



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Executive Order 14012 Anniversary

Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization:
Second Anniversary Accomplishment Highlights

July 2022 - July 2023

Marking its second-year anniversary in July 2023, USCIS and our federal implementation partners of the [Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization](#) continued to build on the strong foundation and success of the first year and expanded our outreach focus. During this time, the Interagency Naturalization Working Group (NWG), grew from 13 to 16 members with the addition of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Small Business Administration (SBA). NWG members continued to elevate and highlight the importance of citizenship through a variety of special projects and efforts.

Special Naturalization Ceremonies

Through special themed naturalization ceremonies in unique locations featuring federal, state, and local leaders as speakers, USCIS strives to elevate the awareness of the naturalization process and highlight the importance of welcoming new citizens into our democracy.

- **Delano Public Library in Delano, CA - December 15, 2022:** The Fresno Field Office held a special naturalization ceremony where American labor leader and civil rights activist, Dolores Huerta, gave remarks and congratulated new citizens. Amplifying the importance of citizenship, Ms. Huerta also recorded a video PSA for USCIS following the ceremony which can be accessed on our YouTube page in English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOLBnQOgdSc; and in Spanish: youtu.be/liuRvENiYkA. As Dolores says – “Sí se puede!”—Yes you can!
- **North Carolina Executive Mansion in Raleigh, NC – June 20, 2023:** In recognition of World Refugee Day, the Raleigh Field Office held a special ceremony for 15 former asylees and refugees hosted at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Executive Mansion is the official residence of the governor of North Carolina, This was the first naturalization ceremony held at the ‘People’s House’ in the 140-year history of the mansion. Governor Roy Cooper welcomed the candidates, saying, “You as new citizens will have something that I do not have. My citizenship was automatic. I was born here. Your citizenship has been earned.” During the ceremony, former Vietnamese refugee and Executive Director of the Montagnard Dega Association, Liana Adrong, was recognized as an Outstanding American by Choice.
- **George Washington’s Mount Vernon in Mount Vernon, VA – July 4, 2023:** In honor of the Fourth of July, the Washington Field Office held a special ceremony at George Washington’s Mount Vernon. U.S. Department of State, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Julieta Noyes, gave remarks and welcomed the 90 new citizens from 53 countries reminding them that, “The strength and vitality of our American democracy depends on the investment of our citizens.”



Interagency Collaboration

- **Naturalization Ceremony Information Session with the National Park Service (NPS) – March 16, 2023:** With the goal of increasing the number of naturalization ceremonies held in national parks throughout the country, USCIS and NPS hosted an information session for 60 park superintendents and park staff. The information session reviewed the basic requirements for holding a ceremony, provided information and resources, and ended with a robust question and answer session. This session, and the NPS’s commitment to elevating citizenship through holding ceremonies in national parks, is a prime example of our effective inter-agency collaboration under the strategy.
- **USCIS Embedded Details:** One aspect of the naturalization outreach strategy has been the placement of USCIS detailed staff with federal partner agencies to serve as inter-agency liaisons assisting partner agencies with implementing projects related to efforts to reduce barriers to naturalization. During these temporary detail assignments, USCIS staff served as in-house subject matter experts on immigration and naturalization issues and educated host agency staff on the naturalization process and the resources and tools available to support eligible lawful permanent residents interested in becoming citizens.
 - HUD Detailee: During this 6-month detail, a USCIS staff member conducted targeted outreach and training on naturalization with public housing authorities in 12 cities throughout the country: Dallas, TX; El Paso, TX; Fort Worth, TX; San Antonio, TX; Miami, FL; Boston, MA; Lawrence, MA; Minneapolis, MN; St. Paul, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; and Los Angeles, CA.
 - USDA Detailee: USCIS and USDA are committed to reaching underserved rural populations eligible to naturalize. During this 4-month detail, a USCIS staff member worked to foster connections between USCIS Community Relations Specialists and USDA local staff to support joint outreach on naturalization to the eligible to naturalize population regularly served by USDA. As part of this effort, USCIS Community Relations Specialists participated in USDA 101 training so they could learn about USDA’s organizational structure and function and appropriately target joint outreach activities.

