



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

MENU

[Home](#) > [Policy Manual](#) > [Volume 12 - Citizenship and Naturalization](#) > [Part J - Oath of Allegiance](#) > Chapter 5 - Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies

Chapter 5 - Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies

Guidance

[Resources \(8\)](#)

[Appendices \(1\)](#)

[Updates \(8\)](#)

USCIS is committed to elevating the importance of the naturalization ceremony as a venue to recognize the rights, responsibilities, and importance of citizenship and provide access to services for new citizens. The naturalization ceremony is the culmination of the naturalization process. USCIS aims to make administrative naturalization ceremonies positive and memorable moments in the lives of the participants. USCIS honors the Oath of Allegiance with policies and practices that reflect the importance of the occasion.

The following information provides USCIS officials with guidance for conducting administrative naturalization ceremonies in a meaningful and consistent manner.^{[\[1\]](#)}

A. Materials Distributed

USCIS may distribute materials at administrative naturalization ceremonies, including:

- U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet (including the President's Congratulatory Letter);
- American flag;
- Citizen's Almanac ([Form M-76](#)); and
- Pocket-size Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States.

1. Contents of U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet

USCIS distributes the U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet (Form M-771) to every naturalization candidate participating in an administrative ceremony in the United States.^{[\[2\]](#)}

The U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet consists of the following:

- President's, Secretary's, or Director of USCIS' Congratulatory Letter and Envelope;

- Application for U.S. Passport (Form DS-11 (PDF));
- Important Information for New Citizens (Form M-767);
- Oath of Allegiance/The Star Spangled Banner/Pledge of Allegiance Flier (Form M-789);
- Certificate Holder; and
- A Voter's Guide to Federal Elections.

The official congratulatory letters from the President of the United States, Secretary of Homeland Security, or Director of USCIS are the only congratulatory letters USCIS distributes at naturalization ceremonies. Guests, elected officials, other U.S. government entities, and nongovernmental organizations may not provide candidates with congratulatory letters within the venue.

2. Distribution of U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet

USCIS may distribute the U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet during the check-in process before the naturalization candidate has been administered the Oath of Allegiance but only after a USCIS officer has determined that the applicant is eligible to take the Oath of Allegiance on the day of the ceremony.^[3]

The U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet contains information for naturalized citizens. Before distributing the packet, officers must:

- Make a statement that an applicant does not become a U.S. citizen until they take the Oath of Allegiance, regardless of the contents of the packet;
- Make a general statement about the contents of the packet; and
- Answer the candidates' naturalization-related questions.

3. The American Flag

Officers distribute the American flag to naturalization candidates. Only USCIS-issued flags made in the United States may be distributed to naturalization candidates.

4. Citizen's Almanac and Pocket-size U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution

The Citizen's Almanac ([Form M-76](#)) and the Pocket-size Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States (Form M-654) must be made available to all interested naturalization candidates or newly naturalized citizens at the:

- Check-in process;
- Conclusion of the oath ceremony program; or
- Conclusion of the naturalization examination.

Officers are not required to distribute these publications to each naturalization candidate, but must make the publications available. The items may be placed on a table in an area accessible to the naturalization candidates. USCIS may also inform candidates that both publications are available for download at uscis.gov/citizenship.

5. Other Materials

USCIS field office leadership must consult with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division to determine whether materials and publications other than the American flag and the contents of the U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet are appropriate for distribution. Federal workers, including officers, and other invited participants, whether governmental or nongovernmental, must never distribute the following within the venue where the USCIS naturalization ceremony is taking place, or anywhere within a federal facility or on federal property:

- Partisan publications;
- Publications referencing a specific political group;
- Commercial materials or publications;
- Religious materials or publications; or
- Any promotional or solicitation materials or publications.

Authorized non-U.S. governmental organizations invited by USCIS to distribute materials or publications, such as voter registration organizations, may provide USCIS-authorized materials at the conclusion of the naturalization ceremony.

Similarly, other authorized U.S. government participants, such as the Department of State's Passport Services Division, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Social Security Administration may distribute USCIS-authorized materials within the venue after the USCIS official has concluded the naturalization ceremony. Only USCIS-approved materials and publications may be distributed within the venue once the presiding USCIS official has concluded the naturalization ceremony.

