

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

SEPTEMBER 2013

Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS” or “Department”) has many avenues for the public to make complaints involving DHS employees or programs, alleged violations of civil rights and civil liberties, immigration filing, travel redress, and other types of grievances. This guide brings together information about these avenues.

If you have questions regarding the types of information that should be included in a complaint or if you are uncertain whether a DHS office or Component listed in this guide has jurisdiction over your concerns, contact that Office or Component or visit their website for more information.

(Note: this guide does not cover employment discrimination complaints. For information on making a DHS equal employment opportunity complaint, visit:

www.dhs.gov/filing-equal-employment-opportunity-eeo-complaint.)

If you are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability, communication assistance is available through the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) in the following forms:

Telephonically-based:

- TTY (text telephone)/ASCII/Voice
- STS (speech to speech)
- Captioned Telephone (CapTel)

Internet-based:

- Video Relay Service (VRS)
- IP Relay
- Relay Conference Captioning (RCC)

For more information about FedRelay, visit www.federalrelay.us/.

This guide will help you direct the following types of complaints to the appropriate DHS Office:

- Discrimination and other violations of civil rights and civil liberties
- Criminal and non-criminal misconduct or serious and/or repeated violations by DHS employees or DHS contractors
- Travel-related complaints
- Alleged discrimination in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding, services, or benefits
- Concerns with longstanding or complex U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immigration filings or applications
- Concerns regarding E-Verify and the SAVE Program
- Concerns regarding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)
- General complaints involving any of the following:
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
 - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
 - Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
 - Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman)
 - U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
 - U.S. Secret Service (USSS)
- Privacy complaints or allegations of privacy violations

1. Discrimination and Other Violations of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) reviews and assesses information concerning abuses of civil rights, civil liberties, and profiling on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion, by employees and officials of the Department of Homeland Security and by recipients of DHS assistance.

You may contact CRCL to file complaints alleging issues such as:

- Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Denial of meaningful access to DHS or DHS-supported programs, activities, or services due to limited English proficiency
- Violation of rights while in immigration detention or as a subject of immigration enforcement
- Discrimination or inappropriate questioning related to entry into the United States
- Violation of right to due process, such as right to timely notice of charges or access to lawyer
- Violation of the [Violence Against Women Act's confidentiality requirements](#) or immigration status-related confidentiality requirements
- Physical abuse or any other type of abuse
- Any other civil rights, civil liberties, or human rights violation related to a Department program or activity, including allegations of discrimination by an organization or program that receives financial assistance from DHS

CRCL works with the entire Department to address civil rights and civil liberties concerns. More information and an optional complaint form are available at www.dhs.gov/crcl. Complaints sent to CRCL are accepted in languages other than English. The complaint form is available online in multiple languages.

As an alternative to reporting a complaint to CRCL, you may file a civil rights complaint with the DHS Office of Inspector General (See 2, below).

To file a civil rights complaint with CRCL, contact:

You may send a complaint to CRCL in writing. Email: CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov Fax: 202-401-4708 You may complete CRCL's optional online fillable complaint form and email the form to CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov or fax or mail the form. If you have any questions, please call CRCL: Phone: 202-401-1474 or 866-644-8360 TTY: 202-401-0470 or 866-644-8361	Mail: Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Compliance Branch 245 Murray Lane, SW Building 410, Mail Stop #0190 Washington, DC 20528 PLEASE NOTE: Mail takes up to 20 business days to arrive. Email is faster. Complaints are accepted in languages other than English.
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2. Criminal and Non-criminal Misconduct, including Serious and/or Repeated Violations

The DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) is the primary investigative agency of criminal and non-criminal misconduct by DHS employees and contractors, as well as theft or misuse of DHS funds, property, or programs. For misconduct by DHS employees, the DHS OIG investigates: (1) allegations of criminal misconduct by any DHS employee; (2) allegations of misconduct against employees at the GS-15, GM-15 level or higher, or against employees in any DHS offices for internal affairs, inspections, audits or Professional Responsibility, or the DHS Office of Security; (3) allegations of serious, non-criminal misconduct against DHS law enforcement officers; and (4) allegations of visa fraud by DHS employees working in the visa issuance process. The DHS OIG also reviews DHS programs and expenditures to identify mismanagement, fraud, waste, or abuse of DHS programs, funds, contracts, or grants, including fraud by contractors and grantees.

