



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Executive Order 14012 Anniversary

Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization: Naturalization Working Group Progress Report

On February 2, 2021, President Biden issued [Executive Order 14012: Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration System and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#). Sections 5(c) and (d) of the Order established the [Interagency Naturalization Working Group \(NWG\)](#), currently comprised of thirteen (13) federal agencies,¹ and directed the NWG to submit a strategy to the President outlining steps the federal government should take to promote naturalization. USCIS published the NWG's Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization on July 2, 2021 and has documented progress in this report.

The NWG's whole of government approach leverages each federal agency partner's unique programs and networks to promote citizenship and ensure aspiring citizens are prepared for success throughout the naturalization process. The NWG works collaboratively at the federal, state, and local community level under three focus areas:

- I. Immigrant, Community, and Education Outreach Initiatives**
- II. Promoting Citizenship through Capacity Building and Partnerships**
- III. Citizenship Education Materials and Inclusion Language**

USCIS and its interagency partners have achieved a significant number of initial successes since the Executive Order was first announced and since the Strategy was published **six months ago**. This work will continue and was not intended as a time-limited initiative.

I. Immigrant, Community, and Education Outreach Initiatives

(A) Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Campaign: *The NWG committed to – Growing the campaign by leveraging NWG networks and expanding outreach to refugees and asylees, agricultural workers, adult adoptees, and LPRs of more than 10 years.*

With the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR), the NWG reached 358 refugee and asylee service providers, providing information about the naturalization process and USCIS resources, as well as recording needs and concerns. USCIS Community Relations Officers (CROs) are now more fully participating in ORR State Refugee Coordinator (SRC) quarterly community consultations at the local level. HHS continues to work with its technical assistance provider to communicate refugee and asylee concerns related to the naturalization process. USCIS also made hardcopy public outreach and educational materials available to HHS grantees upon request, ensuring that promotion materials and education tools reach the right individuals. With the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the NWG is reaching historically underserved agricultural workers across the United States. USCIS and USDA launched pilot projects in Fall 2021 to conduct local level outreach among agricultural workers in four geographic areas: Imperial Valley, California; Rio Grande Valley, Texas; Central Florida; and Central Pennsylvania. Each area has a plan tailored to its immigrant community needs. USCIS and USDA are looking to expand the pilot projects to other geographic areas in 2022.

¹ Current NWG members include: (1) the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, (2) the U.S. Department of Agriculture, (3) the U.S. Department of Defense, (4) the U.S. Department of Education, (5) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (6) the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (7) the U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service (new member!), (8) the U.S. Department of Justice, (9) the U.S. Department of Labor, (10) the U.S. Department of State, (11) the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, (12) the Social Security Administration, and (13) the Institute of Museum and Library Services (new member!).

USCIS participated in a stakeholder engagement session on intercountry adoption issues in January 2022 with the U.S. Department of State (DOS) hosted by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI)². USCIS provided updates on the adoption sections of its policy manual, discussed the publication of its [Adult Adoptees and U.S. Citizenship Webpage](#), and covered its COVID-related flexibilities and country-specific processing updates. DOS provided updates on the status of intercountry adoptions in bilateral agreements with priority countries.

For longer-term LPRs (10+ years), the USCIS Office of Performance and Quality (OPQ) is working with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES)³ to develop a messaging project that assesses the effectiveness of various attempts to nudge applicants to apply for immigration benefits, including those who have been LPRs for 10+ years. This collaboration will increase equitable access to benefits and services, improve effectiveness, and enhance the immigration process.

USCIS is also working to reach longer-term LPRs via in-language community outreach to groups who have larger numbers of elderly and longer-term LPRs. In December, USCIS Director Ur Mendoza Jaddou gave an interview in English and Vietnamese on the Saigon Broadcasting Television Network, with specific messaging tailored to the concerns of elderly longer-term Vietnamese LPRs. USCIS will build on this successful model for similar engagements in 2022.

USCIS has also focused on geographically isolated groups as well as former and current military members and their families. The USCIS Office of Citizenship Education and Training Branch team has prioritized geographically isolated communities in its 2021 and 2022 plans, using data from the “Eligible to Naturalize Dashboard” to locate groups in areas with limited support services. Finally, USCIS is working with the newest NWG member, The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS)⁴, on a plan to provide libraries in rural communities with additional support for civics and English language classes. USCIS has also taken several steps outlined in sections “E-F” below to reach military members, veterans, and their family members.



²The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that was founded in 2001 by advocates of children in the U.S. and around the world in need of families. For more information, see <https://www.ccaainstitute.org/>.