B. Ceremony Check-In Process

USCIS officers perform the ceremony check-in process before the start of the ceremony. An officer reviews the responses on each naturalization candidate's Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony (Form N-445) and updates responses as necessary. Once the officer verifies each candidate's eligibility for naturalization, the officer then collects all USCIS-issued travel documents and lawful permanent resident cards from each candidate.

C. Ceremony Program

To standardize the naturalization ceremony experience, unless exempted, USCIS offices follow these steps in administrative ceremonies to the extent feasible:[\[4\]](#)

- Invite governmental or nongovernmental organizations offering on-site voter registration services to introduce themselves and address the naturalization candidates before the ceremony; [\[5\]](#)
- Play "Faces of America;"
- Play the national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner, instrumental or vocal version; [\[6\]](#)
- Deliver opening (welcoming) remarks by Master of Ceremonies; [\[7\]](#)

- Announce the “call of countries;” [\[8\]](#)
- Administer the Oath of Allegiance to the naturalization candidates; [\[9\]](#)
- Deliver keynote remarks (USCIS leadership or guest speaker);
- Play Presidential, Secretary’s, or Director of USCIS’ congratulatory remarks;
- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance;
- Deliver concluding remarks (Master of Ceremonies or USCIS field leadership); [\[10\]](#) and
- Present the Certificate of Naturalization (Form N-550) by USCIS leadership or officers. [\[11\]](#)

The Naturalization Ceremony Presentation [\[12\]](#) includes all required video and musical elements the office plays at various points in the naturalization ceremony program.

Field offices may also enhance the ceremony program with additional appropriate elements, such as approved musical selections included in the Naturalization Ceremony Presentation. When USCIS plays musical selections during ceremonies, naturalization applicants are not required to stand or sing.

D. Guest Speakers

USCIS welcomes distinguished community members who are U.S. citizens by birth or naturalization to participate as guest speakers in administrative naturalization ceremonies. A guest speaker may be a:

- Civic leader;
- Government leader;
- Military leader;
- Member of Congress;
- Judge;
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official; or
- A person whom USCIS deems appropriate for the occasion.

Local USCIS field leadership must carefully review and select guest speakers based on their relevance to the occasion, with particular focus on their outstanding achievements, contributions to the nation or their community, personal experience, or notable activities as a citizen of the United States.

USCIS field leadership must review the qualifications of any potential guest speaker who is not a DHS employee, and approve their role in the program before they speak at an administrative naturalization ceremony. [\[13\]](#) If USCIS headquarters selects a guest speaker for a USCIS field office’s administrative naturalization ceremony, headquarters reviews the person’s qualifications before making the recommendation.

It is the responsibility of field leadership of the USCIS office conducting the administrative naturalization ceremony to preserve the importance, dignity, and significance of the occasion. After selecting and scheduling a guest speaker, the local field leadership must send the speaker a written notice, which describes USCIS’s

expectations regarding the appropriate length and content of remarks. USCIS must advise speakers that appropriate remarks focus on:

- Importance of U.S. citizenship;
- New privileges (such as the ability to travel with a U.S. passport, apply for a position in the federal government, and vote in federal elections);
- Responsibilities of U.S. citizenship (such as voting and serving on a jury when requested);
- Civic principles within the U.S. government;
- Civic participation in the local community;
- Importance of swearing allegiance to the United States; or
- Theme of the ceremony.

Inappropriate remarks, including political (partisan or otherwise), religious, or commercial statements, are not permitted.^[14] Out of respect for the candidates and other attendees, guest speakers serving in the keynote role should deliver remarks between 5 and 10 minutes in length. If a scheduled guest speaker is unable to participate, USCIS must approve any replacement speaker.

USCIS respects the privacy of applicants and may not release the names or personal information of applicants for naturalization unless the applicant provides consent or disclosure required by law.

E. Participation by Elected Officials and Members of Congress

1. Elected Officials

USCIS must uphold the integrity of each administrative naturalization ceremony and ensure that it is a politically neutral event. The presence of candidates for public office at a naturalization ceremony may create a perception that is inconsistent with USCIS's obligation of neutrality. Accordingly, candidates for public office, including incumbents, generally may not speak at or participate in an administrative naturalization ceremony starting from 3 months immediately preceding a primary or general election for office.

