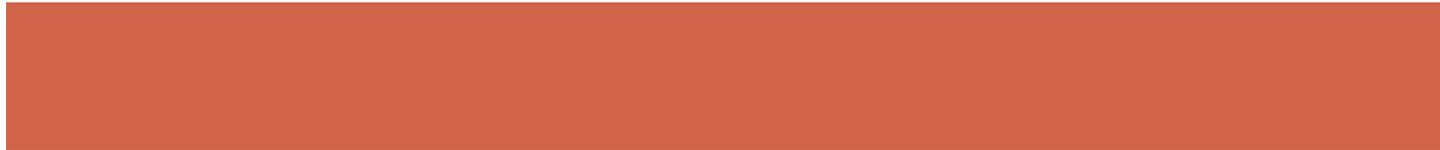


# THE PATH TO U.S. CITIZENSHIP

## LVCA TUTOR RETREAT

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# Workshop Goals

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- ▣ Understanding the Naturalization Process
- ▣ Eligibility
- ▣ Steps to Naturalization
- ▣ Components of the Test
  - Civics questions
  - Reading and Writing
  - English Speaking and the Naturalization Interview
- ▣ Resources

# What is Naturalization?

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- Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

# Who Administers the Naturalization Test?

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States.
- The USCIS is an agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- “USCIS is funded almost completely by the fees paid by individuals and organizations for immigration and naturalization services. The agency receives very little taxpayer money. “

# Why Do You Want to be a U.S. Citizen?



# Benefits of U.S. Citizenship?

- **Vote.** Only citizens can vote in federal elections. Most states also restrict the right to vote, in most elections, to U.S. citizens.
- **Serve on a jury.** Only U.S. citizens can serve on a federal jury. Most states also restrict jury service to U.S. citizens. Serving on a jury is an important responsibility for U.S. citizens.
- **Travel with a U.S. passport.** A U.S. passport enables you to get assistance from the U.S. government when overseas, if necessary.
- **Bring family members to the U.S.** U.S. citizens generally get priority when petitioning to bring family members permanently to this country.
- **Obtain citizenship for children under 18 years of age.** In most cases, a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen is automatically a U.S. citizen.
- **Apply for federal jobs.** Certain jobs with government agencies require U.S. citizenship.
- **Become an elected official.** Only citizens can run for federal office (U.S. Senate or House of Representatives) and for most state and local offices.
- **Keep your residency.** A U.S. citizen's right to remain in the United States cannot be taken away.
- **Become eligible for federal grants and scholarships.** Many financial aid grants, including college scholarships and funds given by the government for specific purposes, are available only to U.S. citizens.
- **Obtain government benefits.** Some government benefits are available only to U.S. citizens.

# Naturalization Statistics

- Each year, USCIS welcomes approximately 680,000 new citizens.
- In FY 2016, the top countries of origin for naturalization were in the following order: Mexico, India, the Philippines, China, and the Dominican Republic.
- The national pass rate on the naturalization test is 91%.

*(USCIS website)*

# Who is Eligible?

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a permanent resident (have a “green card”) for at least 5 years (there are exceptions)
- Meet certain continuous residency requirements
- Be able to read, write, and speak basic English
- Have a basic understanding of U.S. history and government (“100 questions”)
- Be a person of good moral character and demonstrate an attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution

# Some Eligibility Exceptions

- **English Language Exemptions**
- You Are Exempt From The English Language Requirement, But Are Still Required To Take The Civics Test If You Are:
  - Age 50 or older at the time of filing for naturalization and have lived as a permanent resident in the United States for 20 years; OR
  - Age 55 or older at the time of filing for naturalization and have lived as a permanent resident in the United States for 15 years.

# Some Eligibility Exceptions

- Even if you qualify for the “50/20” or “55/15” English language exceptions listed above, you must still take the civics test.
- You will be permitted to take the civics test in your native language.
- If you take the test in your native language, you must bring an interpreter with you to your interview.
- Your interpreter must be fluent in both English and your native language.

# Steps to Naturalization

- Study for the interview and test
- Submit N-400 Application for Naturalization
  - ▣ (Fee is \$640 plus \$85 biometric fee = total \$725)
- Go to the biometrics (fingerprinting) appointment
- Complete the interview
- After passing the test, take the Oath of Allegiance
  
- **\* International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Charlottesville offers low cost assistance with the N400 application**

# Fee Waivers and Redections

- You may qualify for a fee waiver if your income falls below 150 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines. (\$36,450 for a family of 4, for example.)
- You may request a reduced fee if your annual household income is greater than 150 percent and not more than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. (\$48,600 for a family of 4, for example.)

