



Improving Customer Experience with Federal Services

High Impact Service Provider Annual CX Action Plan

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
External Affairs Directorate
Office of Citizenship and Applicant Information Services**

June 2019



HISP Organization Overview

The mission of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), External Affairs Directorate (EXA), Office of Citizenship and Applicant Information Services (CAIS) is to:

- Deliver effective information and services that help our applicant community learn and navigate the immigration journey through a digital and live-help experience, which creates value and efficiency for our applicants and adjudicative process.
- Foster immigrant assimilation and promote education on citizenship rights and responsibilities through federal leadership, grants, tools, and resources.

This mission is achieved through work performed by CAIS's four component areas (listed below).

Office of Citizenship

- Promotes instruction and training on citizenship rights and responsibilities
- Assists applicants with a variety of resources and tools

Digital Services Division

- Manages the USCIS website, which provides information, online self-help tools, digital forms and online account services

Public Services Division

- Responds to questions by phone, email, live chat, and written correspondence through the USCIS Contact Center
- Provides language services to USCIS and other government agencies

Liaison and Coordination Branch

- Builds partnerships between USCIS and the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and other agencies





HISP Annual Maturity Self-Assessment Summary

In 200 words or less total, tell us about your efforts around each core CX function by responding to the following prompts that apply.

Measurement: 2 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

- Monthly telephone survey on the USCIS Contact Center 1-800 line and field offices; 2 weeks after initial contact.
- Continual (real-time) Foresee web survey on most of the website.
- In process – development of an omni-channel automated survey tool that will consolidate CX efforts across most CAIS public-facing channels (phone, web, e-mail, chat, written correspondence) using one seamless platform. Scheduled completion is FY20, Q2.

What are you most proud of?

- The pending shift from an outdated, siloed model of collecting CX data to an omni-channel real-time survey tool across CAIS.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

- Expand CAIS surveys beyond the OMB A11 questions to gather more targeted feedback and make operational improvements.
- Expand survey tool to the agency at large to address the following criteria: *We have a central view of how our entity is doing on CX at Secretary, Regional, Program, Front-Line, or ... appropriate levels.*

What's blocking you from fully implementing changes?

- Attrition and competing priorities.
- There is a need for increased efficiency in the PRA approval process for timely and relevant CX measurement activities.

What else would you like to share?

- N/A

Governance: 3 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

- CX leadership starts at the top and is driven by the Chief of CAIS; the CAIS Chief oversees several strategic-level CX initiatives to include enhancements related to the USCIS Contact Center, web content, online filing and citizenship.
- A formal CAIS CX Strategy Plan is pending development; all CX initiatives align with the USCIS Strategic Plan.
- USCIS has a newly established Contact Center Working Group comprised of representatives from across the agency to strengthen cross-agency collaboration to improve information services.

What are you most proud of?

- The passion and dedication to CX from the leadership level to the staff level.
- CAIS is driving CX improvements on several fronts including online filing and self-service tools, among others.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

- CAIS plans to codify its CX strategy in a formal document.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

- The following CX criteria would require significant coordination with the agency at large: *Significant policy decisions and large investments require CX activities and documentation as part of the review process.*

What else would you like to share?

- N/A





Organization & Culture: 4 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

- "Customer Service" is a core competency for USCIS employee performance plans. It includes a requirement to understand and anticipate the needs of those the employee supports and use feedback to enhance products and services.
- The USCIS Performance and Learning Management System (PALMS) has an extensive library of trainings focused on CX.
- Various awards are offered to CAIS employees for exemplary CX service, to include special recognition, cash and time-off awards.

What are you most proud of?

- Several CAIS team members are recipients of the highly competitive and distinguished USCIS "Director's Award" for CX initiatives in the areas of superior service and innovation and technology.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

- For people who might file online, CAIS is standing up a "Measuring Product Success" team to analyze data (such as customer usage and satisfaction) and present findings that strategically align.
- CAIS will continue to encourage and reward innovation including partnering with Contact Center vendors that drive innovation.
- CAIS will continue to cross-train Tier 2 contact center staff to handle different levels of CX engagement.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

- The following CX criteria would require significant coordination with the agency at large: *We have job codes and positions that are specific to CX skill sets and roles.*

What else would you like to share?

