U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services *Office of the Director* Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

PA-2023-25

August 25, 2023

Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Access to Voter Registration Services during Naturalization Ceremonies

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing updated policy guidance in the <u>USCIS Policy Manual</u> regarding access to voter registration services¹ during administrative naturalization ceremonies.

Background

The ability to vote in federal elections is a fundamental right that comes with U.S. citizenship.² All individuals naturalized at an administrative naturalization ceremony are immediately eligible to register to vote. In furtherance of its long-standing goal of encouraging newly naturalized U.S. citizens to exercise their right to vote, USCIS has historically provided access to voter registration services at the conclusion of administrative ceremonies.³

USCIS is updating guidance to increase awareness and expand access to voter registration during naturalization ceremonies. This guidance, contained in Volume 12 of the Policy Manual, is effective immediately. The guidance contained in the Policy Manual is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance on the topic.

Policy Highlights

• Affirms that USCIS provides access to voter registration services at each administrative naturalization ceremony and information regarding points-of-contact for voting and voter registration.⁴

To provide feedback on this update, email USCIS at policyfeedback@uscis.dhs.gov.

¹ For a definition of voter registration services, see Volume 12, Citizenship and Naturalization, Part J, Oath of Allegiance, Chapter 5, Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies, Section F, Voter Registration After Naturalization Ceremonies, Subsection 2, Voter Registration Services [12 USCIS-PM J.5(F)(2)].

² See National Voter Registration Act of 1993, Pub. L. 103-31 (May 20, 1993). See <u>52 U.S.C. 20501(a)</u>.

³ See <u>52 U.S.C. 20507(a)(5)</u>. See Promoting Access to Voting, <u>86 FR 13623</u> (Mar. 10, 2021).

⁴ USCIS is not responsible for the collection or retention of any information from such applications. USCIS refers questions regarding voting and voter registration to governmental or nongovernmental organizations offering on-site voter registration services.

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- Provides that USCIS offices request election officials from state or local government election offices to attend ceremonies to distribute, collect, and review voter registration applications, and to officially register new citizens to vote.
- Affirms that USCIS offices coordinate with nonpartisan nongovernmental organizations for voter registration services when state and local government election officials are not available.
- Provides that, to the extent feasible, USCIS offices invite governmental or nongovernmental organizations offering on-site voter registration services to introduce themselves and address the naturalization candidates before the ceremony.
- Explains that nongovernmental agencies requesting participation at administrative naturalization ceremonies to offer voter registration services submit a one-time Voter Registration Services Attestation (Form N-401) for participation at a field office.

Summary of Changes

Affected Section: Volume 12 > Part J > Chapter 5 > Section C, Ceremony Program

- Revises language in the introductory paragraph.
- Adds new bullet to the bulleted list in the first paragraph.

Affected Section: Volume 12 > Part J > Chapter 5 > Section F, Voter Registration After Naturalization Ceremonies

- Revises language in Subsection 1 (Distribution of Voter Registration Applications).
- Revises language in the second and third paragraphs in Subsection 2 (Voter Registration Services).
- Revises language in the first, second, and fifth paragraphs in Subsection 3 (Registration by Nongovernmental Organizations).
- Adds new bullet to the bulleted list in the introductory paragraph in Subsection 5 (Points-of-Contact for Voting and Voter Registration).

USCIS may also make other minor technical, stylistic, and conforming changes consistent with this update.

Citation

Volume 12: Citizenship and Naturalization, Part J, Oath of Allegiance, Chapter 5, Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies [12 USCIS-PM J.5].