



# CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.

## **Overview of the U.S. Naturalization Process and Citizenship Benefits**

**August 30, 2018**

# Agenda

- Impact of Citizenship
- Citizenship Eligibility Requirements
- Overview of the Application Process
- Overview of the USCIS Interview
- Citizenship Navigator Updates and Requests
- Questions

# Impact of Citizenship

- Family Reunification
- Derivative Citizenship for Children
- Faster Citizenship for Spouse
- Full Civic Participation
- Travel Benefits
- Public Benefits
- More Employment and Educational Opportunities



# Family Reunification

- Sponsor more family members for a Permanent Resident Visa “Green Card”
- Spouses, minor children and parents of adult U.S. citizens are granted green cards without regard to numerical quotas
- Waiting time is shorter for family petitions



# Derivative Citizenship for Children



# Faster Citizenship for Spouse



# Full Civic Participation

Right to Vote, Hold Elected Office, and Serve on a Jury



# Travel Benefits

Travel freely and receive protection from the U.S. Embassy





# Public Benefits



# More Employment and Educational Opportunities



# Citizenship Eligibility Requirements



# Age

A naturalization applicant must be at least 18 years old at the time of filing.

# Permanent Residence Status and Continuous Residence

- An applicant must be a lawful permanent resident (“green card holder”) for at least five years or three years if married to a U.S. citizen before applying for naturalization.
- Must have continuous residence in the U.S. during this period for at least 30 months of the five years preceding the date of filing the application.
- Long absences from the U.S. may break continuous residence.
- An applicant must have lived in the state or USCIS district with jurisdiction over the applicant's place of residence for at least 3 months before filing the N-400 application.

# English Test

An applicant must be able to pass a test on reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English unless qualified for an exemption.

# U.S. History and Civics Test

An applicant must be able to pass a test on U.S. history and civics.

# Testing Exemptions

- An applicant may qualify for one of several testing exemptions based on age, long-term residence, and disability.
- An applicant with a certain physical or developmental disability or a mental impairment that make him or her unable to learn can apply for a disability-based waiver of the testing requirements.



# Good Moral Character

An applicant must have good moral character (or “GMC”) for five years before applying for naturalization (or three years for the spouses of U.S. citizens).

# Selective Service

In general, males must register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday and not after reaching 26 years of age.

# Oath of Allegiance

- An applicant must understand and be willing to take an Oath of Allegiance to the U.S.
- The oath requires applicants to renounce allegiance to any other countries and promise to support and defend the Constitution of the U.S.

# Overview of the Application Process



# Step 1

- Complete Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.
- Collect the necessary documents to demonstrate your eligibility for naturalization.
- Make copy of the Green Card, both sides
- Refer to A Guide to Naturalization for more information at [www.uscis.gov/natzguide](http://www.uscis.gov/natzguide).
- Review and sign your Form N-400.

## Step 2

- Send in your application, supporting documents, and fees to USCIS. (Refer to [www.uscis.gov/n-400](http://www.uscis.gov/n-400) for filing addresses.)
- Fees can be paid by check, money order, or a form to pay by credit card
- Include Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, if applicable

## Step 3

Go to the biometrics appointment. You will receive an appointment notice that will include your biometrics appointment date, time, and location. All applicants are required to attend the biometrics appointment, even those over 75 years of age (a new requirement).

## Step 4

- Once all the preliminary processes on your case are complete, USCIS will schedule an interview with you to complete the naturalization process.
- You must report to the USCIS office at the date and time on your appointment notice.



# Step 5

Complete the in-person interview at USCIS

## Step 6

Receive a decision from USCIS on your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

# Step 7

Receive a notice to take the Oath of Allegiance.

# Step 8

Take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States and receive your Certificate of Naturalization.

# Elderly and disabled applicants

All domestic USCIS facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. However, USCIS can make special arrangements to accommodate the needs of the elderly and applicants with disabilities, who are homebound or hospitalized. This is known as [homebound processing](#). Applicants who need to [request an accommodation](#) for their appointment can submit a [service request](#) online or call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at any time at 800-375-5283 (TDD: 800-767-1833).

# Overview of the USCIS Interview



# Overview of the USCIS Interview

- During your interview, be prepared to provide corrections, including any new trips overseas, the birth of a child, a new job, etc. Review your submitted N-400 so that you know the facts you entered onto that form.
- The test of your English speaking ability will begin the moment the officer meets you at your interview.
- Bring your driver's license or state ID, green card, certified marriage and/or divorce decrees for all marriages, passports or travel documents, federal tax returns, proof of registration for selective service.

# Sample Interview Questions

- The officer may engage in “small talk” in order to gauge the applicant’s command of basic English.
  - Examples: How’s the weather outside? Did you have any problems finding parking? Have you been waiting a long time to talk to me today?
- The officer may ask questions to check understanding of the reason for the interview.
- The officer may ask the reasons the applicant wishes to become a United States citizen.



# Sample History and Civics Questions

- How many U.S. Senators are there?
- Where is the Statue of Liberty?
- What is the capital of the United States?
- What is the name of the national anthem?
- Name one problem that led to the Civil War.

# Citizenship Navigator Updates

- Use the hotline if you have questions about citizenship or DOJ R&A
- Marketing materials
- Quarterly Call to occur September 6
- Free and discounted trainings available.  
Contact me for the code.



# Questions?

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