³GSA is not a formal NWG interagency partner but is working collaboratively with USCIS on this research-oriented project.

⁴IMLS is a governmental organization and the newest member of the NWG. IMLS’ mission is to advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.

(B) The USCIS Outstanding Americans by Choice Initiative (ABC): *The NWG committed to – Recognizing individuals who have chosen to become Americans and have made significant contributions to their communities.*

USCIS recognized nine ABC recipients in 2021. Full bios for all of 2021’s ABCs are available [on the USCIS website](#). USCIS intends to increase the number of ABC awards in 2022.

(C) USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program: *The NWG committed to – Revisiting the feasibility of accepting private donations and fostering partnerships with foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and corporations to expand the scope of naturalization services; Refining the grant program to consider prioritizing funding for organizations that assist underserved communities.*

USCIS provided \$10 million in grants to 40 grantees for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the country, including new partners that work with traditionally underserved communities as identified in E.O. 14012. USCIS continues to explore the feasibility of accepting private donations to expand its grant program and refine granting criteria. In 2022, USCIS will explore expanding grant program criteria to better reach underserved or isolated communities as outlined in the Strategy.

(D) Social Media Outreach: *The NWG committed to – Expanding social media content around citizenship-related activities in connection with annual themes; Expanding social media activity in other languages; and Leveraging interagency partner social media accounts.*

USCIS re-activated its Spanish language social media accounts and developed targeted social media messaging around key dates and annual themes. USCIS also provided strategic communications updates to NWG members who elevated messaging on their platforms to multiply reach. USCIS will look at expanding its social media annual thematic calendar in 2022 and at the possibility of posting in additional languages.

(E) Targeted Outreach: *The NWG committed to – Conducting outreach with state and local governments; Conducting naturalization information sessions with NWG partner agencies; Leveraging USDA’s Office of Partnership and Public Engagement Networks and DOJ/Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) GovDelivery listserv; and Exploring direct communication with applicants around key milestones in their immigration journeys.*

In June, USCIS conducted a naturalization-focused webinar with 490 DOJ/EOIR accredited representatives. USCIS also held a webinar with Veterans Affairs (VA) and the DHS/CIS Ombudsman in August, providing naturalization-related information to 244 veteran organizations, legal advocates, and other stakeholders on services for former and current members of the U.S. military and their families.

USCIS held information sessions for USDA regional and local contacts. USCIS also leveraged USDA Office of Partnership and Public Engagement networks in establishing its local level pilot projects described under section “A” above.

DOJ has been sending USCIS communications on naturalization via its GovDelivery listserv. In addition, with the arrival of Afghan evacuees, the Civil Rights Division (CRT) has increased its outreach to immigrant service providers. In October 2021, CRT published a [Fact Sheet](#) for Afghan evacuees, many of whom are in the process of applying for Special Immigrant visas or already have Special Immigrant visas and will be eligible to apply for naturalization in the future. The Fact Sheet, as well as CRT presentations for service providers,

explains how employers can onboard work-authorized immigrants who are waiting for their Social Security number. DOJ/EOIR also published a “U.S. Citizenship” section on its high-use Immigration Court Online Resource (ICOR) and is working with federal colleagues to enhance resources linked from there.

USCIS has been exploring direct communication with applicants, especially surrounding key milestone dates. Due to Privacy Act concerns, USCIS must approach any direct communication with potential applicants with caution, ensuring that the appropriate legal authority and authorization for any direct communication is in place and the correct protocols are followed. USCIS continues to discuss with its Office of Chief Counsel and Office of Privacy the appropriate mechanisms for conducting any direct communications encouraging individuals to apply for naturalization.

(F) Community Outreach: *The NWG committed to – Identifying offices and networks within each partner agency for promotional work; Conducting museum, library, and employer outreach; Encouraging USCIS Community Relations Officer (CROs) participation in HHS/ORR State Refugee Coordinator consultations; Supporting the “Avoid Scams” initiative; and Supporting DOJ/EOIR’s outreach with their networks.*

USCIS and NWG partners identified each interagency partner’s unique offices and networks for coordinated local community outreach:

