



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**The Naturalization Process and
USCIS Resources to Support Citizenship Preparation**

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Immigration to the United States

Quick Overview

- The U.S. is receiving its largest wave of immigrants. The foreign-born population is expected to grow from 13% (40.8 million) currently to 19% (83 million) by 2050
- Over 80% of immigrants now come from outside Europe (e.g. Mexico, China, India, Philippines)
- In addition to settling in traditional gateways, immigrants are now settling in “new gateways” (e.g. North Carolina, Nevada, Georgia) that have little experience providing for the needs of diverse immigrant populations
- Currently, there are approximately 13.3 million Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) living in the United States. Roughly 8.8 million of these individuals are eligible to apply for citizenship



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Immigration to the United States

FY 2010-2013 Snapshot

On average, the United States welcomes approximately one million lawful permanent residents (LPRs) and more than 700,000 new citizens each year.

Year	Asylees	Refugees	Lawful Permanent Residents	Naturalized Citizens
FY 2013	25,199	69,909	990,553	779,929
FY 2012	29,484	58,179	1,031,631	757,434
FY 2011	24,988	56,384	1,062,040	694,193
FY 2010	21,056	73,293	1,042,625	619,913



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Immigration to the United States

8.8 Million LPRs Eligible to Apply for Citizenship

STATE OF RESIDENCE		
California	2,480,000	28.2 %
New York	1,050,000	11.9 %
Texas	930,000	10.6 %
Florida	830,000	9.4 %
Illinois	370,000	4.2 %
New Jersey	370,000	4.2 %
Massachusetts	200,000	2.3 %
Virginia	180,000	2.0 %
Washington	180,000	2.0 %
Arizona	160,000	1.8 %



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Immigration to the United States

8.8 Million LPRs Eligible to Apply for Citizenship

COUNTRY OF BIRTH		
Mexico	2,690,000	30.6%
Philippines	340,000	3.9%
Dominican Republic	310,000	3.5%
Cuba	300,000	3.4%
China	280,000	3.2%
Canada	260,000	3.0%
El Salvador	260,000	3.0%
India	240,000	2.7%
United Kingdom	240,000	2.7%
Vietnam	200,000	2.3%



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The USCIS Office of Citizenship

Strategic Goals

Established by the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Office of Citizenship engages and supports partners to welcome immigrants, promote English language learning and education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and encourage U.S. citizenship by:

- Providing immigrants with opportunities and tools to become involved citizens
- Building community capacity to prepare immigrants for citizenship
- Promoting dialogue and collaboration on civic integration and citizenship and raising awareness of its importance to society



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The USCIS Office of Citizenship

Key Initiatives for Lawful Permanent Residents

- **Citizenship Resource Center:** A web-based resource center designed to help immigrants prepare for the naturalization process and test. In fiscal year (FY) 2014, the Citizenship Resource Center had more than 3.8 million unique visitors. The site is located at www.uscis.gov/citizenship
- **Naturalization Information Sessions:** Free information sessions for immigrants to learn more about the naturalization process, test, and eligibility requirements. Since July 2009, USCIS has held more than 3,000 naturalization information sessions for approximately 140,000 attendees. Events are listed at www.uscis.gov/citizenshipsessions
- **America's Literacy Directory:** A zip-code based search engine that identifies local organizations providing English as a Second Language and citizenship classes. This search engine is located at <https://literacydirectory>



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USCIS Office of Citizenship

Key Initiatives for Immigrant-Serving Organizations

- **Citizenship and Integration Grant Program:** USCIS awards grants to organizations to expand the availability of high quality citizenship preparation services for permanent residents in communities across the nation. USCIS is now accepting applications for the FY 2015 grant program through May 15, 2015. For additional information, see: www.uscis.gov/grants
- **Training Seminars:** Free training events designed to enhance the skills needed to teach U.S. history, civics and the naturalization process
- **Technical Tools:** Lesson plans, interactive practice tests, tip sheets, booklets, and multimedia resources available at www.uscis.gov/citizenship
- **Program Development:** USCIS offers resources to support organizations seeking to enrich their citizenship preparation programs



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The USCIS Office of Citizenship

Key Partnerships

- **Municipal Partnerships:** Local communities play a critical role in welcoming and assisting immigrants. By establishing formal agreements with local municipalities, USCIS is able to provide information and resources to facilitate outreach and engagement, training and technical assistance, and citizenship education to communities
- **Federal Partnerships:** As the federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States, USCIS recognizes the services other federal agencies provide to immigrants. Through collaboration and partnership with these agencies, USCIS is able to expand its support for permanent residents on the path to citizenship



