

1. What are the key components of a successful citizenship program?

- Mechanisms to protect confidentiality
- Clear expectations of staff responsibilities
- Effective client tracking systems
- Collaboration and communication between legal and language staff
- Scheduling options
- A curriculum guided by course objectives that uses real-life material that is age and level appropriate as well as culturally sensitive;
- Student assessments and feedback;
- A qualified instructor who is evaluated and provided training opportunities.
- Strategic use of volunteers
- Easy referrals and access to legal application assistance

2. I don't have enough resources to start a large program. How do I start small and grow from there?

Starting small is a great place to start. Good starting ideas include creating a referral list of local classes, creating partnerships with other service providers who are offering classes, tutoring students to help them prepare for the test, and offering a citizenship test preparation session. See Section IV for more ideas.

It is also fine to start your citizenship program with just a class or two. It would be great if you could offer one civics-based ELL class and one citizenship test preparation class. This way, you could assist 2 levels of students. As your program gains resources and recognition, and you can begin to offer additional classes and begin to expand.

3. I'd like to refer our clients to a language program. What should I look for in a program before recommending it to my clients?

If a program is unable to offer language classes in-house, it is important to have a prepared referral list of classes available in the community for students. When deciding which programs to include on the list, you might consider the following characteristics:

- Scheduling and location availability
- Course costs
- Availability of several class levels
- Qualifications of teachers

4. Where can I find curriculum, assessment, and supplemental resource ideas?

USCIS has a list of resources that are available for program developers and teachers. The website includes lists of potential textbooks, resources and other materials that can be used in the classroom. This resource can be found here: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship>. CLINIC is also able to help with this task.

5. How should I staff the program? What credentials should I be looking for?

Language staff should be headed by a qualified, experienced educator. Volunteer teachers are a great way to expand your program and offer more classes. They should be trained by a qualified teacher, observed and evaluated by a qualified teacher, and given assistance in planning lessons.

Legal staff should be trained in substantive immigration law topics as well as case management techniques, should pursue or maintain BIA accreditation, and should participate regularly in staff development opportunities.

Language and legal staff should interact on a regular basis in order to best serve and benefit the client. Staff should understand the goals of each section as well as strategize together on how best to accomplish the goals together. Staff should be trained on the basic information required within each section. For example, language staff should know the basic terminology and requirements involved in the naturalization process. Legal staff should know the information included on the citizenship test.

6. What kind of training is available for teachers?

USCIS offers several trainings free of charge for teachers and all information can be found here: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship>. USCIS provides both in-person and online training opportunities. The local Literacy Council and local TESOL chapter trainings may also provide good resources.

7. Is it acceptable to ask students to pay for student workbooks or other class materials?

Yes, it is ok. It is also recommended that students pay a nominal fee. This fee can cover course materials and copies, or be used to offset the cost of the class.

8. How can an ELL-civics student know when s/he is ready to pass the naturalization test?

Several mock interviews should be conducted. A student should expect to feel nervous on test day but feel confident that he or she has practiced the speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills needed to pass the test.

9. What type of naturalization application assistance should an ELL teacher provide students?

Unless the ELL teacher is BIA accredited, he or she should avoid providing any naturalization application assistance and instead, point the student to the qualified legal representatives.

10. What types of technology can assist our program in this work?

Technology plays an increasingly important role in immigration-related matters. In order to quickly and accurately help clients, having case management software that pre-populates immigration forms, saves individual case files, and allows for the saving of scanned documents is helpful. USCIS has announced that immigration paperwork can soon be submitted electronically, and upgrading office software and equipment to accommodate this change will be necessary. Offering computer labs for language students is also a good idea. Students can gain language and technological skills simultaneously as they prepare for the citizenship exam using the many on-line tools available to them.