Targeted State and Local Engagements

In year two, USCIS embarked on an ambitious schedule of state and local engagements highlighting the Naturalization Promotion Strategy and amplifying the importance of citizenship and immigrant integration. Through these trips, USCIS was able to meet with thousands of stakeholders representing multiple sectors sharing important information and resources, fostering partnerships, and gathering information about existing barriers to naturalization. Many of these trips provided unique opportunities to reach marginalized and underserved communities that may be eligible to naturalize.

- **Hawaii – December 2022:** The Office of Citizenship, Partnership, and Engagement traveled to Hawaii and collaborated with the Hawaii Field Office in naturalization promotion work. Traveling to Maui and Oahu, USCIS held two Citizenship Education Teacher Training sessions, attended an agricultural event for farmworkers, held multiple stakeholder engagements to encourage and strengthen naturalization promotion efforts in the state, and hosted a naturalization ceremony.

- **California – December 2022:** USCIS traveled to Fresno, CA to participate in the Fresno Hmong Cultural New Year Celebration. This unique multi-day event was attended by some 100,000 members of the Hmong community from across the United States. USCIS participated in the opening ceremony, stakeholder engagements, speaking events, and hosted a naturalization ceremony.
- **Utah – March 2023:** USCIS coordinated with the Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity, participating in meetings and engagements throughout the state. While in Salt Lake City, USCIS met with Governor Cox’s senior advisors on immigration issues, focusing on Utah’s efforts to foster immigrant integration and inclusion. The team also traveled to Ogden City and Logan, participating in a total of seven engagements, a citizenship education seminar, and a naturalization ceremony for 125 new U.S. citizens. Following our engagement with stakeholders in Ogden, Ogden City embarked on a comprehensive citizenship program, Path to Citizenship, that seeks to address all the common barriers to naturalization and engage students in extracurricular activities that promote civic participation.
- **North Carolina – June 2023:** USCIS coordinated with the North Carolina Governor’s Office of Public Engagement and Inclusion, participating in meetings and engagements throughout the state. The USCIS team met with stakeholders in Raleigh, Durham, and Greensboro, participating in listening sessions, community roundtables and meetings with state and municipal leaders, and a World Refugee Day naturalization ceremony where 15 new American citizens took the Oath of Allegiance.
- **Texas – June 2023:** USCIS coordinated with the Houston Office of New Americans. While in Houston, the team met with the Houston Mayor’s Department of Neighborhoods and learned about the city’s unique approach to language access for its limited English proficiency constituents, held a stakeholder engagement for immigrant service providers hosted by the Harris County Public Schools, met with the Houston Endowment and learned of their efforts and investments in promoting naturalization within Houston, and met at the Consulate of Mexico to discuss potential collaboration to promote naturalization among Mexican nationals in greater Houston who may be eligible to naturalize. The Houston Endowment has made a significant investment of 1.5 million dollars in ensuring that immigrants in Houston have the necessary support as they move along the pathway to citizenship.



Expanded Foreign Embassy Outreach

- In close coordination with DHS and building on the relationship established in year one, USCIS continued to actively engage with the Embassy of Mexico and its consulates in year two. Holding two initial meetings with the Mexican Ambassador and embassy staff, USCIS presented the goals of Executive Order 14012 and the Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization. In February, USCIS hosted a webinar on the naturalization process and available resources for all 52 Mexican Consulates. Over 100 consulate staff participated and the presentation was followed by an active question and answer session.



