



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Director L. Francis Cissna on New Agency Mission Statement

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“In my short time as director of USCIS, I continue to be impressed by the commitment and dedication that employees throughout the agency have shown toward our common goals. USCIS employees are passionate about upholding the rule of law and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system. I’ve always known this and have seen it confirmed again and again in my meetings with you during visits I have made to field offices and service centers. To reflect these principles, and to guide us in the years ahead, I am pleased to share with you our agency’s new mission statement:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services administers the nation’s lawful immigration system, safeguarding its integrity and promise by efficiently and fairly adjudicating requests for immigration benefits while protecting Americans, securing the homeland, and honoring our values.

I believe this simple, straightforward statement clearly defines the agency’s role in our country’s lawful immigration system and the commitment we have to the American people.

The American people, through Congress, have entrusted USCIS with the stewardship of our legal immigration programs that allow foreign nationals to visit, work, live, and seek refuge in the United States. We are also responsible for ensuring that those who naturalize are dedicated to this country, share our values, assimilate into our communities, and understand their responsibility to help preserve our freedom and liberty.

What we do at USCIS is so important to our nation, so meaningful to the applicants and petitioners, and the nature of the work is often so complicated, that we should never allow our work to be regarded as a mere production line or even described in business or commercial terms. In particular, referring to applicants and petitioners for immigration benefits, and the beneficiaries of such applications and petitions, as “customers” promotes an institutional culture that emphasizes the ultimate satisfaction of applicants and petitioners, rather than the correct adjudication of such applications and petitions according to the law. Use of the term leads to the erroneous belief that applicants and petitioners, rather than the American people, are whom we ultimately serve. All applicants and petitioners should, of course, always be treated with the greatest respect and courtesy, but we can’t forget that we serve the American people.

USCIS employees take pride in helping prospective immigrants who desire to be part of our country, but they are also dedicated to ensuring we have an immigration system of which we can be proud. We answer to the American people who look to us to ensure that people who are eligible for immigration benefits receive them and those who are not eligible – either because they don’t qualify or because they attempt to qualify by fraud – don’t receive them, and that those who would do us harm are not granted immigration benefits. Thus, as we begin our work under the banner of our new mission statement, we will also go forward by ending use of the term “customer” as an agency when referring to applicants or petitioners – a reminder that we are always working for the American people.

It is a pleasure serving with you as we continue to faithfully administer and protect the integrity of our nation’s lawful immigration system.”

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