**Training for Citizenship Navigators:**

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

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1. Introduction and Agenda overview
	1. Agenda Presentation
		1. Impact of Citizenship
		2. Citizenship Eligibility Requirements
		3. Overview of the Application Process
		4. Overview of the USCIS Interview
		5. Citizenship Navigator Updates and Requests.
		6. Questions
2. Impact of Citizenship
	1. Family Reunification
		1. Sponsor a wider range and higher numbers of family members
		2. Waiting time for a Visa is shorter for family members of a citizen than for a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)
		3. Citizens must fill out an application for Visa for their family member with the USCIS
		4. Quotas on immigration numbers from specific countries for Visas can mean long wait times, should a the person applying be citizen rather than an LPR this wait time is often less.
	2. Derivative Citizenship for Children
		1. When parents naturalize their children may qualify for automatic citizenship, if they are in accord with certain restrictions
			1. Under the age of 18
			2. Currently legally living in the United States
			3. Under physical custody of the citizenship parent
	3. Faster Citizenship for Spouse
		1. The LPR requirement is reduced from 5 years to 3 years.
			1. Applicant must be married to the same US Citizen for those three years.
			2. May apply for citizenship 90 days early.
		2. Citizen spouse must also be a citizen for all three of the years of marriage.
	4. Full Civic Participation
		1. Relevant importance with the upcoming election
		2. Right to vote in Local, State, and National elections
		3. Right to run for elected office, and serve on a jury
			1. Are excluded from holding the offices of the President and Vice-President
	5. Travel Benefits
		1. May travel outside of US borders for unlimited amount of time and be granted re-enter freely.
		2. May receive protection and assistance from a US embassy while traveling abroad.
	6. Public Benefits
		1. Can receive access to public benefits, and social programs like Food Stamps, and Medicaid without the restrictions that are placed on a non-citizen.
	7. More Employment and Educational Opportunities
		1. Many federal, State, and Local government jobs may require an applicant to have citizenship
		2. Some Federal and Non-federal scholarships may also require US citizenship
		3. Certain private companies that receive contracts from the United States Government may also require a security clearance which requires citizenship.
		4. Some studies find that certain companies tend to hire and promote citizens at a higher rate as they view the pursuit of citizenship as commitment, and thus will most likely a company will be able to benefit longer from an employee that it has invested cost into training, rather than someone who may return to their original country.
	8. Protection from Deportation and Exclusion
		1. A citizen is not at risk to be deported unlike an LPR
		2. May also not be barred from re-entry into the United States.
3. Eligibility Requirements
	1. Age
		1. A Naturalization applicant must be at least 18 years old at time of the filing for citizenship.
	2. Permanent Residence Status and Continuous Residence.
		1. Must be an LPR for at least 5 years before applying for naturalization.
			1. May apply 90 days prior to this 5-year term
			2. Date is found on the Permanent Resident card, and it is from this point that the 5-year term begins
			3. To reiterate a Spouse of a legal citizen may apply within a 3-year term limit, following the restriction mentioned in the prior slide on “Faster Citizenship for Spouse” slide.
			4. Trips out of the country for six months or more may break continuous residence.
				1. USCIS will assume your continuous residence was broken for trips of 6-months or more

Unless applicant can prove that continuous residence was not disrupted.

Ties to the United States must be shown as evidence

Employment, full access to Home or apartment throughout the trip, or immediate family members that remain in the US.

* + - * 1. Trips over 1 year out of the US will automatically break Permanent Resident Status

Will need to re-establish residence in order to reapply.

* 1. English Test
		1. Consists of a
			1. Reading test
				1. The applicant will have to read a sentence consisting of whatever the interviewer places in front of them.
			2. Writing Test
				1. Interviewer will read out a sentence and applicant will have to write this sentence down.
			3. Speaking and Understanding test
				1. Must be able to answer questions asked about the application process or any documents.
				2. Additionally must be able to follow all presented instructions throughout the interview process.
		2. Interview and assessment begins the second the applicant walks in the door, and all conversation is considered part of the interviewer’s assessment.
	2. US History and Civics Test
		1. Consists of Ten Questions pulled from the larger 100-sample questions that can potentially be asked.
			1. Interviewer may ask up to 10 questions, and the applicant must answer 6 correctly.
			2. Link to the 100 potential civics questions: <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/teachers/educational-products/100-civics-questions-and-answers-mp3-audio-english-version>
		2. This is an Oral not written test.
	3. Testing Exemptions
		1. 50/20: An applicant who is age 50 or older and has had his/her green card for 20 years or more
			1. Automatic English exemption.
			2. The applicant will still have to take the history/civics test, but can take it in his/her native language.
		2. 55/15: Similarly, an applicant who is 55 or older and has had a green card for 15 years.
			1. Can get an automatic English exemption
			2. May take the history/civics test in his/her native language.
		3. 65/20: If an applicant is age 65 or older and has had a green card for 20 years or more
			1. he/she qualifies for an English exemption
			2. May take an easier history/civics test in her/her own language
				1. Drawn from a list of the 20 easier history/civics questions instead of the standard 100 questions.

This is called “Special Consideration.”

