



***Next Generation Vital Statistics:
A Hearing on Current Status, Current
Issues and Future Possibilities***

September 12, 2017

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Office of Passport Services



Panel 4.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: FEDERAL LEVEL



Day 1 Panel 2 Overview

- The Bureau's Office of Passport Services issues U.S. passports to U.S. citizens and nationals.
- In FY2016, we issued 18 million U.S. passports.
- Vital records are a critically important part of the U.S. passport issuance process and are relied upon to help establish identity, citizenship, and entitlement to a U.S. passport.
- Passport Services greatly values and relies upon our long-standing relationships with Vital Registrars and partner organizations to resolve discrepancies, verify, and confirm the authenticity of vital records.



What challenges does Passport Services face with vital records?

- Security and efficiency are the highest priorities in our processes. Of course, challenges arise between the two.
 - Counterfeiting and document security
 - Data integrity and the accuracy of documents we review
 - Changing state vital statistic offices and our ability to maintain partnerships and communication
 - Learning the varied processes across state vital statistics offices
 - Timeliness of obtaining vital records for customers with urgent and emergency travel circumstances
 - Limited access to records for customers who do not live in the jurisdiction where their vital event took place
 - Limited electronic access to records to more readily determine identity and citizenship



How might they be improved?

- Systems or processes that provide streamlined and immediate access to vital records can help the Office of Passport Services meet our commitments to security and efficiency and to our customers.
 - Direct search and retrieval access to vital records for verification purposes
 - Electronic delivery or electronic certificate options for customers needing immediate access to a certified record (far away from the jurisdiction).
 - Increased adoption of the recommended standards for birth certificates
 - Natural phase-out of the circulation of older and less secure certificates and formats no longer in production
 - Faster registration or reporting processes of vital events to federal users



Thank you to all of the State Vital Registrars and partner organizations that support us in providing quality service to our customers.