The DHS OIG has the authority to investigate claims of civil rights abuses and whistleblower and retaliation matters within the Department. For complaints alleging criminal or non-criminal misconduct, including serious/repeated violations of DHS rules, policies, or regulations by employees of all DHS Components, visit the OIG website at www.oig.dhs.gov/ and send your complaint electronically using the online DHS OIG Allegation Form. The OIG may be contacted at:

Phone: 800-323-8603 Fax: 202-254-4297	Mail: Attn: Office of Investigations - Hotline Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General/Mail Stop 2600 245 Murray Lane, SW, Building 410 Washington, DC 20528
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As an alternative to reporting a complaint to the OIG, complaints involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) employees can be sent to the Joint Intake Center (JIC). Allegations of misconduct received by the JIC are screened by the OIG and, when warranted, are returned to the JIC for appropriate action by the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility or the CBP Office of Internal Affairs.

Email: Joint.Intake@dhs.gov Phone: 877-2INTAKE (877-246-8253) Fax: 202-344-3390	Mail: Department of Homeland Security Joint Intake Center P.O. Box 14475 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20044
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To report criminal activity that you believe may be within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard, visit www.uscg.mil/hq/cg2/cgis/, click on “regional contact info” and call the appropriate regional authority, or call the Coast Guard Investigative Service at 202-493-6600.

As an alternative to reporting complaints to the OIG, allegations of serious misconduct involving National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) employees or Federal Protective Service Protective (FPS) Security Officers can be sent to the NPPD Office of Compliance and Security.

Email: NPPD.compliance@hq.dhs.gov Phone: 703-235-4963 Fax: 703-235-3059	Mail: Office of Compliance and Security National Protection and Programs Directorate U.S. Department of Homeland Security 5th Floor, Mail Stop 0662 245 Murray Lane, SW Arlington, VA 20598-0662
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3. Travel-related Complaints

For complaints related to difficulties experienced during travel screening, such as watch list issues; denied or delayed entry into or departure from the U.S. at a port of entry or border crossing; or situations where you believe you have been unfairly or incorrectly delayed, denied boarding, or identified for additional screening, use the DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP), www.dhs.gov/dhs-trip. Once your application has been submitted, you will receive a Redress Control Number from DHS TRIP, which you may use to check the status of your application.

Email: trip@dhs.gov	Mail: DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) 601 S. 12th Street, TSA-901 Arlington, VA 20598-6901
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For complaints about your experience while clearing customs and immigration, including concerns about the inspection process, facilities, and penalties assessed, contact the CBP INFO Center. An online complaint form is available at help.cbp.gov. Or contact:

Phone: 877-227-5511 or 202-325-8000 TTY: 866-880-6582	Mail: CBP INFO Center U.S. Customs and Border Protection 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20229
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For complaints alleging that you were treated unfairly or discriminated against by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) because of your disability, race, national origin, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, or any other civil rights or civil liberties violation, contact the TSA Disability and Multicultural Division in the Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement. More information and an optional online complaint form are available at www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/civil-rights-travelers.

Email: TSA-CRL@tsa.dhs.gov Phone: 866-289-9673	Mail: Transportation Security Administration Disability and Multicultural Division Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement (TSA-6) 601 S. 12th Street Arlington, VA 20598-6006
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4. Alleged Discrimination in FEMA Funding, Services, or Benefits

For complaints alleging discrimination in the application or distribution methods of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds, services, or benefits, whether by FEMA or by FEMA grantees, contact the FEMA Office for Equal Rights at:

Phone: 800-621-3362 or 202-646-3535 TTY: 202-646-7651 Fax: 202-646-4320 Attn: Civil Rights Title VI Program	Mail: FEMA - Office of Equal Rights Attn: Civil Rights Title VI Program 300 D Street, SW, 8th floor Washington, DC 20472
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5. Concerns with Longstanding or Complex USCIS Immigration Filings or Applications

For help resolving problems with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immigration filings or applications, first try resolving the issue by using the USCIS customer service options available to you: (1) Call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283, 1-800-767-1833 (TTY); (2) Check “Case Status at www.uscis.gov; or (3) Make an InfoPass appointment with USCIS at infopass.uscis.gov.