For example, if the state primary elections are on February 4, 2014, and the state general election is November 3, 2014, a candidate for public office in those primary elections may not be a guest speaker or have another formal participatory role from November 4, 2013 (3 months before the primary election) until after February 4, 2014. A candidate for the general election may not have a participatory role from August 3, 2014 (3 months before the general election) until after November 3, 2014.^[15]

The 3-month rule does not apply to the President or Vice President of the United States. However, the 3-month rule does apply to Members of Congress. In exceptional circumstances, the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division may authorize exceptions to the 3-month rule if the candidate's participation, subject to any appropriate conditions, would not unduly compromise the ceremony's political neutrality and would serve the best interest of USCIS and enhance the ceremony. For any exceptions or issues relating to the 3-month rule, field leadership should contact the Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division.

2. Members of Congress

USCIS congressional liaisons coordinate with USCIS district or field office leadership regarding invitations to and requests from Members of Congress to participate in administrative naturalization ceremonies.

Congressional liaisons and the Field Operations Directorate must provide ample notice when issuing invitations to or responding to requests from Members of Congress to serve as guest speakers in naturalization ceremonies. In the event a Member of Congress is unable to serve as a guest speaker after accepting an invitation to do so, only USCIS may select an appropriate substitute.

When a congressional liaison issues an invitation to a Member's office, the invitation must include USCIS guidelines for administrative naturalization ceremonies.^[16] Members of Congress scheduled to speak at administrative naturalization ceremonies must follow USCIS' guidance for guest speakers.^[17] Members of Congress may not distribute any materials at a USCIS naturalization ceremony or inside the ceremony venue.^[18]

Some members of Congress may ask USCIS to schedule naturalization ceremonies to mark particular dates or events of significance to the United States or the U.S. state being represented. USCIS district office or field office leadership may, at their discretion, honor these requests, subject to restrictions for guest speakers.^[19]

District office or field office leadership must decline the request if there is any possibility of the event being seen as a platform for any political, controversial, religious, or commercial message. District office or field office leadership may also decline the request if supporting such a ceremony would negatively impact other activities or otherwise present operational hardships.

When a member of Congress asks USCIS to schedule a naturalization ceremony, USCIS responds in writing. If the request is to be honored, the response will provide expectations and restrictions regarding speech for guest speakers.^[20] If the request is to be declined, USCIS will provide a reason and a copy of the ceremony guidance.

Members of Congress and their staff are always welcome to attend a naturalization ceremony as members of the public.

F. Voter Registration After Naturalization Ceremonies

1. Distribution of Voter Registration Applications^[21]

The ability to vote in federal elections is a fundamental right that comes with U.S. citizenship.^[22] All newly naturalized citizens must be given the opportunity to register at the end of the administrative naturalization ceremony when the new citizen is then eligible to register to vote.^[23] USCIS provides access to voter registration services for the state where the field office is located at each administrative naturalization ceremony.^[24]

USCIS offices request election officials from state or local government election offices to attend naturalization ceremonies to distribute, collect, and review state-specific voter registration applications, and to officially register newly naturalized citizens to vote. When election officials are unavailable, USCIS offices coordinate with nongovernmental organizations to distribute and collect voter registration applications for an election official to review and officially register new citizens to vote.^[25]

If no organizations are available to distribute voter registration applications, USCIS field offices must provide voter registration applications to all new citizens.^[26] USCIS is not responsible for the collection of applications

or retention of any information from such applications, or any other activities related to voter registration.

2. Voter Registration Services

The term “voter registration services” includes one or more of the following activities:

- Distribution of voter registration application forms;
- Assisting interested applicants in completing voter registration application forms;
- Reviewing submitted forms to ensure that each form is complete;
- Collecting completed forms for submission to the local election official; or
- Providing nonpartisan educational information on the voting process. [\[27\]](#)

The mechanism for registration may vary by ceremony location, but in every case must take place only after the conclusion of the ceremony, when the candidates are officially U.S. citizens. USCIS provides space to governmental or nongovernmental entities in the same ceremony space or room to provide on-site voter registration services, if available.

If no space is available for governmental or nongovernmental entities to provide on-site voter registration services, the USCIS field office distributes voter registration applications to each newly naturalized citizen. [\[28\]](#) USCIS bases a “no space available” determination on the location of the ceremony venue, [\[29\]](#) the size of the venue facility, and the number of applicants naturalizing, as well as the layout of the venue space, in accordance with safety standards and regulations. “No space available” determinations are made on a case-by-case basis by USCIS field leadership conducting the ceremony.