- Continuing to disseminate information about the naturalization process and to promote citizenship among potential eligible to naturalize Mexican nationals in the U.S., USCIS continued to meet with Consuls General and their staffs throughout the country whenever possible. This year, USCIS held in person meetings at four Mexican Consulates in El Paso, TX; Salt Lake City, UT; Raleigh, NC; and Houston, TX. In the coming months, USCIS Community Relations Specialists will participate in naturalization promotion events in partnership with several consulates throughout the country.
- This year USCIS expanded foreign embassy outreach and met with the Guatemalan Consul General and his staff in Raleigh to share information about Guatemalan nationals eligible to naturalize in the area. The Consul General supported the idea of displaying USCIS naturalization materials in the lobby of the Guatemalan Consulate.



Citizenship Teacher Education Trainings

- During this past year, USCIS staff from the Office of Citizenship conducted 21 in person citizenship training seminars with some 3,000 adult educators. The goal of these seminars is to provide participants with ideas, promising practices, and tools for promoting citizenship education in their local communities. These free seminars provide instruction on the naturalization test, application process, and eligibility requirements to help participants build, enhance, and maintain a comprehensive adult citizenship education program.



Citizenship Grants

- Since it began in FY 2009, USCIS has awarded \$132 million through 579 competitive grants to immigrant-serving organizations in 39 states and the District of Columbia. The program has helped more than 300,000 immigrants prepare for citizenship. In October 2022, USCIS awarded nearly \$20 million in grants to [66 organizations](#) for a 2-year period of performance. In FY 2023 USCIS received \$25 million for the program and will make awards by September 30, 2023.
- Through these grant opportunities, USCIS is working to expand the availability of high-quality citizenship preparation services and to provide opportunities for immigrants to gain the knowledge and training necessary to integrate into American society. Increased learning opportunities and additional citizenship instruction resources in communities help immigrants improve their English language skills, increase their knowledge of U.S. history and government, and gain the tools necessary meet their responsibilities and become successful U.S. citizens.

Citizenship Ambassadors

- USCIS launched the [Citizenship Ambassadors](#) Initiative in July 2022, timed to coincide with the one year anniversary of the public release of the Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization. The initiative is a core piece of the Strategy’s public education and outreach campaign.
 - Citizenship Ambassadors volunteer with USCIS under a renewable Gratuitous Service Agreements (GSAs) and work alongside community relations specialists (CRSs), public affairs officers (PAOs), the Office of Citizenship (OoC), and district and field office directors (FODs) on citizenship promotion and education outreach messaging.
 - As trusted, well-known, and respected community leaders, selected ambassadors share USCIS talking points and publicly available materials and resources, as well as their own personal stories and experiences navigating, or helping others to navigate, the naturalization process. Ambassadors also communicate with USCIS on community issues and concerns, prevalent community myths or erroneous beliefs about the naturalization process, and continued challenges and barriers to naturalization.
 - After one year of highly successful initiative implementation, USCIS is working to expand the total number of ambassadors from 8 to 12. The increased number of ambassadors will amplify the success of the program, diversifying its geographic reach and access to an increased number of immigrant communities.



Outstanding Americans by Choice

The Outstanding Americans by Choice initiative recognizes the outstanding achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. USCIS continued to recognize naturalized U.S. citizens who have made significant contributions to their community and adopted country. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor demonstrate their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Recent recognitions include:

- Liana Adrong, Executive Director, Montagnard Dega Association, Greensboro, NC

Recognition date: June 20, 2023, Raleigh, NC

- Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, Associate Dean for Public Health and C. S. Mott Endowed Professor of Public Health, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine, Flint, MI

Recognition date: April 24, 2023, Dearborn, MI

- Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO, Bread for the World, Washington, DC

Recognition date: January 13, 2023, Washington, DC

- Brigadier General and Deputy Commanding General Stephen L. A. Michael (Ret.), U.S. Army, Kansas City, MO

Recognition date: November 10, 2022, Washington, DC

- Esther Olavarria, Former Deputy Director for Immigration, White House Domestic Policy Council, Miami, FL

