

E-Verify Program Surpasses 52,000 Employers

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today that more than 52,000 employers have voluntarily signed up to participate in E-Verify, the nation's employment authorization status verification program. The program has been growing by approximately 1,000 new employers each week since last October.

"We began with a small number of pilot employers in five states testing the viability of such a program," said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. "Today, more than 52,000 employers across the nation are participating in E-Verify. This program is proving to be a key component in promoting the integrity of the employment verification process of our workforce. E-Verify is a valuable tool, and we congratulate the thousands of employers who are making a positive impact on our nation's security." E-Verify is a free, easy to use Web-based system that allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly-hired employees. E-Verify evolved from the Basic Pilot/Employment Eligibility Verification Program which was originally developed in 1997 and was made available to employers as a Web-based program in 2004. USCIS operates the program in partnership with the Social Security Administration. As part of President Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget, \$100 million was requested to further support the expanded usage of E-Verify and to extend USCIS program operations outside of Washington, D.C. USCIS is currently recruiting new personnel for the first regional verification center in Buffalo, N.Y. Since the program's inception, USCIS has launched major enhancements to improve E-Verify. The agency unveiled a new photo screening tool in September that allows employers to compare photos on a new hire's employment authorization document or permanent resident card against nearly 15 million images stored in DHS immigration databases. USCIS has also improved contact services for customers to obtain program information and assistance through its National Customer Service Center. Participation in E-Verify is voluntary. However, a number of states require certain employers to participate in and comply with a federal work authorization verification program. Arizona is a prominent example of such a state with more than 18,000 employers currently participating in E-Verify compared to just 325 one year ago.