



Case Study: U.S. Department of Homeland Security



Customer Overview:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is a federal agency born out of the National Strategy for Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Act of 2002, designed to mobilize and organize the nation to secure the homeland from terrorist attacks.

The Department of Homeland Security's mission is to lead the unified national effort to secure America and to prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation. The department ensures safe and secure borders, welcomes lawful immigrants and visitors, and promotes the free flow of commerce.

Challenges

As part of its mission to lead a unified national effort to secure America from terrorist attacks, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) supports Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA/PA) processing in all DHS offices across the U.S. and around the world. This initiative includes ensuring that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) FOIA/PA units meet all Federal statutory requirements of the FOIA/PA.

Providing FOIA/PA information to public and government agencies upon request, the USCIS supports an average of 140,000 FOIA/PA requests per year. By mandate, all federal agencies must process requests for information within 20 working days of receiving the request, regardless of its complexity or the time involved collecting information from other sources.

Faced with huge amounts of requests, documents, and statutory requirements, most of the FOIA/PA driven actions were characterized by manual, paper-based processes, high costs, and large backlogs of request submissions.

Because each FOIA/PA request relies on data and assistance from multiple systems and entities, in order to complete it within Federal FOIA/PA statutory timeline requirements, USCIS required a state-of-the-art case management system that could replace its antiquated case tracking systems using manual processes and old mainframe technology, while providing daily management and Congressional FOIA/PA reporting capabilities.

Solution

USCIS implemented Global 360 products as the enterprise solution for its Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act (FOIA) Information Processing System (FIPS). FIPS is an imaging, workflow, and case tracking system that provides online processing, redaction and release (on paper or CD) of documents, efficient movement of cases through a role-defined and secure processing and approval progression, and tracking of cases to ensure compliances with all. USCIS has since selected the web-based Case360 platform for the latest FIPS technology refresh.

Results

FIPS was initially deployed for 260 users at 48 locations across the country, including Hawaii. It supported all of the required processing in two shifts (20 hours per day) and more than 140,000 requests per year.

Combining one of the highest transaction volumes with the lowest relative cost and lowest head count of any Federal agency, the USCIS FIPS is one of the most cost-effective, flexible, and scalable solutions being used within the federal government. An independent cost benefit analysis of FIPS conducted by global strategy and technology consulting firm, Booz Allen Hamilton, cited both a positive Net Present Value (NPV) and a positive return on investment (ROI), as well as showing a 42.9% efficiency savings when FIPS was implemented to convert from manual processes.

Challenges

Faced with huge amounts of requests, documents, and statutory requirements, the U.S. DHS needed to replace its antiquated case tracking systems using manual processes and old mainframe technology, while providing daily management and Congressional FOIA/PA reporting.

Solution

The DHS deployed Case360 as the enterprise solution for its Financial Information Progress Systems (FIPS) to put an end to their manual, paper-based processes and related storage and handling costs and to improve operations and responsiveness.

Results

The DHS experienced a 42.9% efficiency savings when they used FIPS to convert from manual processes. System users have applied FIPS to complete more than 1 million cases, handle more than 17 million images and 3 terabytes of data, and log over 17,250 hours of production operation in its six-year tenure.



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USCIS system users have applied FIPS to complete more than 1 million cases, handled more than 17 million images and 3 terabytes of data, and logged over 17,250 hours of production operation in its ten years tenure. FIPS processes more than 70% of the FOIA/PA cases handled by DHS, at only 24% of the average cost per case closed as compared with all other DHS components combined.

In September 2002, a key National Records Center (NRC) manager reported that FIPS system enhancements resulted in the ability to complete an additional 500 cases per month with no additional staff.

Since its original deployment, the FIPS solution has been recognized with the following rewards: Department of Justice Justworks Award, INS Commissioner's Award, Giga's Innovation and Excellence in Workflow Process and Knowledge Management, and Giga's Global Excellence Awards.