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Got Startup Experience? Help Enhance the Pathways for Immigrant Entrepreneurs

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Posted by [Aneesh Chopra](#) and [Doug Rand](#) on December 13, 2011 at 08:04 AM EST

It's no secret that immigrant entrepreneurs make a major contribution to American [economic growth](#) and [job creation](#). It's also no secret that we can do more to attract and retain the best and brightest seeking to come here and start new companies. That's why President Obama supports legislation to create a visa designed for startup founders, as part of a [21st century immigration system](#).

But we don't have to wait for Congress to [improve our immigration system](#) and boost job growth. Over the past several months, as part of the White House [Startup America](#) initiative, the Administration has taken several executive actions to keep [more talented science and math graduates](#) in the country longer and to [make it easier to start a company in the U.S.](#)

Most recently, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced an innovative new [Entrepreneurs in Residence](#) (EIR) initiative, with the immediate goal of recruiting a small "tactical team" of business experts to work with USCIS staff to help streamline operations and enhance pathways within existing immigration law to help immigrant entrepreneurs start and grow businesses in the United States. This intensive 90-day project is a major priority for USCIS, the Department of Homeland Security, and the White House [Startup America](#) initiative.

USCIS just posted the [job announcement](#) to recruit external business experts for this tactical team, and applications will be accepted through December 31, 2011. Here is a quick FAQ for those interested in applying or who may want to encourage other great candidates to apply.

Why create an Entrepreneurs in Residence (EIR) team for a government agency?

Solving an important challenge requires fresh ideas, focus, and time. The EIR model provides all three by bringing together professionals with diverse talents from inside and outside government to work together as a team to achieve outcome-oriented solutions within a short and focused time frame. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already begun the first pilot of the EIR model to create a new "[Innovation Pathway](#)" for breakthrough medical devices, attracting [world-class leaders](#) to join in the endeavor. USCIS is the second Federal agency to embrace this tool for government innovation, and its first iteration will focus on immigrant entrepreneurs.

What is the goal of the USCIS EIR team?

The purpose of this tactical team is to bring business experts in-house to work alongside USCIS staff with the goal of more fully realizing the potential of current immigration law to attract foreign entrepreneurial talent. This means optimizing the range of existing visa categories already used by entrepreneurs to provide a pathway to success that is more clear, consistent, and aligned with business realities.

What specific outcomes will this team work to achieve?

As a lean startup within government, the EIR team will constantly experiment and iterate in order to develop the most effective policies and practices for USCIS to achieve its goal. At the end of this process, a successful set of outcomes would include:

- Entrepreneurs know exactly which visa categories are most appropriate for their particular circumstances, based on clear public materials.
- USCIS's policies, practices, and training better reflect the realities faced by foreign entrepreneurs and startup businesses.
- USCIS's workforce is better equipped to adjudicate cases in today's complex and rapidly evolving business environment.



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What are the job requirements?

The tactical team will work primarily at USCIS Headquarters in Washington, DC, for a period of approximately 90 days. USCIS aims to have the tactical team in place as early as possible in 2012. For specific job requirements, check out the USCIS [job announcement](#) as well as the general details of the [Department of Homeland Security Loaned Executive Program](#).

This is a unique opportunity for experienced entrepreneurs to serve the Nation.

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