3. Registration by Nongovernmental Organizations

In-person voter registration services by the state or local election office is optimal. If state or local election officials are unable to participate, all interested nongovernmental groups may seek to offer voter registration services at administrative naturalization ceremonies. To qualify, nongovernmental organizations must be:

- A bona-fide nonprofit that is exempt from federal tax requirements; [\[30\]](#)
- Nonpartisan; and
- Approved by USCIS field leadership.

All interested nongovernmental organizations seeking to offer voter registration services must submit a one-time Voter Registration Services Attestation ([Form N-401](#)) [\[31\]](#) to the [local USCIS Field Office Director](#) at least 60 days before the ceremony. Field leadership provides a written response to each request after consultation with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel’s Ethics Division, at least 30 days before the date of the ceremony. [\[32\]](#)

Field leadership must consider requests from all interested nongovernmental organizations seeking to participate in the ceremony and must offer equal, non-preferential opportunities to all qualified and approved nongovernmental organizations. If multiple organizations seek to provide voter registration services at USCIS administrative naturalization ceremonies, USCIS field leadership may establish a rotating participation schedule.

When USCIS determines that an organization is qualified and is approved to participate in voter registration services at an administrative naturalization ceremony, field leadership sends the organization a letter, listing specific requirements for participation. Field leadership then contacts the organization to determine its availability to participate in scheduled administrative ceremonies.

While participating at ceremonies, nongovernmental organizations and their representatives must not:

- Attempt to influence or interfere with a person's right to register to vote, or to vote; [\[33\]](#)
- Participate in any political activity, partisan or otherwise, regardless of whether the ceremonies take place on federal or non-federal property; [\[34\]](#)
- Engage in religious or commercial solicitation or promotion of any kind;
- Discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, or veteran status; [\[35\]](#)
- Collect, retain, or share the personal information of those registered to vote at naturalization ceremonies, even if this information is requested on a voluntary basis;
- Use the information provided on voter registration applications for any purpose other than voter registration; [\[36\]](#) or
- Alter completed voter registration materials in any manner. [\[37\]](#)

While participating, nongovernmental organizations and their representatives must:

- Safeguard all personal information new citizens provide for voter registration;
- Follow scheduling and logistical requirements set forth by USCIS field leadership;
- Have received recent proper training on how to register voters;
- Receive an on-site briefing from field leadership regarding rules for that particular facility;
- Wear professional attire and represent themselves and their organization professionally; and
- Wear nametags that include the name of the organization while registering voters (no other identification of the organization may be worn or displayed).

4. Revocation of Participation Privilege

If a nongovernmental organization fails to comply with the above requirements for participation, field leadership, in consultation with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division, may revoke the privilege to participate and exclude the organization from participating in future administrative naturalization ceremonies.

In addition, if a USCIS official receives a complaint from a newly naturalized citizen, guest of a newly naturalized citizen, or the state or local election office regarding an organization's inappropriate behavior or lack of ability to properly provide voter registration services, field leadership, in consultation with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division, may revoke the privilege to participate upon appropriate inquiry and review of the circumstances.

5. Points-of-Contact for Voting and Voter Registration

If naturalized citizens have questions regarding voting and voter registration, USCIS refers them to:

- The governmental or nongovernmental organization offering voter registration services on-site;
- Other information resources within the local area; or
- The appropriate official government websites [USA.gov Find My State or Local Election Office](https://www.usa.gov/find-my-state-or-local-election-office), [USA.gov Register to Vote](https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote), and [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov).

G. Services Provided by Other Government Entities

Federal entities, such as the Department of State's Passport Services Division, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Social Security Administration, as well as state and local governments, may be authorized to provide information and make services available to newly naturalized citizens and their guests at the conclusion of the administrative naturalization ceremony.^[38] Governmental entities that desire representation at administrative naturalization ceremonies must seek advance approval from field leadership of the USCIS office conducting the ceremony.

H. Participation of Volunteers and Civic Organizations

Field leadership may permit volunteers from the community, community-based organizations, and civic organizations to participate in various roles during the administrative naturalization ceremony. For example, Field leadership may have the U.S. armed forces color guard perform the presentation of colors and the national anthem or have volunteers lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Field leadership will determine the appropriate level of participation for the occasion. However, under no circumstances will any non-USCIS employee perform any USCIS function.^[39]

Field leadership must review the qualifications, designate the level of participation, and oversee the participation of all volunteers and organizations during the administrative naturalization ceremony. In addition, non-USCIS participants must not engage in political, religious, or commercial activity of any kind.

