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E-Verify/Basic Pilot Findings Released

Recent findings about the Web-based Basic Pilot program, now called E-Verify, have been released. Among other things, the new report notes that employers are satisfied with many aspects of the new online version of the former Basic Pilot program. Also, the accuracy of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), database used for verification has "improved substantially" since the start of Basic Pilot. Further improvements are needed, however, the report notes, especially if the program is mandated nationally.

Most importantly, the report states, the database used for verification "is still not sufficiently up to date to meet the [Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996] requirement for accurate verification, especially for naturalized citizens." The report notes that USCIS and the Social Security Administration accommodate this problem by providing for a manual review of these cases, which is "timeconsuming and can result in discrimination against work-authorized foreign-born persons during the period that the verification is ongoing, if employers do not follow procedures designed to protect employee rights."

E-Verify allows employers to get automated confirmation of a newly hired employee's work authorization after an Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) has been completed. Employers who sign up to participate complete the I-9 process as usual, but then enter and submit I-9 information through a Web-based computer program to the Social Security Administration (SSA) database. If the SSA does not have sufficient information to confirm work authorization status, queries are sent to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for confirmation. If more information is required to complete the confirmation process, the employer is asked to have the employee contact the SSA or USCIS to provide the needed information.

The report, including recommendations, is available at

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/WebBasicPilotRprtSept2007.pdf>. Related materials are available at

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnxtoid=89abf90517e15110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD>.