# What are the Components of the Test?

- Applicants must:
  - ▣ Correctly answer 6 out of 10 questions about U.S. history, government, symbols, holidays, and geography. To prepare, applicants must study all 100 possible questions; and
  - ▣ Correctly read 1 sentence (3 chances); and
  - ▣ Correctly write 1 dictated sentence (3 chances); and
  - ▣ Demonstrate the ability to speak English based on answers to questions normally asked during the interview, including questions about the N400.

# The “100 Questions.”



# Would You Pass?

- ◆ The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
- ◆ Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?
- ◆ What is the economic system in the United States?
- ◆ Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
- ◆ Who was president during WWI?
- ◆ How many voting members in the U.S. House of Representatives?

# Reading Vocabulary

## Reading Vocabulary for the Naturalization Test

PEOPLE	CIVICS	PLACES	HOLIDAYS	QUESTION WORDS	VERBS	OTHER (FUNCTION)	OTHER (CONTENT)
Abraham Lincoln	American flag	America	Presidents' Day	How	can	a	colors
George Washington	Bill of Rights	United States	Memorial Day	What	come	for	dollar bill
	capital	U.S.	Flag Day	When	do/does	here	first
	citizen		Independence Day	Where	elects	in	largest
	city		Labor Day	Who	have/has	of	many
	Congress		Columbus Day	Why	is/are/was/be	on	most
	country		Thanksgiving		lives/lived	the	north
	Father of Our Country				meet	to	one
	government				name	we	people
	President				pay		second
	right				vote		south
	Senators				want		
	state/states						
	White House						

# Sample Reading Questions

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- Who is the Father of our Country?
- What colors are on the American Flag?
- When is Independence Day?
- What state has the most people?



# Sample Writing Questions

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- George Washington is the Father of Our Country.
- The flag is red, white, and blue.
- Independence Day is in July.
- California has the most people.

# The Naturalization Interview

- Applicants demonstrate basic English speaking proficiency during the interview:
  - ▣ By engaging in greetings and “small talk”
  - ▣ Following commands
  - ▣ Answering N400 questions: Personal information
  - ▣ Answering N400 questions: Good moral character / “Have you ever...” questions

# Examples of Vocabulary from N400

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- Verify
- Swear
- Marital Status
- Spouse
- Advocated
- Prior
- Resident
- Dependents

# Examples of “Have you EVER...?”

- Been a member of any organization, party, club or society in any country?
- Been a member of the Communist Party? Any other totalitarian party? A terrorist organization?
- Not filed your federal, state, or local taxes since becoming a permanent resident?
- Committed or attempted to commit a crime for which you were not arrested?
- Had a hereditary title or order of nobility in any foreign country?

# “Moral Character” questions

- Have you ever been:
  - ▣ A habitual drunkard?
  - ▣ A prostitute?
  - ▣ Married to more than one person at the same time?
  - ▣ Gambled illegally or received income from illegal gambling?
  - ▣ Failed to support your dependents or to pay alimony?

# What Happens Next?

- Applicants who pass the test will be scheduled for a public ceremony where they will take the Oath of Allegiance:
- *"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."*

# New Citizens!



# Citizenship Resources: USCIS

- USCIS Citizenship Resource Center website:
  - ▣ For teachers: lesson plans, activities, links
  - ▣ For students: interactive study materials

## [USCIS Citizenship Resource Center](#)

- Flash cards for 100 questions and reading and writing vocabulary
- Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons USCIS

# Citizenship Resources

- From the LVCA Library:
  - ▣ Citizenship: Literacy Skills / Weintraub
  - ▣ Citizenship: Civics and Literacy / Weintraub
  - ▣ Citizenship Now! / Hilgeman
  - ▣ Catholic Legal Immigration Network's Guide
  
- ▣ LVCA booklet: Preparing for the U.S. Citizenship Interview

# Citizenship Resources

- YouTube videos showing mock interviews:
  - ▣ [Interview with Mr. Dada](#)
  - ▣ [Interview with Ms Garcia](#)

Catholic Legal Immigration Network's graphic novel depicting the naturalization interview:

- [Miguel's Naturalization Interview](#)

# Final Questions and Comments

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□ *Thank you!*