

**Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee  
Government Issue Paper  
Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee  
Centers of Excellence and Expertise Working Group**

**June 2024**



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

Pub# 3733-0624

**Office of Field Operations, Cargo and Conveyance Security**  
**Secure Trade Lanes Subcommittee**  
**Centers of Excellence and Expertise Working Group**  
**June 2024**

**Action Required:** Informational

**Background:**

The Centers of Excellence and Expertise (Centers) were established following the exhaustive idea exchange with the Commercial Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) and careful concept testing and validation both within CBP and the broader trade community. The Centers have full operational authority to process post-release trade activities on an industry and account basis; thereby, improving enforcement efforts, and increasing industry knowledge. Due to their dynamic role in trade facilitation, the Centers play a more strategic role in trade enforcement by focusing their industry expertise on bad actors and working collaboratively on specific enforcement issues across the nation and within the Ports of Entry (POEs).

The Centers also provide a forum to work with other government agencies to address requirements efficiently, formulating a unified approach at the border. In this manner, the Centers serve as a resource to the broader trade community and to CBP's U.S. government partners. The Centers provide a unique opportunity to not only facilitate trusted partners, but to offer effective trade enforcement by working with the industry to identify potential threats.

**Issue:**

The Centers have been permanent organizational and operational structures for ten years, and as such, CBP is partnering with COAC to evaluate the successes, efficiencies, and opportunities for enhancement. The trade landscape continually evolves and so the industry sectors and CBP must adjust to emerging issues and threats. CBP and COAC strive to develop modern processes that align with the commercial realities of how a 21<sup>st</sup> century industry operates.

**Current Status:**

The Centers Working Group, reestablished in November 2023, meets bi-weekly to discuss concerns, objectives, and goals. The Center WG has identified three overarching themes, operations, structure, and communications, for further analysis and will create sub-workgroups to further address needs, logistical protocols and ultimate goals going forward.

**Submitted by:** Ann Marie Paul, Office of Field Operations

**Date:** May 21, 2024