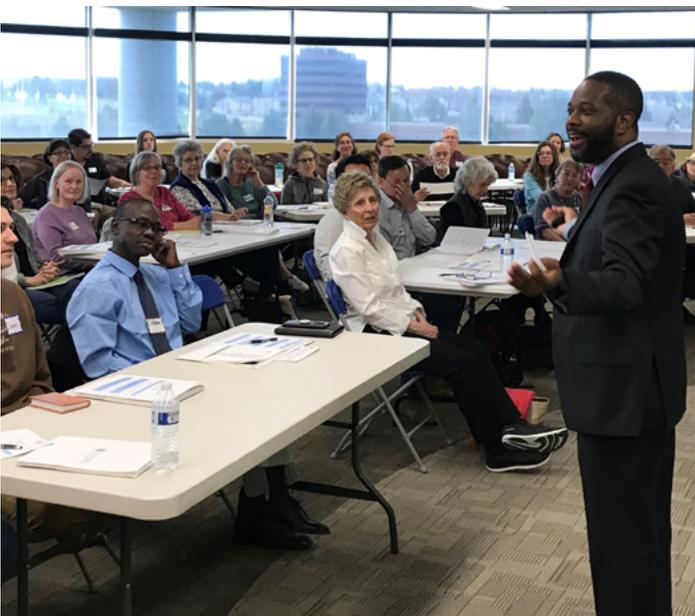




U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Executive Order Progress Fact Sheet

- On Feb. 22, 2021, USCIS announced the [Reinstatement of the 2008 Civics Test- Revising Guidance on Naturalization Civics Educational Requirement](#), with an effective date of March 1. USCIS determined that the 2020 civics test may have inadvertently created potential barriers to the naturalization process and reverted to the previous test to ensure the process is more accessible to all eligible individuals.
- As of March 9, DHS is **no longer applying the 2019 public charge rule, which has been vacated by a federal court. DHS has instead reverted to the 1999 interim field guidance** issued by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service. Under the 1999 interim field guidance, DHS will not consider a person's receipt of Medicaid (except for Medicaid for long-term institutionalization), public housing, or SNAP benefits as part of the public charge inadmissibility determination. In addition, medical treatment or preventive services for COVID-19, including vaccinations, will not be considered for public charge purposes. This policy helps ensure that noncitizens are able to access important government services for which they may be eligible.
- On March 10, **DHS and Department of State initiated the first phase of reinstating and improving the Central American Minors program** to reunite qualified children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras with their parent or parents who are lawfully present in the United States. On June 15, the departments announced the expansion of the [Central American Minors Program](#) to a greater number of qualifying individuals.
- On April 19, DHS published a [Request for Public Input in the Federal Register seeking the public's input on barriers to USCIS benefits and services](#) including adjustment of status, naturalization, H-1B nonimmigrant status, refugee status, asylum, and parole. A central goal of the Request for Public Input was to promote equity, above all by reducing administrative burdens, undue complexity, unnecessary confusion, and processing and waiting times. The department received more than 7,400 comments and has since announced a number of policy updates responsive to the feedback received, many of which are outlined in this Fact Sheet, and continues to review the public comments for further action.
- On April 27, [USCIS issued policy guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual to address deference to prior determinations of eligibility](#) by an officer when adjudicating a request for an extension of petition validity, returning to our prior deference policy to promote efficient and fair adjudication of immigration benefits.



- In May, [USCIS relaunched the International Entrepreneur Parole Program by updating our website and withdrawing the proposed rule](#) that would have ended the program. We also engaged with the public to promote the potential of this job-creation program, including a virtual event hosted by the National Venture Capital Association.
- On May 25, [USCIS published guidance that applicants who are outside the United States for one year or more to engage in ministerial or priestly functions may treat such time abroad as continuous residence](#) and physical presence in the United States for naturalization purposes, which promotes fairness and access to naturalization.
- In 2021, USCIS launched several initiatives to support access to naturalization for active military and veterans residing outside the United States.
 - On March 29, USCIS conducted its first naturalization ceremony for active military members and their families using video capabilities. USCIS offers both video interviews and naturalization ceremonies at Department of Defense facilities for eligible military members and their qualifying family members stationed overseas.
 - On May 28, USCIS [published](#) guidance to clarify that certain veterans of the U.S. armed forces who served honorably during specifically designated periods of hostility and meet all other statutory requirements for naturalization, can naturalize and become U.S. citizens in accordance with U.S. immigration laws.
 - On Nov. 12, USCIS [published](#) updated guidance to make it easier for veterans residing outside of the United States to enter the United States to attend their naturalization interview, and if found eligible, their oath ceremony.
- On June 9, [USCIS published guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual to increase the amount of time a grant of employment authorization is valid for applicants seeking adjustment of status under INA 245](#) from one year to two years.
- On June 9, [USCIS published an update to the expedite criteria](#) to better accommodate applicants' emergency circumstances and facilitate noncitizens' participation in the legal immigration system, while keeping in mind operational efficiencies and the effect on processing times.
- On June 9, USCIS [clarified the circumstances under which officers should issue a request for evidence \(RFE\) or notice of intent to deny \(NOID\)](#), how much time the requester should have to respond, and the limited circumstances under which officers may proceed to denial without first issuing an RFE or NOID.
- On June 14, USCIS announced the [U Visa Bona Fide Determination EAD](#) which provides employment authorization and deferred action for U visa petitioners living in the United States, and their qualifying family members, who have pending bona fide petitions and who merit a favorable exercise of discretion. This provides stability to survivors of crimes to ensure they can effectively assist law enforcement in the prosecution of criminal perpetrators.