I. Offers to Donate Use of Facilities

USCIS may generally accept offers to donate use of facilities unless they present a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest. Facilities^[40] should be neutral and generally not affiliated with any religion, commercial enterprise, political group, or immigration law or advocacy group. The USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division analyzes offers to donate use of facilities for compliance with relevant legal authorities and DHS policy on the acceptance of gifts.

USCIS may generally hold naturalization ceremonies at public events or state or federal government events that take place in diverse settings that provide an educational opportunity for promoting public understanding of the naturalization process such as:

- USCIS offices;
- Federal, state, and local government offices and spaces;

- Federal courts;
- Military installations;
- Sporting event venues;
- U.S. national parks;
- State, county, and local public parks;
- Public libraries and museums;
- Monuments and historic sites;
- Fairs or festivals; and
- Public schools and universities. [\[41\]](#)

Events and locations for oath ceremonies must be consistent with the importance, dignity and significance of the occasion. [\[42\]](#)

When reviewing an offer to use venues and facilities for naturalization ceremonies, USCIS considers whether the acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility:

- Violates or creates the appearance of a violation of the Hatch Act; [\[43\]](#)
- Creates or appears to create a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest;
- Creates or appears to create an appearance of lack of impartiality; or
- Creates or appears to create preferential treatment or an endorsement of the donor, or the donor's products, services, activities, or policies.

USCIS may not use:

- Religious facilities (for example, space in or connected to a place of worship);
- Venues of political affiliation or in conjunction with a political activity, including national conventions and fundraising events;
- Facilities of an organization that practices immigration law;
- Facilities of an organization that is directly engaged in immigration advocacy or immigration policy;
- Facilities concurrently hosting an event [\[44\]](#) for an organization that practices immigration law or is active in immigration advocacy, policy, or immigration lobbying; [\[45\]](#)
- Facilities of an organization [\[46\]](#) that represents petitioners and applicants before DHS; or
- Facilities where USCIS personnel cannot protect secure documents.

USCIS employees must not solicit a gift (including use of facilities to hold an administrative naturalization ceremony) from any non-federal entity. [\[47\]](#) However, USCIS may accept an unsolicited gift with the concurrence of the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division and approval of the USCIS Director.

Generally, USCIS would not use a donated facility for ceremonies from a prohibited source. [\[48\]](#)

1. Submission of One-Time Offer to Donate Facility

The donor must submit an invitation letter (on the organization's letterhead) to the Field Operations Directorate at least 4 weeks in advance of the ceremony date to guarantee timely processing.

In addition to the donor's submission, an officer must submit Gift Offer Donation Request (Form G-1477)^[49] for approval.

2. Submission of Multi-Date Offers to Donate Facilities

Certain organizations qualify for multi-date gift offer approvals. These include non-federal, nonprofit organizations that USCIS has approved previously for gift offers. In order to qualify for multi-date gift approval, the donor must:

- Have a history of donating use of venue for naturalization ceremonies that were conducted without negative incident;
- Be unlikely to undergo changes of ownership or mission; and
- Submit an invitation letter (on the organization's letterhead) that specifies the number of ceremonies to be held at the donated venue and the donated value ^[50] of the gift offer. The invitation letter does not have to identify specific dates of the ceremonies to be held.

The officer must indicate the total yearly value for all multi-date offers submitted on the Gift Offer Donation Request (Form G-1477).^[51] Notwithstanding a prior approval, changes in a donor's ownership, mission, or operations may warrant denying use of venue space prospectively.

Duration of Approved Multi-Date Offers

Multi-date gift offers are valid for 1 year from the time of approval of the request.

Subsequent Uses of Approved Multi-Date Offers

The donor of a previously approved multi-date gift offer to donate use of facilities does not need to submit a new submission for approval. New submissions for review and approval are only needed in instances where:

- The gift value exceeds the total previously listed gift value ^[52] in the original submission;
- There is a change in the donated venue location;
- There is a substantive change to ownership, mission, or stability of the organization; or
- Any other changes arise that create a new actual or apparent conflict of interest.

3. Review of Offer

After receipt, an authorized official reviews the documents for accuracy and consistency. The following officials then review and consider the gift offer for approval (in order of review):

- USCIS Field Operations;
- USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division; and

- USCIS Director (final approval).