- **DOL** – USCIS is working with DOL to identify best locations for targeted outreach with American Job Centers and other offices, as well as on messaging for grantees and stakeholders.
- **USDA** – USCIS is working with a myriad of USDA departments and local offices in its local community pilot projects and is looking to expand pilot projects in 2022.
- **HHS** – USCIS connected its CROs to HHS/ORR’s State Refugee Coordinators and is working to expand outreach to other HHS programs and divisions.
- **DoD** – The USCIS Field Operations Directorate is partnering with DoD to offer noncitizen military members the opportunity to pursue U.S. citizenship on military bases by conducting interviews and naturalization ceremonies via video technology. DoD and the Military Services continue to refine and improve communication efforts with military members to ensure each serving noncitizen has the information necessary to initiate the naturalization process. The DoD is also actively engaged with DHS and VA on the [Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative \(IMMVI\)](#).
- **SSA** – SSA’s Office of Strategic and Digital Communications has worked closely with USCIS to air USCIS video PSAs in offices across the country and to post USCIS widgets and links on its in-language webpages. SSA is looking to expand outreach with local offices in 2022.
- **HUD** – USCIS is working with HUD to develop further avenues for outreach.
- **ED** – USCIS continues to work with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) and Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) in the development of outreach materials and citizenship and education training seminars for adult educators. USCIS will engage with other parts of ED in 2022.
- **VA** – USCIS conducted a webinar for VA stakeholders. The VA also aired a USCIS video PSA in hospital and clinic waiting rooms across the country in November in celebration of Veterans Day. In 2022, the VA is looking to expand outreach work with its Transition and Case Management office and Veterans Experience Office. The VA is the co-chair with DHS of the [Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative \(IMMVI\)](#).

- **DOJ** – As mentioned in section “E”, USCIS has worked with EOIR on a webinar for stakeholders, and DOJ shared has shared multiple USCIS announcements to DOJ’s GovDelivery subscribers. DOJ also helped coordinate avoid scams outreach and messaging in Fall 2022. As a part of Civil Rights Division’s (CRT’s) general outreach and information sharing, CRT conducted 100 presentations in fiscal year 2021 and over 20 presentations so far in fiscal year 2022 to worker and employer audiences about the Immigration and Nationality Act’s anti-discriminatory provision, which prohibits certain types of employment discrimination based on citizenship, immigration status, and national origin. In 2022, USCIS and DOJ are looking to provide naturalization information with DOJ/EOIR grants of cancellation of removal, asylum, and other forms of relief that provide a pathway to lawful permanent residency and citizenship in 2022.
- **DOS** – In 2022, USCIS and DOS will explore further coordination to provide information on naturalization and citizenship acquisition to recipients of adoption-related immigrant visas. USCIS will also pursue outreach to foreign consulates in the U.S. to help clarify dual citizenship messaging.
- **NPS** – NPS joined the NWG in November and is working on 2022 plans for educational materials and outreach at NPS parks and monuments.
- **IMLS** – IMLS joined the NWG in December and is developing plans for networks of libraries and museums for naturalization promotion and civics education.

USCIS held an educator training summit with the Ellis Island Museum and National Park in November, reached an agreement with the Heinz Center in Pittsburgh to conduct annual outreach and educational activities, and held a planning session with the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas on additional engagement activities for 2022.

(G) Engaging with Stakeholders: *The NWG committed to – Engaging with congressional partners, foreign embassies and consulates, intergovernmental partners and networks, the “Roadmap for Educating for American Democracy,” and community-based organizations.*

USCIS conducted a webinar for Congressional staffers in July and is looking to deepen its outreach to Congressional partners in 2022, focusing on geographic areas and communities with significant numbers of individuals eligible to apply for naturalization and on communities that are geographically isolated. USCIS will expand outreach to foreign embassies, consulates, and intergovernmental partners on migration trends,



comparative analysis, and citizenship acquisition, including with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum, and Refugees (IGC).

The USCIS Office of Citizenship Education and Training Branch team met with staff from Educating for American Democracy (EAD) and agreed to work collaboratively on developing two-generation (2-Gen)⁵ citizenship educational resources for K-12 and adult citizenship education audiences. USCIS will continue exploring this partnership in consultation with its Office of Chief Counsel.

USCIS Community Relations Officers (CROs) have conducted close to 900 naturalization outreach events to LPRs and stakeholders, in addition to their continued engagement with library citizenship corners. CRO engagements have been in major LPR languages and in close coordination with interagency partners, faith-based communities, businesses, and state and local government offices. USCIS Field Offices play a critical role in community-level outreach and have been on the frontline of building state and local partnerships. USCIS also launched a naturalization promotion toolkit for Field Offices and developed a living roster of over 1,400 organizations providing immigrant services.