These questions are marked with an asterisk

* + 1. Physical or Mental Disability
			1. Applicants with disabilities that make it harder for them to learn may apply for this exemption.
				1. Must fill out a special form, and get medical proof that the disability hinders learning
			2. This is not an automatic and should this be a path that an organization considers for a client they must be prepared to provide the necessary proofs.
	1. Good Moral Character.
		1. Must have a Good Moral Character (GMC) for five years before applying for citizenship.
			1. This is very complex, and encompasses a wide-range of issues
				1. Very important that those considering applying for citizenship secure the assistance of an immigration attorney or a BIA accredited representative.
				2. Truthfulness on the application, paying taxes, to criminal behavior are covered in this clause.
			2. Does not define good moral character but instead outlines situations or persons who are disqualified from applying for citizenship.
		2. During the naturalization process, USCIS can identify applicants who are deportable and place them in removal proceedings.
		3. Any applicant who has ever been arrested or convicted of a crime needs to consult with an immigration attorney or BIA accredited representative before applying for naturalization.
	2. Selective Services
		1. Males must register for selective services within 30 days of their 18th birthday
			1. But not after the age of 26.
		2. USCIS will deny an application for naturalization should the applicant refuse to register for selective services.
	3. Oath of Allegiance
		1. Applicant must understand and be willing to take an Oath of Allegiance to the US
			1. Applicants who are so severely disabled that they are unable to understand or assent to the oath can apply for a disability-based waiver of the oath requirement.
		2. Oath will require the renouncement of allegiance to any other countries, and promise to support the Constitution of the United States.
		3. Applicants whose religion or personal beliefs do not allow them to take oaths, bear arms, or serve in the military can request a modified oath with these portions of the oath modified or omitted.
1. Overview of the Application Process
	1. Must first meet the Eligibility requirements from the previous section.
	2. Pre-Step 1
		1. Secure representation from an attorney or a BIA accredited representative
	3. Step 1
		1. Complete Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.
		2. Get 2 passport-style photos taken.
		3. Collect the necessary documents to demonstrate your eligibility for naturalization.
		4. Refer to “A Guide to Naturalization” for more information at [www.uscis.gov/natzguide](http://www.uscis.gov/natzguide).
		5. Review and sign your Form N-400.
	4. Step 2
		1. Send in your application, photographs, documents, and fees to USCIS. (Refer to [www.uscis.gov/n-400](http://www.uscis.gov/n-400) for filing addresses.)
		2. Include Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, if applicable
	5. Step 3
		1. Go to the biometrics appointment, if applicable. You will receive an appointment notice that will include your biometrics appointment date, time, and location.
		2. USCIS requires applicants to be fingerprinted for the purpose of conducting Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal background checks.
			1. .All applicants must have background checks completed before USCIS will schedule an interview
				1. If you are 75 years old or older at the time of filing, you are exempted from the fingerprint requirements
	6. Step 4
		1. Once all the preliminary processes on your case are complete, USCIS will schedule an interview with you to complete the naturalization process.
		2. You must report to the USCIS office at the date and time on your appointment notice.
	7. Step 5
		1. Complete the in-person interview at USCIS
	8. Step 6
		1. Receive a decision from USCIS on your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.
			1. Will be either:
				1. • Granted—USCIS may approve your Form N-400 if the evidence on record establishes your eligibility for naturalization.
				2. • Denied—USCIS will deny your Form N-400 if the evidence on record establishes you are not eligible for naturalization.
	9. Step 7
		1. Receive a notice to take the Oath of Allegiance.
			1. You may be able to participate in the oath ceremony on the same day as your interview.
			2. If a same day oath ceremony is unavailable, USCIS will mail you a notification with the date, time, and location of your scheduled oath ceremony
	10. Step 8
		1. Take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States and receive your Certificate of Naturalization.
			1. Not a citizen until this Oath is taken at an Oath Ceremony.
2. Overview for the NCIS Interview
	1. With these slides simply refer to what appears. Keep in mind the seriousness of the questions involved in the interview process, and ensure your client is properly prepared for their interview with the USCIS.
3. Citizenship Navigator Updates
	1. Please subscribe to the texting campaign!
		1. Please sign-up so you can receive these so that you have an understanding of the materials that CLINIC is sending out, and you can better recommend sign-ups to your clients.
		2. Language options
			1. English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Somali, and Nepali
	2. Use the hotline if you have questions about citizenship or BIA R&A
	3. Marketing materials update
		1. Creating a poster for waiting rooms about texting campaign
		2. Flyers available on website, just need to be print out.
		3. Potential Business card sized card to hand out.
	4. Quarterly Call to occur in October
	5. Free training on the N-400.
		1. Please contact Leya Speasmaker for the code to waive the fee.
4. Questions
	1. What specific ways can Citizenship Navigators help? (other than test prep)
		1. Know in your community who you can refer clients to. Either
			1. Reputable immigration attorneys
			2. Non-profits are, in your area, doing authorized legal immigration naturalization work.
				1. To request national a list of BIA recognized organizations contact Leya Speasmaker.
			3. Recognize that unauthorized or non-recognized persons or organizations that may be working in your community could harm the process for your clients, and potentially place their application process, and status at risk.
		2. Enroll Clients in texting-campaign
	2. Can a client turn in the I-648 on the day of the interview, or is that too late?
		1. Everything is best done in advance just in case USCIS denies the form.
			1. This can be done, but be cautious. Make sure you have substantial information for proof of disability.
	3. Which languages does the USCIS offer the naturalization questions in?
		1. Spanish, Mandarin, Tagalog, Korean, French.
		2. Clinic offers 15 language options for the questions, contact Leya Speasmaker for these.