Field leadership may accept a gift offer or donated facility for ceremony use from a federal, state, or local governmental entity without the submission of a gift offer letter and approval of the USCIS Director. However, before accepting such an offer, field leadership must consider if acceptance would create or appear to create a conflict of interest. If field leadership is unable to determine whether the offer would create or appear to create a conflict of interest, field leadership should confer with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division before accepting the offer.

4. Rejection of Offer

USCIS may not accept an offer of use of facilities if:

- The gift offer would not aid or facilitate the mission of USCIS and DHS;
- The acceptance of the gift would create or appear to create a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest;
- The donor seeks to obtain or conduct business with USCIS or DHS;
- The donor conducts operations or activities that are regulated by USCIS or DHS;
- The acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility would reflect unfavorably upon the ability of the agency, or any employee of the agency, to carry out USCIS and DHS responsibilities or official duties in a fair and objective manner;
- The acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility would compromise the integrity or the appearance of the integrity of USCIS or DHS programs or any official involved in those programs;
- The acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility would violate, or create the appearance of a violation of the Hatch Act; [\[53\]](#)
- The acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility might reasonably create the appearance of preferential treatment or official endorsement of an outside entity; or
- The acceptance of the gift or use of the donated facility would be inconsistent with USCIS' interest in upholding the importance, dignity, and significance of the occasion.

The authorized agency officials may consider various factors, including the following, in their determination:

- The identity of the donor;
- The monetary or estimated market value or the cost to the donor;
- The purpose of the gift as described in any written statement or oral proposal by the donor;
- The identity of any other expected recipients of the gift on the same occasion, if any;
- The timing of the gift;
- The number of times the donor has offered gifts to USCIS;
- The nature and sensitivity of any matter pending before the agency that may affect the interest of the donor;
- The importance or consequence of an individual employee's role in any matter affecting the donor (for example, if benefits of the gift will accrue to the employee); and

- The nature of the offered gift.

At the end of the gift offer process, USCIS provides notification of the acceptance or rejection of the gift offer to the donor.

J. Coordination with External Organizations

When USCIS hosts an administrative naturalization ceremony^[54] in which an external organization (such as another federal agency or a local community-based organization) plays a role,^[55] USCIS is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the event is important, dignified, and significant. While USCIS welcomes participation from external organizations, USCIS does not formally co-host ceremonies with external organizations.

1. USCIS Responsibilities

In conducting administrative ceremonies, USCIS is responsible for the following:

- Approving the ceremony facility – USCIS follows internal policies and procedures regarding the use of space, including donations of space. ^[56] Prior to selecting the facility, USCIS reserves the right to conduct a site visit of the proposed space.
- Planning the ceremony – USCIS determines the ceremony program, including the order of events, the order of speakers, the seating arrangements of the speakers on stage, and security measures appropriate for the venue. ^[57]
- Ensuring the ceremony remains the focus of the event.
- Ensuring proper use and placement of the DHS seal and signature according to approved guidelines. ^[58] When coordinating with an external entity, USCIS must avoid perceived endorsement.
- Selecting, inviting, and approving guest speakers – USCIS must approve all guest speakers. While the collaborating organization may recommend guest speakers to USCIS, the selection is at the discretion of USCIS. USCIS may request to review guest speaker remarks in advance of the ceremony for content and length. Inappropriate remarks, including political (partisan or otherwise), commercial, or religious statements, are not permitted. ^[59]
- Determining which naturalization candidates will participate in the ceremony – Organizations may not request that specific lawful permanent residents (LPRs) be naturalized at any ceremony (for example, only LPRs from a particular country). USCIS does not consider such requests, which may create a conflict of interest or the appearance of preferential treatment to specific LPRs.
- Ensuring that voter registration applications are offered to new citizens at the end of the ceremony. ^[60]
- Selecting and approving organizations requesting to distribute voter registration applications, and the methods by which such efforts are to be conducted.
- Preserving the importance, dignity, and significance of naturalization ceremonies.

USCIS may brief all ceremony participants on expected behavior.

2. External Organizations

The external organization is responsible for:

- Following all USCIS policies and procedures, including guidance from field leadership.
- Seeking approval from USCIS prior to distributing any materials at the ceremony. If the external organization wishes to distribute American flags to ceremony guests, those flags should be made in the United States. USCIS provides flags for all naturalization candidates.
- Coordinating with USCIS on media coverage of the naturalization ceremony.