USCIS also has a team of Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) in the field who have renewed efforts to engage local media outlets, highlighting in-person and virtual citizenship promotion work and ensuring native, in-language media coverage for different populations eligible to apply for naturalization. PAOs have given nearly 45 interviews to 30 media outlets, including dozens of non-English language interviews over the last year. PAOs continually promote USCIS tools and resources and pitch citizenship-focused stories to English and non-English media, reaching populations eligible to apply for naturalization in their native languages across the country.

In addition to hosting the aforementioned webinars and engagements, USCIS continued to engage in virtual and in-person conferences and events reaching a broad range of stakeholders.

- In June, the USCIS Chief of Staff, Felicia Escobar-Carrillo, and the NWG Chair, Kelly Ryan, spoke at the Center for Migration Studies (CMS) webinar on the Executive Order and the CMS report [“Making Citizenship an Organizing Principle of the US Immigration System”](#) and listened to CMS recommendations.
- In June, USCIS and the DHS/CIS Ombudsman and the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) hosted a public stakeholder engagement webinar to discuss [naturalization and immigrant integration](#). The presentation and Q&A are available on the [USCIS website](#).
- In October, the NWG Chair presented on a panel at the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) National Immigrant Integration Conference (NIIC) where USCIS also hosted a booth, handed out over 3,050 materials, and talked with hundreds of participants, answering questions and building connections for future partnerships.
- In October, the NWG Chair and a USCIS Educational Specialist on Civics Education, Dr. Jeremy Kelton Williams, presented on panels at the Washington College of Law at the American University Conference on Citizenship.
- In November, the NWG Chair spoke at the Hispanic Women’s Association of Arkansas virtual annual conference.

⁵For more information on “2-Gen” approaches to education, see the USCIS factsheet: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/tip-sheets-and-idea-boards/DCET-43-2Gen-Tip-Sheet.pdf>

II. Promoting Citizenship through Capacity Building and Partnerships

(A) Letters of Agreement (LOA) & Memoranda of Understanding (MOU): *The NWG committed to – Exploring a return to LOAs with cities and MOUs with the National Park Service (NPS), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the U.S. Department of Education (ED).*

USCIS finalized MOUs with NPS and IMLS and is working on finalizing MOUs with ED and USDA. USCIS also determined that there are better mechanisms than LOAs for partnerships with state and local governments and will pursue these relationships further in 2022.

(B) Collaboration and Partnerships: *The NWG committed to – Expanding DHS’ intra-agency collaboration, specifically working with CBP to post naturalization related materials on their website and to air video PSAs and distribute materials at points of entry (POEs); Continuing to work with IOM to distribute materials to refugees resettled in the United States; Working with DOS on potential for dual citizenship messaging with certain countries; Exploring potential partnership with the USPS; and Working with SSA and HHS/ORR on outreach initiatives.*

USCIS and CBP are working on material distribution and airing video PSAs at select airport Ports of Entry (POE). CBP will also post the USCIS [Naturalization Eligibility Tool](#) to its website, which helps applicants determine whether they may be eligible to submit an application for naturalization.⁶ USCIS added a similar link to the Form I-90 (Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card) webpage (“Check to see if you may be eligible to apply for naturalization.”). USCIS has also continued to work with IOM to distribute materials to refugees processed for resettlement.

USCIS and SSA have collaborated on the “Enumeration Beyond Entry” project, under which partners automated the Social Security Number (SSN) application process for noncitizens residing in the United States. Noncitizens can now request a new or replacement social security card through USCIS Forms I-485 and I-765. For information on dual citizenship messaging programs and plans, as well as USCIS close work with HHS/ORR see sections “I.A” and “I.G” above. USCIS is planning to further explore possible USPS collaboration in 2022.

The NWG, led by the USCIS Office of Performance and Quality (OPQ) and the DHS Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS), recently launched the Eligible to Naturalize Dashboard which provides statistics on those eligible to apply for naturalization⁷ by birth country, age, gender, class of admission, and length of time as lawful permanent resident (LPR).⁸ The Dashboard is an important part of the Strategy’s overall data-driven and evidenced-based approach and will inform planning, program design, and targeted outreach in the years to come. USCIS OPQ also published several data and statistical webpages and reports which NWG members are using to inform outreach strategies, including the first infographic webpage on [Military Naturalization Statistics](#), a new infographic webpage on [Naturalization Statistics](#), and the reports [Characteristics of People Who Naturalized](#) and [Trends in Naturalization](#). In keeping with the NWG Strategy to seek public feedback and input, OPQ also hosted its first ever data listening session and held focus group sessions. The NWG gained valuable insights into how to improve data transparency and better understand motivations for and barriers to naturalization.

⁶ The tool does not determine if an applicant is eligible for naturalization, but rather helps applicants work through the initial process and criteria, and then directs them to the online filing portal.