- In furtherance of the [Executive Order on Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework To Address the Causes of Migration, To Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and To Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border](#), USCIS conducted a comprehensive examination of current rules, regulations, precedential decisions, and internal guidelines governing the adjudication of asylum claims and determinations of refugee status to evaluate whether the United States provides protection for those fleeing domestic or gang violence in a manner consistent with international standards. Following the Attorney General’s June 16 decisions vacating the prior AG opinions in Matter of A-B- I and II and Matter of L-E-A-, USCIS revoked prior guidance for processing credible fear, reasonable fear, and affirmative asylum claims in accordance with the vacated decisions and updated the Nexus-Particular Social Group Lesson Plan to reflect the vacatur.
- On July 20, USCIS revised [guidance to reduce the burden for F-1 student applicants](#) who have to file multiple so-called “bridge” applications to maintain their nonimmigrant status while awaiting a USCIS decision.
- On Aug. 5, USCIS [published guidance regarding the definition of “child” and how to determine whether a child born outside the United States, including a child born through Assisted Reproductive Technology \(ART\), is considered born “in wedlock.”](#) This guidance allows children born to married legal parents, one of whom has a genetic or gestational link to the child, to acquire citizenship because these children are now considered born in wedlock.
- On Aug. 20, [DHS and the Department of Justice jointly published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\) to allow USCIS asylum officers to adjudicate claims for asylum by individuals subject to expedited removal](#) [DHS and the Department of Justice jointly published an NPRM to allow USCIS asylum officers to adjudicate the asylum claims of individuals subject to expedited removal](#) who are found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture. This rulemaking is intended to alleviate the immigration court backlog, allowing individuals subject to expedited removal to have their asylum claims adjudicated more expeditiously while ensuring due process. When implemented, this will reduce barriers to accessing humanitarian protection for those who qualify.



- On Oct. 20, USCIS published [comprehensive guidance on adjudication of applications for T nonimmigrant status for victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons](#), as well as the first-ever standalone [T Visa Law Enforcement Agency Resource Guide](#) for certifying officials. The guide emphasizes a victim-centered approach and provides certifying agencies with helpful information on how to support victims of human trafficking while law enforcement detects, investigates, and prosecutes acts of trafficking.
- On Dec. 6, [USCIS rescinded the general requirement to interview all Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, petitioners](#). This blanket petitioner interview policy impeded access to immigration benefits and efficient adjudications by adding burdens on refugee and asylee populations as well as operational challenges for USCIS without an evident benefit to justify these burdens.
- On Dec. 7, USCIS issued guidance that supersedes the previous administration’s July 2019 guidance regarding the internal relocation analysis for credible fear and affirmative asylum adjudications. By ensuring that USCIS guidance is consistent with current law, policy, and practice, issuance of this superseding guidance is in line with the [Executive Order on Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework to Address the Causes of Migration, To Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and To Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border](#), which requires the Administration to “restore and strengthen...our asylum system.”
- On Dec. 16, USCIS rescinded all prior guidance related to the United States’ bilateral Asylum Cooperative Agreements with the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, which were terminated in May and August by the Department of State pursuant to the [Executive Order on Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework To Address the Causes of Migration, To Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and To Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border](#).
- [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program \(USRAP\) Improvements](#): USCIS continues to work with the Department of State to take steps to improve the efficacy, integrity, security, and transparency of the USRAP pursuant to the Executive Order on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration.
- [Family Reunification Task Force](#): USCIS continues to serve on the Family Reunification Task Force and pursuant to Executive Order 14011 establishing the task force, has created processes for humanitarian parole and parole-in-place.
- On Jan. 21, 2022, [USCIS issued policy guidance clarifying how the national interest waiver can be used by science, technology, engineering, and math \(STEM\) graduates and entrepreneurs](#), as well as the significance of letters from governmental and quasi-governmental entities.
- Also, on Jan. 21, 2022, [USCIS issued policy guidance to clarify how to evaluate evidence to determine eligibility for O-1A nonimmigrants of extraordinary ability](#), with a focus on persons in STEM fields.

