



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

*Office of Citizenship,  
Partnership, and Engagement*

# Questions and Answers Stakeholder Engagement with the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) Education Fund Naturalization Working Group

**Engagement Date: Dec. 5, 2024**

## **Background**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) participated in a meeting with the NALEO Education Fund Naturalization Working Group on Dec. 5, 2024. The Office of Citizenship, Partnership, and Engagement provided responses to questions submitted by members of the NALEO Naturalization Working Group. Please note that some of the stakeholder questions below may have been revised for clarity.

## **Upcoming Presidential Transition**

### **Q1. What significant changes does USCIS anticipate related to implementing the naturalization process under the incoming administration?**

A1. As the Executive Branch begins its longstanding process of helping to prepare the incoming administration, USCIS will do its part to ensure a smooth and effective transition. The USCIS Presidential Transition Council, USCIS leadership, and the DHS Presidential Transition Office are working closely together on the transition. While we do not have more information to share related to any significant changes related to the citizenship process under the incoming administration, USCIS and DHS are working to ensure a smooth transition, and we will continue to execute our mission.

## **Naturalization Policy**



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### **Q2. Will USCIS be making any formal announcement that it is not going to pursue the approach for the re-design of the naturalization exam envisioned in the pilot program? Is there additional information USCIS can share about a potential redesign of the test?**

A2. On Dec. 15, 2022, USCIS published a Federal Register notice that included information about the trial for the civics and English-speaking portions of the naturalization test. In addition to the civics and speaking test, the naturalization test includes an English reading and writing test, which were not part of the trial. Since the initial announcement of the trial two years ago, USCIS has conducted several comprehensive multiple sector engagements throughout the country, including adult educators, community colleges, civil society, faith-based communities, businesses, and others which presented a high number of constituents who would have been impacted by such changes, and received feedback and recommendations from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman and Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Based on that feedback, particularly that the trial test would be unduly difficult, and would pose challenges for individuals with lower levels of reading or literacy and for individuals with disabilities, USCIS has decided to no longer pursue the trial of the naturalization test, and as such will not implement the proposed trial as detailed in the [Federal Register notice](#) published on December 30, 2024.

### **Q3. Could you provide an update on the status of the 'Modernizing Adoptions and Naturalization' Notice of Proposed Rulemaking?**

A3. The rule continues to be reviewed and considered.

### **Fees and Waivers**

### **Q4. Does USCIS plan to share data with the public on reduced fee requests submitted since April 1, 2024? Specifically, what are the number of reduced fee requests USCIS has received since that date, including how many were approved and denied?**

A4. At this time, USCIS does not have public data on reduced fee applications since April 2024. Although a request for a reduced fee is different than a fee waiver request, USCIS has published data on fee waivers on the [Naturalization Statistics page](#) and will publish an update with FY2024 data soon.

### **Q5. Does USCIS plan to develop online versions of the Form I-912 to submit requests for fee waivers and Form I-942 to submit requests for a reduced fee? If so, is there a projected timeline?**

A5. USCIS will continue to review expanding online forms for the public. Note, as of April 1,



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2024, Form I-942 no longer exists and a request for a reduced fee Form N-400 is submitted on the Form N-400 itself. If you are requesting a reduced fee or filing a fee waiver, you cannot file Form N-400 online. You must file a paper Form N-400 if you are requesting a reduced fee or filing a fee waiver.

### **Citizenship and Integration Grant Program (CIGP)**

**Q6. The NALEO Education Fund views that the FY25 Continuing Resolution provides for the same level of funding of the CIGP. Is USCIS considering issuing the FY25 Citizenship and Integration Grant funds before December 20 while the Continuing Resolution is in place?**

A6. Since 2009, the CIGP has been a part of a multifaceted effort to provide citizenship preparation resources, support, and information to immigrants and immigrant-serving organizations. The program has awarded approximately \$168 million through 687 competitive grants to immigrant-serving organizations in 41 states and the District of Columbia. The program has helped more than 375,000 lawful permanent residents (LPRs) prepare for U.S. citizenship. On September 30, 2024, USCIS awarded seven grants totaling \$2.4 million for the Citizenship Integration Training Academy (CITA). Most recently on Friday, November 22, 2024, USCIS awarded 36 Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services (CINAS) awards totaling \$10 million. USCIS did not issue FY25 grant funds before December 20 as that timeline would not allow for a full and fair consideration process.