Footnotes

[\[^1\]](#) This guidance applies only to administrative naturalization ceremonies involving an Application for Naturalization ([Form N-400](#)) where a USCIS-designated official or an immigration judge administers the Oath of Allegiance. The guidance does not apply to administrative ceremonies involving children obtaining evidence of citizenship -- Application for Citizenship ([Form N-600](#)) or Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 ([Form N-600K](#)) -- or judicial naturalization ceremonies where a federal, state, or local court administers the Oath of Allegiance.

[\[^2\]](#) To the extent practicable, U.S. Citizenship Welcome Packet (Form M-771) will also be distributed to candidates participating in naturalization ceremonies overseas, subject to circumstances such as the location of the ceremony and the capacity of the military member to carry the materials.

[\[^3\]](#) See Section B, Ceremony Check-in Process [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(B\)](#)], and Section C, Ceremony Program [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(C\)](#)].

[\[^4\]](#) USCIS offices are exempt from implementing the ceremony program when conducting a home visit, or an expedited administrative naturalization ceremony. See Chapter 6, Judicial and Expedited Oath Ceremonies [[12 USCIS-PM J.6](#)].

[\[^5\]](#) For more information, see Section F, Voter Registration After Naturalization Ceremonies [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(F\)](#)].

[\[^6\]](#) USCIS offices may incorporate a live performance as an alternative to the version on the video. If any proprietary versions of the national anthem, or any other songs, are being used, the user must ensure that the intellectual property rights of the holder(s) are respected, and the necessary legal permissions are acquired.

[\[^7\]](#) Opening (welcoming) remarks include, but are not limited to, an introduction of ceremony principals and an overview of the ceremony program.

[\[^8\]](#) The designated official reads aloud a list of countries represented by the naturalization candidates' former nationalities.

[\[^9\]](#) See Chapter 2, The Oath of Allegiance [[12 USCIS-PM J.2](#)]. See [INA 337](#). See [8 CFR 337.1\(a\)](#) and [8 CFR 337.1\(b\)](#).

[\[^10\]](#) Concluding remarks may include, but are not limited to, expressing appreciation to those family and friends in attendance, acknowledging the achievement of the naturalized citizens, announcing the services of

those governmental and nongovernmental entities in attendance, and explaining the distribution method for the certificates of naturalization.

[^11] Only USCIS leadership and officers may present the Certificates of Naturalization to the naturalized U.S. citizens.

[^12] The presentation is provided to all field offices in an electronic format and includes a PowerPoint and video materials.

[^13] Certain prominent guest speakers, which may include elected officials and cabinet members, should receive their invitation to speak from USCIS leadership at headquarters. Therefore, local field leadership should coordinate with headquarters as early as possible and list ceremony details in the National Ceremony Scheduler.

[^14] If a guest speaker makes inappropriate remarks during an administrative naturalization ceremony, field leadership should inform the speaker and notify the appropriate USCIS supervisor or manager. If the guest speaker does not indicate a willingness to modify their remarks in the future, field leadership should not accept requests from the person to speak at future administrative naturalization ceremonies.

[^15] See [5 U.S.C. 7321-7326](#) (Hatch Act).

[^16] See Chapter 5, Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies [[12 USCIS-PM J.5](#)].

[^17] See Section D, Guest Speakers [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(D\)](#)].

[^18] See Section A, Materials Distributed, Subsection 5, Other Materials [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(A\)\(5\)](#)].

[^19] See Section D, Guest Speakers [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(D\)](#)].

[^20] See Section D, Guest Speakers [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(D\)](#)].

[^21] See the [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#).

[^22] See National Voter Registration Act of 1993, [Pub. L. 103-31 \(PDF\)](#) (May 20, 1993). See [52 U.S.C. 20501\(a\)](#).

[^23] See [52 U.S.C. 20507\(a\)\(5\)](#).

[^24] Applicants participating in an administrative ceremony in a state where they do not reside may instead refer to the [National Mail Voter Registration Form](#).

[^25] Nongovernmental organizations must be qualified and approved according to the criteria in Subsection 3, Registration by Nongovernmental Organizations [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(F\)\(3\)](#)].

[^26] For applicants, including military applicants residing outside the United States, who do not reside in the state where the administrative ceremony takes place, USCIS provides the [National Mail Voter Registration Form](#).