⁷ Some individuals eligible to apply for naturalization may not be granted citizenship based on the circumstances of their particular case.

⁸ The Dashboard has been reviewed by DHS and USCIS privacy components to ensure that no personally identifiable information appears in the data or can be extrapolated from the data.

III. Citizenship Education Materials and Inclusive Language

(A) Language and Accommodation: *The NWG committed to – Assessing expansion of its printed citizenship study materials; Identifying necessary additional languages; Developing aids for legal and technical terms; Exploring ways to improve digital access to citizenship-related content and resources; Offering accommodations for webinar participants.*

USCIS Office of Citizenship, Publications, and Outreach Branch team continues to work on expansion of study materials into additional languages, exploring ways to improve digital access to citizenship-related content on USCIS' [Citizenship Resource Center \(CRC\) site](#), and offering accommodations for participants. Over the course of the past year, USCIS released digital versions of the pamphlet [USCIS Welcomes Refugees and Asylees](#) in Amharic, Kibembe, Kinyarwanda, and Tigrinya.

(B) Training: *The NWG committed to expanding – Adult citizenship education training seminars; Outreach for military service members; and Webinars for NWG member agencies and their networks, including development of “Welcoming Webinars” housing important information on services and resources for new immigrants and lawful permanent residents.*

The USCIS Office of Citizenship, Education and Training Branch team trained over 4,500 adult citizenship and English language educators via webinar in 2021, targeting educators working in schools, libraries, museums, community-based organizations, and state and local adult learning resource centers. Reaching this many educators has a powerful multiplier effect as educators transfer knowledge to their communities and classrooms. Additionally, USCIS hosted a special informational training session for members of the IDR Consortium who work with migrant farmworkers and their children, some of whom are LPRs and may be eligible to apply for naturalization.

On July 2, DHS, DoD, and VA announced the Immigrant Military Members and Veterans Initiative (IMMVI). Partners have prioritized the improvement of naturalization and information services delivery, ensuring that all veterans fully understand and have ready access to citizenship application support and resources. Partners have initiated outreach to veterans who have been deported or removed and are working to improve access to military members to enable naturalization early in military careers. Partners have also developed a registration portal to identify noncitizen military members and veterans who were previously removed and an online resource center and information platform.



USCIS created a public-facing [Special Military Naturalization Webpage](#) for military service members, veterans, and their family members along with the educational handout “N-400 Topic Exercises: Armed Forces.” For more information on outreach to members of the military, veterans, and their families, see sections “E-F” above. USCIS also began exploring the idea of displaying materials in United Service Organization (USO) lounges and is looking at potential pilot sites for 2022.

The USCIS Office of Citizenship Publication and Outreach Branch team developed a concept for “Welcoming Webinars” for new immigrants which will be closely coordinated with NWG partners who provide immigrant integration services and support. Webinar development and launch is planned for the first half of 2022.

(C) Citizenship Education Materials and Promotional Videos: *The NWG committed to – Creating additional naturalization test preparation resources and tools; Exploring the creation of videos featuring key American landmarks, monuments and historical sites; Producing videos featuring senior administration officials; Distributing existing videos via NWG partners’ unique program offices networks.*

USCIS is refreshing its existing naturalization video PSAs and continues to distribute PSAs and materials through NWG partners. USCIS produced a video highlighting the importance of naturalization and E.O. 14012 featuring NWG principals.

The USCIS Office of Citizenship Education and Training Branch team developed a first of its kind Assessment for Adult Citizenship Education (AACE) test. The AACE test will help citizenship educators and applicants gauge their readiness for the civics and English components of the U.S. naturalization test. USCIS is in dialogue with private sector companies and app developers about possible public-private partnerships to help aspiring citizens learn English and civics and further assist them in the application process. The team also developed the following [educational tools and resources](#):

- Updates to Scoring Guidelines for the U.S. Naturalization Test,
- Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum for a High Beginning ESL Level Course,
- Two-Generational Family Approaches to Citizenship,
- N-400 Topic Exercise: Oath of Allegiance,
- A More Perfect Union: The Civics Test Guide to the Monuments and Memorials on the National Mall.

NPS developed an educational expedition video series for students that explores the history and significance of Ellis Island and USCIS is hosting these videos on its [Citizenship Resource Center \(CRC\) site](#).

Conclusion

The NWG has made significant progress in the six months since submitting its strategy. This progress will continue as we strive to further promote naturalization as a key element of restoring faith in our legal immigration system and strengthening integration and inclusion efforts.



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