N/A

Customer Research: 1 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

- CAIS has a team dedicated to CX research and human centered design that travels the country conducting research.
- CAIS uses ethnographic research, usability testing and focus groups when developing new technologies and processes.

What are you most proud of?

- CAIS has integrated its user research team into design, development, and deployment to ensure a focus on the user in all phases. Research findings are shared via a centralized webpage with everyone from developers to program owners.
- This process has resulted in design features that are intuitive to the user and improve their overall immigration journey.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

- USCIS is evaluating using the omni-channel survey tool to collect internal employee feedback to identify opportunities to improve the employee experience and internal programs.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

- CAIS opted to not have a catalog of applicants/petitioners and detailed personas, but instead use ethnographic research to guide our CX initiatives to avoid generalizing our applicants and petitioners due to the diversity of their needs.
- CAIS does not have an entity-wide catalog of all journeys and prioritized bottlenecks. However, we developed journeys for several high volume USCIS processes.
- CAIS does not conduct formal segmentation/analysis activities. However, the team will evaluate opportunities for future applications.

What else would you like to share?

- N/A





Service Design: 4 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

- USCIS fully implemented the agile development methodology throughout the organization.
- CAIS develops new IT and digital investments using human-centered design principles.

What are you most proud of?

- CAIS integrated its customer research team into design, development, and deployment to ensure a focus on users for all phases. Current efforts are focused on expanding online filing to all USCIS forms and providing an enhanced account experience.
- Another example of how CAIS leverages public feedback is the development of a new contact center Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Our team conducted two focus groups and leveraged feedback from monthly surveys to improve the design.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

- CAIS will continue to phase out legacy systems and manual processes for newer technologies and streamlined processes.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

- Most public-facing legacy programs are not continuously tested using human-centered design processes because they will be replaced with cloud-based programs developed using these principles.
- Although CAIS has several internal resources skilled in human-centered design principles, all programs and entities that interact with the public do not have this capacity. Those programs can leverage available resources in other parts of CAIS for assistance.
- Our systems and processes are interconnected and sometimes other agency priorities take precedence over CX-related initiatives.

What else would you like to share?

N/A

Areas of Focus

Reflecting upon our 2019 CX Maturity Self-Assessment, our HISP has decided to focus on raising our maturity in the following areas in FY19/FY20:

- Measurement
- Governance
- Organization & Culture
- Customer Research
- Service Design





FY 2019 / 2020 CX Improvement Actions

Describe a use case where a typical customer of your program faced challenge(s) during a service experience. This case should relate to one of your organization's Focus Areas for the remainder of FY19 and through FY20.

Example HISP Customer Profile

Maria is a naturalized United States citizen who petitioned for her mother Ana, an El Salvadorian Citizen, to move to the United States as a permanent resident. Maria submitted the necessary forms and documentation approximately 4 months ago. She went to the USCIS website and used the Case Status Online tool to check the status of her application, which indicated her petition for her mother is still processing. Maria decides to call the USCIS Contact Center 1-800 number to obtain more details. When calling, the contact center representative checks the publically available processing times tool and informs Maria that her case is within normal processing standards and will require approximately 3 more months to be adjudicated. The agent recommends that Maria sign up for an online account that will proactively push notifications when there is an update on her case.