Recognition date: November 8, 2022, Miami, FL



Law School Community of Practice

The Law School Community of Practice established in year one continued to convene during year two. This Community of Practice was established to encourage law schools to engage in naturalization-focused days of service around key calendar dates, especially in rural, isolated, and/or vulnerable communities, and to allow naturalization support to count for the public service credits required for graduation. USCIS hosts quarterly Community of Practice meetings for this group, bringing together law schools and their trusted partners to share best innovations and practices in the field around citizenship preparation, and opportunities for collaboration. Meetings also afford USCIS an opportunity to share pertinent information to promote naturalization. Additionally, USCIS provides civics and citizenship education materials for these events. Below are highlights of some promoting naturalization initiatives from select Community of Practice group members.

- **Arkansas Access to Justice Commission and Foundation in Northwest Arkansas.** The Commission was created by the Arkansas Supreme Court in 2003 to provide equal access to justice in civil cases for all Arkansans. This year, fittingly on Citizenship Day, the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, along with several partner organizations (including the National Lawyers Guild), will jointly host a Naturalization Clinic on September 17 in Rogers, Arkansas. Prior to the clinic, volunteers, including attorneys, nonprofit workers, and law students from the University of Arkansas School of Law and the William H. Bowen School of Law will attend a training with in-person and virtual options. USCIS has provided study materials for the clinic. This will be the inaugural Naturalization Clinic in northwest Arkansas, a metropolitan area and region within the Ozark Mountains, and home to approximately 14,000 eligible to naturalize lawful permanent residents. Arkansas Access to Justice anticipates serving around 100 clients.
- **Project Citizenship in Boston, MA.** Since 2014, Project Citizenship has hosted numerous free legal workshops on citizenship throughout New England with a focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Project Citizenship conducts targeted outreach to the immigrant community. Potential clients can schedule eligibility screenings online, and, if they appear potentially eligible, they are notified to schedule an appointment for an upcoming workshop. Through an online platform, Project Citizenship manages thousands of volunteers from local colleges and universities, and the private sector (including established corporate partnerships and attorneys). On April 1, 2023, Project Citizenship hosted Boston's largest Citizenship Day in collaboration with the Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA). Through this large-scale event, Project Citizenship and its partners served 419 clients with the assistance of 270 volunteers. Clients' ages ranged between 17 to 87 and represented nationals from 57 different countries.
- **CUNY Citizenship Now! and CUNY School of Law in New York, NY.** For the past 25 years, CUNY Citizenship Now! has been providing pro bono naturalization application and legal assistance, alongside other legal services to support the needs of nearly a quarter of a million immigrants across New York City's five boroughs through its community-based pro se limited scope legal service program model. This unique model allows them to assist more than 12,000 individuals per year. The program utilizes a trained a volunteer corps of over 6,000.

New Resources

- [USCIS Policy Manual](#): Naturalization and Citizenship Related Updates:
 - [Revision of Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions \(Form N-648\)](#)
 - [Extension of Permanent Resident Card for Naturalization Applicants](#)
 - [Revision of Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service \(Form N-426\)](#)
 - [Venues for Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies](#)
 - [Citizenship for Adopted Children](#)
 - [Removing Guidance Related to the 2020 Civics Test](#)
- **Military IMMVETS**: Resources from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and other agencies that offer services and resources to assist military members, veterans, and their families. As a U.S. military member or veteran, you may be eligible to apply for naturalization to become a United States citizen as well as other benefits and services.
- **Online Rescheduling of Biometrics Appointments**: On June 28, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services launched a new self-service tool allowing benefit requestors, and their attorneys and accredited representatives, to reschedule most biometric services appointments before the date of the appointment.
- **Citizenship Resource Center**: This is a collection of helpful resources and free study materials for a variety of users which is frequently updated.

As the Chair of Interagency Naturalization Working Group and co-lead of the Task Force on New Americans, USCIS will continue to work to bring together all sectors of society to promote naturalization and immigrant integration.



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