for the TSA Pre✓® Application Program was resourced in accordance with the programs enrollment growth projections. Importantly, in the past year, TSA has transitioned its activities to focus on integrating enrollment, more targeted marketing, and operational activities to maximize the daily utilization of TSA Pre✓® lanes by trusted travelers, in lieu of focusing on an overall enrollment number. This revised and more strategic approach will allow for more direct impact on TSA’s operational effectiveness.

The OIG report highlights the 2016 surge of Adjudication Center cases. Beginning in the spring of 2016, TSA experienced a surge of air travelers and related security wait time increases resulting in widely publicized delays captured by the media. Passengers sought relief from long screening lines leading to a near 100 percent increase in TSA Pre✓® applicants and increased volume at TSA Pre✓® enrollment centers, surpassing the volume increases that had been projected for 2016. To address this increase, TSA expanded its number of enrollment centers and extended the hours of operation of many of its highest-volume centers. The TSA Adjudication Center also identified further surge response measures, as discussed in the OIG report, including the use of additional government personnel to support the Adjudication Center workload.

TSA Pre✓® adjudication ongoing and future enhancements

Over the past year, TSA has continued its efforts to coordinate and align marketing, enrollment, resources, and operations efforts for TSA Pre✓®. To mitigate future potential applicant surges and provide more effective adjudication operations, TSA developed and implemented technical solutions in late 2016 and early 2017, including enhanced filtering of criminal history responses from the FBI. These efforts aimed to reduce manual adjudication workload for both name-based criminal checks and immigration checks. An automated solution allowed adjudicators to more effectively focus manual reviews on cases with potentially disqualifying information. TSA estimates an approximate six percent decrease in cases requiring manual review from the 2016 rate of 27 percent down to 21 percent and has extended this technology enhancement to other vetted populations. These enhancements further reduce the overall Adjudication Center workload across TSA’s vetted populations, not only for TSA Pre✓® applicants. TSA also authorized additional fee-funded resources and increased its cross-training efforts within the Adjudication Center and overall security threat assessment program operations personnel.

The additional fee-funded resources, automation, and cross-training provide broader flexibility and capabilities to respond to surges and evolving security and vetting requirements. TSA remains committed to identifying and implementing improvements to increase security effectiveness and



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address security and operational changes. TSA describes many of these efforts in the attached response to OIG's recommendations.



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Draft Report: "TSA's Adjudication Resources Are Inadequate to Meet PreCheck Enrollment Goals,"
Project No. 16-078-ISP-TSA

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Align Adjudication Center resources with TSA's plans to increase TSA Pre✓® Application Program enrollments.

Response: Concur. TSA's current goal regarding TSA Pre✓® is to increase utilization of TSA Pre✓® lanes at domestic airports and maximize the volume of enrolled, known travelers receiving TSA Pre✓® expedited screening. Over the past year, TSA has continued to work closely to coordinate and align marketing, enrollment, and TSA operations efforts for TSA Pre✓®. TSA established a TSA Pre✓® Taskforce to better consolidate and coordinate communications and operational planning activities to include the Adjudication Center resource management. In addition, the Adjudication Center worked closely with the program team to project resource needs to address future TSA Pre✓® Application Program growth.

From 2018 to 2020, TSA projects an average of two million new enrollments per year in the TSA Pre✓® Application Program. Most applicants do not require manual adjudication and receive a response from TSA within 2-3 weeks and often within days. Assuming the percentage of TSA Pre✓® Application Program applications requiring manual review and adjudication remains steady at 21 percent, the Adjudication Center would receive approximately 35,000 applications for manual review and adjudication each month. In October 2017, TSA approved the addition of another 21 fee-funded full-time equivalent (FTE) for the Adjudication Center to support projected enrollment growth, evolving security requirements, and future surge potential. This additional staff increase, along with the taskforce activities and continued automation plans, will greatly increase TSA Adjudication Center operations and surge planning. TSA is confident that this increase will address the projected number of applications needing manual review and adjudication within TSA's goal of responding to applicants within 30 days.

TSA has begun the process to hire additional FTE with new employees arriving as early as March 2018. The Estimated Completion Date for this recommendation is June 2018.

Recommendation 2: Automate the TSA Pre✓® Application Program caseload assignment and reporting process to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of adjudications.

Response: Concur. Transition of the TSA Pre✓® Application Program into the Technology Infrastructure Modernization (TIM) system in lieu of the existing Screening Gateway system for case management and adjudication processing will begin in late CY2017. The migration activities are scheduled as part of TIM Acquisition Program activities with oversight by DHS. The TIM system, which currently processes Transportation Worker Identification Credential applications, offers the ability to assign cases in bulk to adjudicators, reducing the need for adjudicators' spreadsheets and manually assigning each case for action. TIM generates reports that detail case production including case status changes or actions taken. For example, the report could provide useful metrics on how many cases were approved or denied by adjudicators as a function of daily output.



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The Estimated Completion Date for transition is June 2018 and dependent on the TIM Acquisition Program progress according to existing work plans and timelines and scheduled activities to complete migration of TSA Pre✓® Application Program adjudication functions to the TIM system.



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Appendix B **Report Distribution**

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