

# Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC)

Government Issue Paper:

## 21st Century Customs Framework (21CCF) - Unified Entry Process

December 2020



**U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection**

Office of Trade  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Customs Framework (21CCF)  
December 2020

**Action Required:** Informational

**Background:**

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Customs Framework (21CCF) is an aspirational and comprehensive modernization effort that will position U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for the future of trade.
  - This landmark effort will update antiquated laws, policies, and processes, akin to the Customs Modernization Act passed in 1993 as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- Through engagement with the trade community, government subject matter experts, and other internal and external stakeholders, CBP has organized this initiative around five key pillars:
  - Enhance Facilitation and Security through 21st Century Processes;
  - Define Customs and Trade Responsibilities for Emerging and Traditional Actors;
  - Ensure Seamless Data Sharing and Access;
  - Employ Intelligent Enforcement; and
  - Protect and Enhance Customs Infrastructure through Secure Funding.
- Each pillar of the 21CCF framework identifies initiatives and actions that involve statutory, regulatory, and policy updates. Each of these pillars has its own execution plan and timeline, which will enable successful execution of the 21CCF strategic goals.

**Issue:**

- While developing 21CCF, CBP received substantial feedback regarding the need to rethink the entry process. Established for a different era of commerce, the current entry process requires a comprehensive update to keep pace with the many new challenges presented by the modern trade environment.
- The trade community seeks an entry process that embraces emerging technology and harmonization across the government.

**Current Status:**

- The Unified Entry Process is a major component of the first pillar. It is a reimagining of the entry process that will expedite release decisions, improve data collection, align authorities across agencies, and streamline business processes.
- The concept is based in the premise that state-of-the-art technology, such as distributed ledgers, robotic process automation, and advancements in artificial intelligence, combined with updated statutory authorities, will allow CBP to gain never before realized transparency into the global supply chain. This means that actors, who have been historically invisible to CBP's processes, will be able to provide data in near real-time, in a secure and verifiable manner.
- The trade community is providing input for this reimagined entry process via the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) Unified Entry Working Group, which has provided valuable, forward-leaning insights on how a new entry process can operate, while ensuring goods continue to enter the United States in a safe, secure manner.
- With this process, the U.S. Government can move towards an automated, account-based, data-centric infrastructure where importation, targeting, and analytics processes will continually scale with trade volumes and industry demands.

**Next Steps:**

- CBP will re-engage the COAC Unified Entry working group in the near future to solicit implementation recommendations for the Unified Entry Process.
- For more information about 21CCF, please visit the 21CCF webpage on CBP.gov:  
<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/21CCF>