Customer Needs + Frustrations

Needs:

- Clear and easy to understand process
- Once filing an application, transparency into the status of her application
- Efficient and easy to use self-service tools

Frustrations:

- Limited transparency into the status of her case
- Processing times can be long (months and even years in some cases)
- Wait times when calling USCIS have increased from seconds to over 30 minutes at times

HISP Implementation Challenge(s)

- Limited transparency for paper applications; applicants encouraged to file online when available
- Limited staff resources are impacting processing times and contact center staffing
- Until deploying the omni-channel survey tool it is difficult to obtain consistent satisfaction data across multiple public facing channels (website, phone, etc.)
- Public expectations have increased (public expects an "Amazon-like" experience)

Stats

- Relevant scores (cannot be shared publicly): Contact Center customer satisfaction score, English website customer satisfaction index score, Spanish website customer satisfaction index score
- When available, 43% of applications are filed online, versus paper applications

Action 1

Focus Area: **Measurement**

Goal to be accomplished by September 30, 2021:

- Percent of e-file ready forms that are filed online at or above 35%
- English website satisfaction index score at or above 75
- Spanish website satisfaction index score at or above 80
- Online account/forms satisfaction at or above 75%
- USCIS Contact Center satisfaction at or above 75%

Critical Activities and Milestones:

- Deploy online filling for all major USCIS forms.
- Deploy Qualtrics survey tool across most CAIS public-facing channels (website, phone, e-mail, chat and written correspondence)
- Implement operational improvements to address survey concerns
- Deploy new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system for the USCIS Contact Center to improve the self-service experience for callers
- Grow USCIS Contact Center staffing to target levels

Other Notes:

- Adjudicative staff, who process applications, are outside of CAIS's purview and not included in the Goal and Activities/Milestones sections at this time.





FY 2019 / 2020 CX Improvement Actions

Describe a use case where a typical customer of your program faced challenge(s) during a service experience. This case should relate to one of your organization's Focus Areas for the remainder of FY19 and through FY20.

Example HISP Customer Profile

Jay, a Chinese Citizen, has been living in the United States for over 20 years as a permanent resident. He is considering applying to become a naturalized citizen so that he can fully enjoy the benefits of living in the United States such as voting in local and national elections and being able to sponsor his siblings in China who want to move to the United States. Jay has been using several USCIS resources to understand the naturalization process. He visited the "Citizenship Resource Center" on the USCIS website, used the "Explore My Options" tool, and contacted the USCIS Contact Center via live chat and phone. Jay is overwhelmed at the information he has obtained and not sure where to start.

Customer Needs + Frustrations

Needs:

- Clear and easy to understand process
- Consistent information among communication channels
- Convenient access to naturalization resources

Frustrations:

- Complex immigration process
- Costly (\$640 filing fee and \$85 biometrics fee plus optional legal fees)
- Need to utilize multiple channels to get answers to his questions

HISP Implementation Challenge(s)

- Creating consolidated CAIS knowledge management system to ensure consistency in information and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managing content across channels.
- Simplifying a naturally complex immigration process that is easy for the average person to understand.

Stats

- Website "Citizenship Resource Center" over 1.4 million page views (May 2019)
- Website "Citizenship Resource Center" satisfaction index score, English website customer satisfaction index score, Spanish website customer satisfaction index score, USCIS Contact Center customer satisfaction score
- Website "Explore my Options" over 330,000 page views (May 2019)
- USCIS Contact Center IVR completion rate of 66% (May 2019)

Action 2

Focus Area: **Governance**

Goal to be accomplished by September 30, 2021:

Implement

- Citizenship Resource Center satisfaction index score at or above 85
- English website satisfaction index score at or above 75
- Spanish website satisfaction index score at or above 80
- Online account/forms satisfaction at or above 75%
- USCIS Contact Center satisfaction at or above 75%
- IVR completion rate at of above 70%

Critical Activities and Milestones:

- Codify CAIS CX priorities into a formal CX Strategy document that aligns with the USCIS Strategic Plan.
- Implement a consolidated CAIS knowledge management system.
- Unify entire website's style and navigation to increase the public's understanding of move between getting information and using the features available after signing into an account.
- Improve the digital experience for the Citizenship Resource Center by making resources platform agnostic and explore development of more interactive content
- Deploy new IVR system for the USCIS Contact Center to improve the self-service experience for callers.
- Leverage survey data and feedback to continue to improve self-service tools and the online filing process.