[^27] See [52 U.S.C. 20506](#).

[^28] If a field office is unable to distribute voter registration forms in any of the above three manners, field leadership must notify their chain of command within the Field Operations Directorate.

[^29] Location of the ceremony venue may include an indoor or outdoor space or facility.

[^30] See Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986. See [IRC's Exemption Requirements – 501\(c\)\(3\) Organizations](#).

[^31] Nongovernmental organizations are only required to submit the Voter Registration Services Attestation ([Form N-401](#)) once per field office.

[^32] USCIS may approve the request on a one-time or standing basis, but USCIS may remove the organization at any time if the organization does not meet the participation requirements.

[^33] See [18 U.S.C. 241](#) and [18 U.S.C. 242](#). See [52 U.S.C. 20506\(a\)\(5\)](#) and [52 U.S.C. 20511](#).

[^34] Political activity includes activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group. For this purpose, political activity also includes advocacy for particular referenda or other political propositions. For example, a nongovernmental group participating in voter registration activities at an administrative naturalization ceremony may not provide information for or against a state immigration law or proposition. The organization's activities while participating must also comply with the Hatch Act, [5 U.S.C. 7321-26](#). See [52 U.S.C. 20506\(a\)\(5\)\(B\)](#).

[^35] See [52 U.S.C. 10101](#), [52 U.S.C. 10301](#), and [52 U.S.C. 10303\(f\)\(2\)](#).

[^36] Strict civil or criminal penalties may be imposed for the unauthorized purchase and use of voter registration information.

[^37] See [52 U.S.C. 20702](#) (regarding the theft, destruction, concealment, mutilation, or alteration of voter records).

[^38] The conclusion of the ceremony is after the Master of Ceremonies (USCIS official) has dismissed the new citizens.

[^39] For example, volunteers must not perform any of the USCIS employee's duties within the ceremony check-in process.

[^40] This includes any type of indoor or outdoor facility.

[^41] Educational institutions with immigration legal clinics that practice before the agency may donate facilities, but they may not permit members of the immigration clinic to have a role in the ceremony.

[^42] See [INA 337\(d\)](#). See [8 CFR 337.2](#).

[^43] See [5 U.S.C. 7321-7326](#).

[^44] This includes any type of meeting, seminar, conference, or convention.

[^45] USCIS may determine it is operationally feasible to hold a naturalization ceremony in which conference or convention participants are invited to attend, but the ceremony must remain a separate event. A separate event means the naturalization ceremony is hosted and paid for by USCIS, in a different area or location from the event, and the naturalization ceremony is not listed as a scheduled program or agenda item of the event.

[^46] Educational institutions with immigration legal clinics that practice before the agency may donate facilities, but they may not permit members of the immigration clinic to have a role in the ceremony.

[^47] See [5 CFR 2635.202](#).

[^48] See [5 CFR 2635.203\(d\)](#).

[^49] See Form G-1477. USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division and the USCIS Director must both sign the form.

[^50] The value broken down by each ceremony or the total value offered to donate use of venue.

[^51] See Form G-1477. The USCIS Office of Chief Counsel's Ethics Division and the USCIS Director must both sign the form.

[^52] The value broken down by each ceremony or the total value offered to donate use of venue.

[^53] See [5 U.S.C. 7321-7326](#).

[^54] See Chapter 6, Judicial and Expedited Oath Ceremonies [[12 USCIS-PM J.6](#)] for information on non-administrative ceremonies.

[^55] External organizations may support USCIS naturalization ceremonies in one or more of the following ways: participating in the event agenda as determined by USCIS; promoting the event within the community; and offering to donate a neutral space in which to hold the naturalization ceremony. See Section I, Offers to Donate Use of Facilities [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(I\)](#)].

[^56] See Section I, Offers to Donate Use of Facilities [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(I\)](#)].

[^57] Security measures are coordinated through the local USCIS Field Security Manager.

[^58] The seal and signature of external organizations may only be used in accordance with [DHS Management Directive 123-06: Use of the Department of Homeland Security Seal](#). Local offices should consult with the USCIS Office of the Chief Counsel's Ethics Division for guidance.

[^59] See Section D, Guest Speakers [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(D\)](#)].

[^60] See Section F, Voter Registration Services [[12 USCIS-PM J.5\(F\)](#)].

Current as of June 24, 2025