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The USCIS Office of Citizenship

Task Force on New Americans

- As part of the President's Executive Actions on Immigration, the Task Force on New Americans was created by President Obama on November 21, 2014
- The Task Force is led by Co-Chairs Cecilia Muñoz, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and León Rodríguez, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- The Task Force is comprised of 16 Federal departments, agencies, and White House offices
- The goal of the Task Force is to develop and begin implementing a federal immigrant integration strategy that encourages new Americans to contribute to society to their fullest potential and bring new Americans together with their receiving communities to strengthen communities



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Task Force on New Americans

- On April 14, the President's Task Force on New Americans submitted a report to President Obama with recommendations on how this nation can:
 - create welcoming communities,
 - promote naturalization and civic engagement,
 - support immigrant entrepreneurs,
 - expand opportunities to learn English, and
 - encourage all Americans to volunteer
- This report is available on the White House website
- In late November 2015, the Task Force will submit a status report to the President regarding progress made since release of the action plan



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NATURALIZATION

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The general eligibility requirements are provided below.

- 18 years old at the time of filing
- Time as a Permanent Resident
- Continuous residence in the United States
- Physical presence in the United States
- Time living where the application is filed
- Good moral character
- Understanding of the English language
- Knowledge of U.S. history and government
- Attachment to the U.S. Constitution



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NATURALIZATION

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What is Physical Presence?

“Physical presence” is the actual time the applicant has been present in the U.S. It measures the total number of days applicants are in the U.S. during the period physical presence is required.

- The “physical presence” requirement changes depending on how the applicant qualifies.
- Since “physical presence” is cumulative, trips outside the U.S. count against this requirement.

In addition, applicants must live in the USCIS District or State where they apply for naturalization for at least 3 months prior to filing.



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NATURALIZATION

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Educational Requirements - CIVICS

- USCIS administers standardized civics test forms to applicants. Test forms are weighted so all test versions have the same level of difficulty.
- Applicants are required to correctly answer 6 out of 10 questions.
- The civics test is an oral exam where the applicant will provide an oral response.
- The 100 civics questions and answers are available to the public on www.uscis.gov



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NATURALIZATION

APPLICATION FOR NATURALIZATION, FORM N-400

- Find the application and instructions at: www.uscis.gov/n-400
- Once received by USCIS, the applicant will then receive an appointment to appear at a USCIS Application Support Center to submit biometrics.
- Once security checks are complete, the application will be sent to the appropriate field office for the eligibility interview.



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NATURALIZATION

OATH CEREMONY

Oath of Allegiance

- If Form N-400 is approved, applicants will be scheduled for an oath ceremony to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States.
- An applicant becomes a naturalized U.S. citizen only after taking the Oath of Allegiance.
- Certificates of Naturalization are issued as proof of citizenship at the oath ceremony.



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MILITARY NATURALIZATION

MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

Members and veterans of the U.S. armed forces may be eligible for naturalization through their military service under Section 328 or 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

INA Section 328:

Naturalization through one year or more of qualifying honorable service during any period.

INA Section 329:

Naturalization through any amount of qualifying honorable service, but must be during a designated period of hostility.
(We are currently in a designated period of hostility.)

Qualifying service can be in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, National Guard, or Coast Guard.



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NATURALIZATION AT BASIC TRAINING INITIATIVE

- Launched in 2009, with the Army;
- Allows USCIS to bring all naturalization-related services to the new enlistees during basic training;
- Affords military members the earliest possible opportunity to apply for naturalization;
- Enlistees bring their completed Form N-400 to basic training. USCIS then collects biometrics and conducts the interview at the basic training site.
- If approved, USCIS will administer the Oath of Allegiance shortly before the basic training graduation day.

USCIS currently partners with all Basic Training sites for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.



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POSTHUMOUS CITIZENSHIP

A deceased military member qualifies if:

- Honorable active-duty service during qualifying period;
- Death was result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by active-duty service (determined by military).

Lawful Permanent Residence, Good Moral Character, and Continuous Residence/Physical Presence requirements are not applicable.

Next-of-kin must file Form N-644, Application for Posthumous Citizenship within 2 years of the military member's death. Form N-644 is filed with the California Service Center.



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Engaging with USCIS

Next Steps

- Visit the USCIS Citizenship Resource Center at www.uscis.gov/citizenship
- Post a USCIS widget on your website. Available at www.uscis.gov/citizenshipawareness
- Register for the USCIS free email alert service at www.uscis.gov/citizenship and click on “Email Updates”



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- Author: USCIS OLA
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- This presentation is current only as of the date of last revision.
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