



Below is a quick note from CIEE's Government Affairs and Advocacy team with updates on the 2026 fiscal year budgets for the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and how those budget changes could affect staff and operations related to the BridgeUSA program.

### **U.S. Department of State**

In early February, Congress approved the U.S. Department of State's budget through the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2026). As a result, embassy staff and operations will continue as normal and the BridgeUSA program will operate as normal with Department of State staff.

### **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

This week, Congress deliberated the 2026 budget for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Friday, February 13, is the deadline for the department to be funded through the remainder of the fiscal year (September 30, 2026). DHS' budget includes money for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- USCIS oversees compliance with U.S. immigration laws, which includes monitoring J-1 visa holders through SEVIS and authorizing a status change or extension of status.
- ICE enforces immigration violations by visa holders, which includes working without authorization, overstaying a visa, criminal violations, and not following the DS-7002 plan (Training/Internship Placement Plan).
- CBP monitors the U.S. border, including entry and exit through U.S. airports. CBP's role is to ensure all individuals, who enter the country, comply with U.S. immigration laws and do not pose a threat to national security, public health, or public safety.

In 2025, USCIS, ICE, and CBP received funds from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025, which can be spent through 2034. Additionally, USCIS relies on the immigration fees it receives for revenue and to sustain its operations and services.

As DHS' 2026 federal funding was not approved by Congress in time to beat the February 13th deadline, DHS will operate in a "shutdown" mode. Government Affairs and Advocacy does not foresee DHS' services or operations dramatically changing at this time.

Those DHS' staff who are designated as essential employees will continue to work through the shutdown. However, DHS' services and operations may be slower. SEVIS will remain in operation. The Transportation and Security Administration, which verifies identification at security checkpoints (visas, passports, etc.), will operate with essential workers but participants may experience airport and flight delays.

As we watch this changing situation, CIEE's Government Affairs and Advocacy team will keep you updated.

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*CIEE thanks you for your ongoing support and advocacy. For any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your CIEE point of contact.*

**Questions? Contact [Asenith Dixon Bell](#).**

Mrs. Asenith Dixon Bell

Vice President, Government Affairs and Advocacy, CIEE

adixon@ciee.org | +1.404.337.3979