

DHS: Money Down the Drain

[report](#) highlighting the serious flaws with ELIS, the DHS Inspector General attaches a letter to USCIS Director Leon Rodriguez blasting his agency for blowing off all of the watchdog's past investigations. "This is our sixth review of a deeply troubled program which has, over its life, wasted hundreds of millions of dollars," DHS IG John Roth tells Rodriguez. "In the course of our audit work, and that of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), USCIS has continually minimized the shortcomings of the program and resisted independent oversight."

In fact, the agency watchdog writes that he's "perplexed at USCIS's non-concurrence," which he points out is not rational, is contrary to department policy and suggests continued effort to promote disagreement rather than collaboration towards the shared goal of bolstering effectiveness and efficiency in agency operations. Despite this blatant negligence, the cash hasn't stopped rolling and now DHS claims it needs another three years and an additional \$1 billion if there's any chance of getting ELIS to work properly. In its current form, the automated system "lacks critical functionality," isn't "user-friendly," and has "significant performance problems" processing cases, according to investigators. Until the agency makes all the needed improvements—and there are many—it will be unable to meet its national security goals, the IG report affirms.

ELIS has been a disaster from its inception yet continues to get taxpayer dollars. It started with a \$536,000 contract that quickly ballooned before authorities admitted it was a failure. It was supposed to improve the current, outdated method of processing forms for benefits, visas and refugee requests at USCIS. Instead, the pricey system drastically slows the process down. Past audits have documented that ELIS requires federal workers to dedicate

twice as much time to each application, completely defeating the purpose. "The electronic immigration system was supposed to provide a more efficient and higher quality adjudication process," according to a 2014 DHS IG