



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Fact Sheet: USCIS to Welcome 3,800 New Citizens During Fourth of July Celebrations

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will commemorate America's 234th birthday by naturalizing more than 3,800 citizenship candidates in approximately 55 special ceremonies held across the United States and abroad. Nine of these ceremonies are specifically for members of the U.S. armed forces and military spouses. This year's ceremonies will celebrate the theme, "A Spirit of Independence."

Highlights of the weeklong celebration include:

- The kick-off on July 1, 2010 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pa. where 25 candidates will take the *Oath of Allegiance* only steps from the location where the Declaration of Independence was adopted in 1776. USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas will provide congratulatory remarks;
- A naturalization ceremony July 2, 2010 aboard the USS Midway in San Diego, Calif. for approximately 300 military candidates who pledged to protect our country before becoming U.S. citizens;
- The naturalization of 150 candidates at Ellis Island in New York, the historic federal immigration gateway that operated from 1892-1954;
- A special ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Space Center outside Orlando, Fla. for approximately 100 candidates. Kennedy Space Center Director Robert Cabanna is the keynote speaker; and
- Nine all-military ceremonies including Baghdad, Iraq; Frankfurt, Germany; Okinawa, Japan; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and Fort Sill, Okla.

About the Naturalization Process

To naturalize, an applicant must fulfill certain requirements set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act concerning age, lawful admission and residence in the United States. These general naturalization provisions specify that a foreign national must be at least 18 years of age; have been granted lawful permanent resident status in the United States (be a legal permanent resident or LPR); and have resided in the country continuously for at least five years. Additional requirements include the ability to speak, read, write, and understand the English language; knowledge of the U.S. government and history; and good moral character.

Special provisions of naturalization law exempt certain applicants from one or more of the general provisions. Spouses and children of U.S. citizens and military classes constitute the main categories of special naturalization. The majority of people naturalizing as spouses of U.S. citizens may do so in 3 years rather than the 5 years

prescribed under the general provisions. Foreign-born children younger than 18 years of age, including adopted children, acquire U.S. citizenship automatically without applying, if they meet certain requirements. Among the requirements, the children must be lawful permanent residents and have at least one U.S. citizen parent. Persons who served honorably in the U.S. armed forces during wartime and in other conflicts may naturalize under certain conditions without prior admission to permanent resident status or having resided in the United States for a particular length of time. Individuals with lawful permanent resident status who have served honorably in the armed forces of the United States also are entitled to certain exemptions from the general naturalization requirements.

Every applicant for naturalization who is 18 years of age or older must file Form N-400, Application for Naturalization. All persons filing these applications who meet the preliminary documentary requirements must be interviewed by officers from USCIS to determine their eligibility to naturalize. In most cases, the officer verifies the applicant’s knowledge and understanding of the English language and the history and government of the United States. Those applicants found qualified are scheduled for an oath ceremony before a judge or before an officer delegated the authority to administer the [Oath of Allegiance](#) by the Director of USCIS¹.

Naturalization Statistics

- Each year, USCIS welcomes approximately 680,000 citizens during naturalization ceremonies across the United States and around the world.
- In fiscal year 2009, 74 percent of all persons naturalizing resided in 10 states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Virginia, Massachusetts, Washington, and Maryland.
- In fiscal year 2009, the leading metropolitan areas of residence were New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-P.A. (15 percent), Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, California (11 percent), and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, Florida (7.3 percent).
- In fiscal year 2009, the top countries of origin for naturalization were in the following order: Mexico, India, Philippines, China, and Vietnam.
- Since September 2001, USCIS has naturalized more than 60,250 members of the military, in ceremonies across the United States and in the following 20 countries: Afghanistan, Djibouti, China, Cuba, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Philippines, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom.
- Since 2008, USCIS has naturalized 715 military spouses during ceremonies in Bulgaria, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Panama, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.
- Since 2009, USCIS has presented 28 military children with citizenship certificates during ceremonies in Germany, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

Total Naturalized Citizens: Fiscal Years 2000-2009			
2009	743,715	2004	537,151
2008	1,046,539	2003	463,204
2007	660,477	2002	573,708
2006	702,589	2001	608,205

2005	604,280	2000	888,788
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For more information on citizenship, please visit www.uscis.gov/citizenship.

For additional information on USCIS and its programs, visit www.uscis.gov.

¹ Lee, James, 2010. *Annual Flow Report-Naturalizations in the United States: 2009*. Office of Immigration Statistics, Policy Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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