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USCIS Averts Furlough of Nearly 70% of Workforce

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Drastic cuts will impact agency operations for foreseeable future

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services today announced that the agency will avert an administrative furlough of more than 13,000 employees, scheduled to begin Aug. 30 as a result of unprecedented spending cuts and a steady increase in daily incoming revenue and receipts.

USCIS expects to be able to maintain operations through the end of fiscal year 2020. Aggressive spending reduction measures will impact all agency operations, including naturalizations, and will drastically impact agency contracts.

“Our workforce is the backbone of every USCIS accomplishment. Their resilience and strength of character always serves the nation well, but in this year of uncertainty, they remain steadfast in their mission administering our nation’s lawful immigration system, safeguarding its integrity and protecting the American people, even as a furlough loomed before them,” said USCIS Deputy Director for Policy Joseph Edlow. “However, averting this furlough comes at a severe operational cost that will increase backlogs and wait times across the board, with no guarantee we can avoid future furloughs. A return to normal operating procedures requires congressional intervention to sustain the agency through fiscal year 2021.”

The additional cost savings come through the descoping of federal contracts that assist USCIS adjudicators in processing and preparing case files as well as a myriad of other support activities. Anticipated operational impacts include increased wait times for pending case inquiries with the USCIS Contact Center, longer case processing times, and increased adjudication time for aliens adjusting status or naturalizing. Naturalization ceremonies will continue. Previously, members of Congress requested that agency leadership avoid operational cuts of this magnitude. However, Congress must still act on a long-term solution that will provide USCIS with the necessary financial assistance to sustain the agency throughout FY 2021 and beyond.

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