**Q7. USCIS publishes the total number of CIGP awards, including the organization and amount of each award. However, in recent years USCIS has not published the total number of applications received for the Notices of Funding Opportunity under the CIGP. Would USCIS be able to provide that information?**

A7. In 2024 Public Law 118-47 directed USCIS, on an annual basis, to make available on a publicly accessible website in a downloadable, searchable, and sortable format, an accounting of all grant funding provided by or in coordination with USCIS for at least the previous three fiscal years. At a minimum, the report must include by fiscal year: the name of the grant, recipient of the grant, grant amount, fiscal year period of availability, purpose of awarded grant, the number of people impacted by the grant, and metrics used to measure success or impact of such grant. USCIS has published this required information on the new [Grant Program Impact](#) webpage. This page includes a table highlighting the specific impact of the grant program and overview of funding opportunities in the past three fiscal years and a cumulative list of all previous organizations that have received grants through the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, including the award amount within each fiscal year. This year USCIS received more applications for the CIGP than it has received in over ten years. In the coming months USCIS will publish information on the



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total number of applications received for grant program cycles.

### USCIS Civics Test Textbook

**Q8. In addition to making the USCIS Civics Test Textbook available online, will USCIS be publishing and making hard copies of the textbook available? Will the textbook be translated into Spanish or any other language?**

A8. USCIS has published hard copy versions of One Nation, One People: The USCIS Civics Test Textbook. The Office of Citizenship delivers Adult Citizenship Education Training Academy sessions across the country. If you participate in the training academy, we will provide you with a hard copy of the USCIS Civics Test Textbook, along with other resources. You can find information on the Citizenship Resource Center about [Upcoming Teacher Trainings](#). The teacher trainings are free and open to the public, including CIGP grant recipient organizations, but note pre-registration is required and capacity may be limited based on the venue. USCIS is also exploring translation of the textbook into other languages.

### USCIS Processing

**Q9. In the next two months, what specific measures is USCIS planning to implement to continue to address the ongoing backlog issues?**

A9. In FY 2023, the USCIS net backlog decreased by more than 760,000 cases, a decrease of 15%. By the end of FY 2023, the USCIS backlog was 4.3 million cases, down from approximately 5 million cases at the end of FY 2022. At the end of FY 2024, USCIS further reduced the backlog to 3.8 million (a reduction of 11.2 percent from FY 2023). Addressing the backlog is a priority. As the backlog increases, applicants and petitioners experience longer wait times to receive a decision on their benefit requests. USCIS understands the impact of decision delays on applicants and petitioners; and USCIS recognizes that its core mission is to ensure the timely processing of immigration applications, petitions, and requests with fairness, integrity, and respect for all whom we serve. In FY 2024, USCIS continued to implement a multi-pronged approach to make progress in backlog reduction that includes increased hiring, expanded overtime hours, further information technology investments to promote more efficient processing of cases, and regulatory and policy changes. However, even with these investments in people, process, and technology, it will take a sustained, multi-year effort and appropriated funding to eliminate the backlog. Note, USCIS projects the backlog will increase due in large part to an increase in forecasted receipts in FY 2025 and the inability to increase current staffing levels without the support of Congressional appropriations for additional backlog adjudication positions.



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**Q10. What are the primary causes of delays related to printing green cards (or Permanent Resident Cards), and is USCIS taking any steps to expedite the issuance of replacement green cards?**

A10. Over the last two fiscal years, USCIS has experienced an increase in Permanent Resident Card (PRC) and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) production volumes. The increase in card production is no longer viewed as a surge, but an ongoing mission requirement. At the height of increased volume, PRCs were pending production for a maximum of nine business days. To address and sustain the increase in card production volume, on August 19, 2024, the Office of Intake and Document Production (OIDP) established a second shift card production operation at the Corbin Production Facility. Adding a second shift at the Card Production Facility allows for the inserter/mailers to operate longer and increase daily output. In addition, OIDP received additional equipment and replaced some of the older equipment to help with production.