Individuals or employers who have exhausted all USCIS customer service options but still need help resolving a problem with an application or petition can request the assistance of DHS Headquarters by contacting the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman) and completing the online case assistance form, or, if outside of the United States, Form DHS-7001, Case Assistance Worksheet, found at www.dhs.gov/cisombudsman. Please note: If the requested service involves the forms I-589, I-590, I-360 (Violence Against Women Act), I-914, I-918, or an I-751 battered spouse waiver, the applicant must sign the last page of Form DHS 7001 and attach it to the online case assistance form as a PDF file.

The CIS Ombudsman is an independent, confidential, and impartial resource located in DHS Headquarters, and there is no fee for assistance provided by the Office. The completed worksheet and any supporting documentation can be submitted on-line (preferred method) or by email, fax, or postal mail:

Online case-problem assistance requests are preferred: Website: www.dhs.gov/cisombudsman Email: cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov Phone: 202-357-8100 or Toll-Free: 855-882-8100 Monday through Friday (11 a.m. – 3 p.m. EST) Fax: 202-357-0042	Mail: Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman Department of Homeland Security Attn: Case Assistance 245 Murray Lane, SW Building 410, Mail Stop #0180 Washington, DC 20528-0180
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6. Concerns regarding E-Verify and the SAVE Program

E-Verify is an Internet-based system that allows businesses to determine the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. For help resolving problems with E-Verify policies and procedures, Form I-9 and employment eligibility, contact the USCIS Verification Programs Contact Center at:

For Employers:	Phone: 888-464-4218 TTY: 877-875-6028 Email: E-Verify@uscis.dhs.gov
For E-Verify Employer Agents:	Phone: 888-464-4218 TTY: 877-875-6028 Email: E-VerifyEmployerAgent@uscis.dhs.gov
For Employees:	Phone: 888-897-7781 TTY: 877-875-6028 Email: E-Verify@uscis.dhs.gov

For immigration-related employment discrimination, including discrimination based on citizenship status, immigration status or national origin in Form I-9 and E-Verify processes, the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Office of Special Counsel is available at:

Employer Hotline:	Phone: 800-255-8155 TTY: 800-362-2735 (TTY)
Employee Hotline:	Phone: 800-255-7688 TTY: 800-237-2515 (TTY)
Email:	oscrt@usdoj.gov
Website:	www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc

The SAVE Program is an inter-governmental initiative designed to aid benefit-granting agencies in determining an applicant's immigration status, thereby ensuring that only entitled applicants receive federal, state, or local public benefits and licenses. For questions on SAVE access methods, verification processes, and forms, contact the USCIS Verification Programs Contact Center by phone at 877-469-2563 or by email at SAVE.HELP@dhs.gov.

7. Concerns about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)

For complaints and concerns about ICE policies, programs, and operations, including ICE civil enforcement priorities, immigration detention, or ICE actions involving U.S. citizens, contact **your local ERO Community Outreach Field Liaison or the ERO Community and Detainee Helpline** to directly address your concern.

- **Contact a Community Outreach Field Liaison**

In the field there are 24 Community Outreach field liaisons, which correspond to ICE ERO's 24 Field Offices located throughout the United States. All concerns or questions regarding ICE practices, policies and/or programs should first be directed to the local field liaison. These dedicated liaisons are in the best position to directly resolve issues and concerns regarding ERO practices, policies, and procedures on a local level. To find the local Community Outreach liaison in your area, use the map at this link to contact one of our 24 field liaisons: www.ice.gov/about/offices/enforcement-removal-operations/ero-outreach/contact.htm.

- **Contact the Community and Detainee Helpline (CDH)**

The Community and Detainee Helpline is established to help those who have not been able to resolve a problem through traditional channels. Prior to contacting the Helpline, you must first try to resolve your request or

concern at the field level though one of the 24 Community Outreach field liaisons. With any request, include a detailed description of all your attempts to resolve the concern and any supporting documentation.

Please note that ICE cannot share any details with you about another person without a signed Form G-28, privacy waiver, or, in certain circumstances, appropriate verification of an agency relationship with the individual. For information on ICE privacy regulations, visit: www.ice.gov/about/offices/management-administration/privacy/.