- **Outstanding Americans by Choice (ABC) Initiative:**

USCIS revitalized [the Outstanding Americans by Choice initiative](#) to honor the outstanding achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. In 2021, USCIS recognized nine Outstanding Americans.

- On Nov. 18, the [directors of USCIS and the Institute Museum and Library Services signed a memorandum of understanding](#) at a special Ellis Island ceremony, which was immediately followed by a training for adult citizenship educators led by a team of Office of Citizenship. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is an agreement that advances the meaning and stature of citizenship by building connections between new citizens and America’s parks. USCIS and the National Park Service (NPS) first signed an agreement in 2006 to connect America’s newest citizens to national parks, which provide an ideal backdrop for naturalization ceremonies. Since then, USCIS has coordinated special naturalization ceremonies at dozens of NPS sites, including Ellis Island, Angel Island, Mount Rushmore and the National Mall and Memorial Parks.
- In 2021, [USCIS awarded nearly \\$10 million in grants](#) to 40 organizations in 24 states to help prepare lawful permanent residents (LPR) for naturalization. USCIS awarded the grants through the Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services grant opportunity, which supports organizations that provide citizenship instruction and naturalization application assistance to LPRs.
- On Nov. 10, the [directors of USCIS and NPS signed a memorandum of understanding \(MOU\)](#) at a special ceremony held at the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House to commemorate Veterans Day. The MOU strengthens the partnership and ensures that citizenship ceremonies will continue to be held at national parks and historic federal landmarks that best represent the strength and spirit of the United States and supports the development of citizenship materials with USCIS and NPS content.



- Since Feb. 1, 2021, **USCIS has hosted 59 national stakeholder engagements with over 11,500 attendees.** Additionally, USCIS staff in field offices participated in 1,901 local engagements with more than 60,000 participants. Engagements covered topics including naturalization, employment-based visas, online filing, and humanitarian topics such as Operation Allies Welcome and Temporary Protected Status. Engagements also allowed the agency to enhance connections with key stakeholders, including state and local government officials, librarians and citizenship teachers, refugee resettlement agencies, and business organizations.
- **Citizenship Education Materials developed and posted on the Citizenship Resource Center for Adult Educators and Learners the following materials:**
 - **A More Perfect Union:** USCIS Test Guide to the Monuments and Memorials on the National Mall. The guide aligns the 100 naturalization civics test questions to the monuments and memorials on the national mall.
 - **The Oath:** This educational handout describes the key principles found in the Oath of Allegiance that applicants take at their naturalization ceremonies.
 - **Armed Forces:** This educational handout covers vocabulary related to the Armed Forces. Citizenship educators can use this and the other N-400 Topic Exercises to help students prepare for their naturalization interview.
 - **Adult Citizenship Education Sample Curriculum for a High Beginning ESL Level Course:** This publication outlines the components, structure, and process involved with creating an adult citizenship education curriculum.

- **USCIS Improving Equity and Access for Underserved Customers**

Per [Executive Order \(EO\) 13985](#), which requires agencies to identify systemic barriers for “underserved groups,” USCIS is reviewing gender marker information in forms and secure documents to incorporate the use of inclusive language that respects gender identities. USCIS is planning a national virtual outreach event which targets customers with disabilities. We are shortening and simplifying Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, and updating guidance on when offices may issue a Notice to Appear to asylum-seekers whom it cannot interview due to language access or mental health/capacity concerns, to ensure they are appropriately placed into removal proceedings where they can apply for asylum or other protection from removals, and where an immigration judge can apply appropriate safeguards if the individual is not sufficiently competent to proceed with a hearing.

- **Preserving and Strengthening Protections for Dreamers:** DHS continues taking action to protect Dreamers and recognize their contributions to our country. As the Government defends the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy in federal court, the Department is working to finalize a rulemaking intended to preserve and fortify DACA. DHS also continues to urge Congress to act swiftly to provide Dreamers and others the pathway to permanent lawful status they need and deserve.



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**