

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

September 2024



**U.S. Customs and
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Office of Field Operations, Cargo and Conveyance Security
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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 detecting illicit activity 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 21st century industry operates.

Current Status:

- The Centers Working Group (WG), reestablished in November 2023, meets bi-weekly to discuss concerns, objectives, and goals.
- The Centers WG has identified three overarching themes, operations, structure, and communications, for further analysis and has established sub-workgroups to delve into the operational protocols of each theme with a goal of furthering modernization to reach optimal trade processing.

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