If you have any questions, please call the ICE Community and Detainee Helpline to speak to a live operator: Phone: 1-888-351-4024 Monday – Friday (8 a.m. – 8 p.m. EST) You may send a complaint to the Community and Detainee Helpline in writing: Email: ERO.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov	Mail: Department of Homeland Security Community and Detainee Helpline Enforcement and Removal Operations U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 500 12th Street, SW Washington, DC 20536
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8. General Complaints

For general complaints about your overall experience with DHS—for example, those dealing with inappropriate conduct, or what you believe to have been incorrect outcomes—you can, in many circumstances, file a complaint verbally, in writing, on the phone, or on-line with the appropriate DHS Component:

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

For complaints about the CBP customs clearance and immigration inspection process at ports of entry and customs processing of international trade:

- **In-person:** Supervisors are available to address travelers’ and importers’ concerns at every air, land, and sea Port of Entry. If you have a concern about your customs clearance or immigration inspection while it is happening, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- **Online:** Complaints may be filed online at: www.CBP.gov. On the home page, click on the Questions/Complaints tab and follow the instructions provided. Further information about the online complaints system is available at www.cbp.gov, under “Questions/Complaints,” or at: help.cbp.gov/app/forms/complaint/session/L3NpZC8xbTFSdmd4bA%3D%3D.
- **By phone:** Complaints may be reported by calling the CBP INFO Center. For domestic calls, the toll-free number is 877-227-5511. For international and/or local calls, the number is 202-325-8000. The TTY number is 866-880-6582. In addition, you may contact the Port of Entry or Border Patrol Sector directly and ask to speak with a supervisor. CBP will make a record of all calls in a complaint tracking database. If your complaint cannot be resolved over the phone, CBP will refer it for additional review and resolution.
- **By mail:** Written complaints also may be sent by mail. Comments/complaints should be sent to the CBP INFO Center at:
 - CBP INFO Center
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

- By phone or mail: ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) field offices are located around the country and each office has a distinct area of responsibility. The webpage www.ice.gov/contact/ero/ provides the address and phone number for each ERO field office.
- By phone or mail: ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) field offices are located around the country. The webpage www.ice.gov/contact/inv/ provides the address, phone number, and fax number for the principal HSI field offices.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

- In person: Some airports are staffed with a local TSA Customer Service Manager who is available to address travelers' concerns. To contact this representative if you have concerns about your TSA inspection, travelers may ask any TSA officer at the airport. In addition, a traveler who needs assistance or is concerned about his or her screening can ask a TSA checkpoint officer or supervisor for a TSA Passenger Support Specialist (PSS). The PSS program ensures that TSA personnel are available to provide additional support and information to travelers at TSA checkpoints.
- By phone, email or online: Travelers may contact the TSA Contact Center for answers related to questions about TSA programs and policies. Complaints, compliments, requests for information and suggestions are recorded and directed as appropriate within TSA headquarters. The TSA Contact Center can be reached by telephone or email. More information can be found at www.tsa.gov/contact-us.
- Travelers may also contact TSA by postal mail.

Phone: 866-289-9673 Email: TSA-ContactCenter@tsa.dhs.gov	Mail: Transportation Security Administration 601 South 12 th Street, TSA-1 Arlington, VA 20598
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- Claims for lost, missing or damaged items: If travelers' property is damaged or misplaced during the TSA screening process, travelers may file a claim with TSA Claims Management Branch. The TSA Claims Management Branch will attempt to resolve your claim as quickly as possible (often within 60 days); however, they may require up to six months to fully investigate your claim before they can make a recommendation to approve, deny, or offer a settlement. Critical life-supporting medications and property will be expedited through the claims process. More information on Claims Management can be found at www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/claims-management-branch and the Claims Management Branch may be contacted by email at tsaclaimsoffice@tsa.dhs.gov.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- By phone: To receive nationwide assistance for immigration services and benefits offered by USCIS, call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283 if you are within the U.S., including Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The TTY number is 1-800-767-1833.
- By mail:
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Customer Service Directorate
Attn: Customer Assistance Office
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 600, MS 2260
Washington, DC 20529-2260

- If you are outside the United States, contact your local U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate.
- For problems that you have been unable to resolve with the above USCIS offices and for which you wish to submit a complaint, you may fax or mail your information to the USCIS Office of Security and Integrity (OSI). For more information, visit www.uscis.gov and click on “Contact Us.”

Fax: 202-233-2453	Mail: Chief, Investigations Division Office of Security and Integrity, MS 2275 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 633 Third Street, NW, 3rd Floor Washington, DC 20529-2275
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Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) Ombudsman

If you have a complaint or other feedback about an interaction or experience with the CIS Ombudsman’s Office, contact that Office at cisombudsman@hq.dhs.gov.

U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

- By email: If you have a question or concern about the Coast Guard, you may leave a comment and your email address at www.uscg.mil/ or visit that site and follow the prompts for information on specific subjects. You also may direct your question or concern to the appropriate command or program office by clicking on “additional contact information” and following the prompts, or by obtaining a contact phone number at www.uscg.mil/global/mail/info_pg.asp.
- In person or by phone: If you do not have Internet access, your local Coast Guard office may be the best way to address your complaint. The phone numbers and addresses for local Coast Guard Offices are in the phone book.
- If your complaint cannot be resolved through your local office, you can contact the Coast Guard Office of Government and Public Affairs by postal mail at:
 - Commandant CG-092
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 2nd Street, SW, Stop 7362
Washington, DC 20593-7362
Fax: 202-372-4980

U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

If you have a question or concern regarding the U.S. Secret Service, you may contact the Secret Service: at:

Phone: 202-406-6300 Fax: 202-406-6560 or 202-406-6560	Mail: U.S. Secret Service Communications Center Attn: Special Agent in Charge (SAIC), Inspection Division 245 Murray Lane, SW, Building T-5 Washington, DC 20223
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9. Privacy Complaints and Allegations of Privacy Violations

The DHS Privacy Office and DHS Components are responsible for responding to privacy complaints submitted by DHS employees, the public, other government agencies, and the private sector. Privacy complaints are defined as written allegations of harm or a violation of privacy compliance requirements. Each Component manages and customizes its privacy complaint handling process to meet its needs and fulfill Department complaint handling and reporting requirements. Please direct your complaint to the Component that you believe is responsible for the issue raised. Alternatively, privacy complaints can be directed to the DHS OIG or DHS Privacy Office for consideration and/or appropriate referral if there is a potential conflict of interest or you are unsure of the appropriate Component with which to file a complaint.

CBP:

Email: Privacy.CBP@cbp.DHS.gov

DHS Privacy Office:

Email: DHSPrivacy@hq.dhs.gov

Mail: Privacy Office, Attn: Chief Privacy Officer
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0655
Washington, DC 20528-0655

FEMA:

Email: FEMA-Privacy@fema.dhs.gov

Phone: 202-646-3323

ICE:

Email: ICEPrivacy@ice.dhs.gov

Phone: 202-732-3300

Mail: Privacy Office
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW, Mail Stop 5004
Washington, DC 20536-5004

NPPD:

Email: NPPDPrivacy@hq.dhs.gov

Mail: Office of Privacy
National Protection and Programs Directorate
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0380
Washington, DC 20528-0380

OIG:

Email: DHSOIGHOTLINE@hq.dhs.gov

POLICY:

Email: PolicyFOIA@hq.dhs.gov

Mail: Office of Policy - Front Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Attn: FOIA and Privacy Officer
245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0445
Washington, DC 20528-0445

TSA:

Email: TSAPrivacy@tsa.dhs.gov

Mail: Privacy Officer
Transportation Security Administration, TSA-36
601 S. 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598-6036

USCG:

Email: HQS-SMB-Privacy@uscg.mil

Mail: Commandant (CG-61)
Attn: Privacy Program
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 2nd Street, SW, Stop 7101
Washington, DC 20593-7101

USCIS:

Email: USCISPrivacy@uscis.dhs.gov

Phone: 202-272-8030

Mail: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Privacy, Mail Stop 8000
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20529

USCIS Verification Division:

Email: VerificationPrivacyComplaints@uscis.dhs.gov

Phone: 888-464-4218

Mail: Verification Privacy Office
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Department of Homeland Security
131 M Street, NE, Suite 200, Mail Stop 2600
Washington, DC 20529-2600

USSS:

Email: privacy@usss.dhs.gov

Mail: FOIA/PA Program
Disclosure/Privacy Officer
U.S. Secret Service
245 Murray Lane, SW
Building # T-5
Washington, DC 20223

US-VISIT:

Email: usvisitprivacy@hq.dhs.gov

Mail: Privacy Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0675
Washington, DC 20528-0675