

Quick Start Guide

Welcome to the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit!

The *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* is a collection of educational resources developed by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to help permanent residents learn more about the United States and prepare for the naturalization process. Many of the *Toolkit's* products can also serve as supplemental teaching tools for volunteers and adult educators in a classroom or community program setting.

This *Quick Start Guide* provides suggestions on how to use the *Toolkit* and its materials in your community. A detailed listing of each of the items included in the *Toolkit* is also provided. Many programs, especially those new to serving immigrant communities, will find the publication *Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide* to be a valuable

resource. This practical guide offers recommendations for organizations interested in establishing English as a Second Language (ESL) and civics and citizenship classes for immigrants. As an initial step, we encourage you to review both this *Quick Start Guide* and the more detailed *Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide*. You will find many uses for the *Toolkit* both as a supplement to classroom instruction and as a stand-alone resource for self-study. To explore some ideas, choose from the topics below.



Providing Basic Information to the Immigrant Community

Before embarking on a new class or program, try assessing the needs of the community and exploring the resources already available. To guide your research, browse through the publication *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* and the website www.welcometousa.gov to review topics of special interest for immigrants. Topics may include:

- Life in the United States
- Education
- Finding a job
- Healthcare
- Immigration and citizenship
- Emergencies
- Starting a business

Consult with other organizations to learn what services they offer and see if there are unmet needs in your community. If you find that there is little or no

knowledge on the resources already available in your community, consider creating a local guide for new immigrants as your first project.

Another suggestion is to host community information sessions on the topics of interest to immigrants in partnership with local organizations that already serve the local community. For example, you could host a session on one of the following topics:

- Getting settled in the United States
- Education in the United States
- How to become a U.S. citizen
- How to navigate the local job market
- How to start a small business

Promoting the sessions in advance will be critical for success. Refer to *Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide* for ideas on how to inform the community about your programs.

Developing Content for Classes

Many of the products and publications included in the *Toolkit* can be used to enhance an ESL and/or citizenship class. Suggestions include the following activities:

- Use *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* to identify vocabulary related to life in the United States. These vocabulary words may also be useful in

preparing students for the naturalization interview and test.

- Students can practice their English skills by reading aloud the questions and answers found in the *Civics Flash Cards*.

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**U.S. Citizenship
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Services**

Developing Content for Classes *(continued from previous page)*

- *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons* offers English language learners an opportunity to learn about U.S. history and government.
- Review each of the vocabulary words for the English reading and writing tests with the class. Following this exercise, ask students to write sentences using the vocabulary words and then read the sentences aloud.
- Use *The USCIS Naturalization Interview and Test* video to develop scenarios that could occur during the naturalization interview. Ask students to act out these scenarios in front of the class or in small groups.
- Show all three films/presentations included in the Toolkit—one at the beginning of each class over a given period—to highlight the important steps that immigrants must take in their journey toward U.S. citizenship. *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants* will help students understand the fundamental civic concepts that unite
- all Americans; *Becoming a U.S. Citizen: An Overview of the Naturalization Process* will explain the naturalization process step-by-step; and *The USCIS Naturalization Interview and Test* will provide insight into one of the most important steps in the naturalization process.
- Use the discussion booklet included with *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants* to spur classroom discussion on the importance of citizenship and the U.S. Constitution.
- Use the Toolkit to create a collection of civics and citizenship study materials in your program’s library or reference section.

Set aside time to closely review the materials in the Toolkit. This process may help you come up with your own ideas to use in ESL and/or citizenship classes.

Training Staff and Volunteers

The study aids and multimedia materials inside the Toolkit can serve as helpful training resources for new and experienced volunteers. Volunteers need appropriate guidance and tools to perform effectively. Refer to *Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide* for a step-by-step plan to build and support your volunteer network. Below are several suggestions on how to train and motivate volunteers:

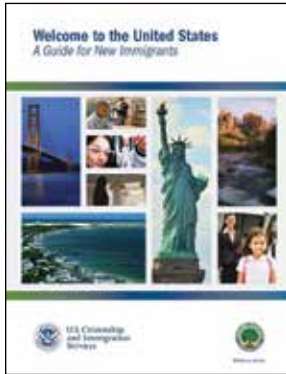
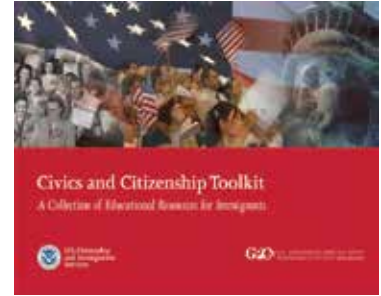
- Organize a viewing of the short films provided in the Toolkit. Lead a group discussion on how to teach students the concepts and information covered in each film.
- Effective citizenship instructors have a solid understanding of the fundamentals of U.S. history and government. Volunteers should review closely *The Citizen’s Almanac*, the film *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants*, and *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons* to expand their knowledge.
- The film *A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants* includes a discussion booklet that encourages further study of the civic concepts
- addressed in the film. The booklet may serve as a basic lesson plan for volunteers to use in the classroom.
- Assign each volunteer to become an “expert” on one of the chapters from the comprehensive orientation guide, *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*. Ask each volunteer to provide a summary to the group. If a student or client has a question about life in the United States that one volunteer cannot answer, he or she can then direct the individual to the most knowledgeable source.
- Ask volunteers to review *Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide*. This will allow them to get a better understanding of how to build an effective program. Hold brainstorming sessions to review program goals, ideas, and recommendations.
- Using the civics and citizenship resources in the Toolkit, ask volunteers to create a special program and exhibit during patriotic holidays or commemorations, such as the Fourth of July, Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Flag Day, etc.

We hope that you find the ideas presented in this *Quick Start Guide* useful for your program. For additional information and resources, please visit www.uscis.gov/citizenship.

Civics and Citizenship Toolkit

Products and Publications

The *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* contains a variety of educational materials designed to help permanent residents learn more about the United States and prepare for the naturalization process. The following items are included in each copy of the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit*. Electronic versions of these items are available at www.uscis.gov/citizenship unless otherwise noted.



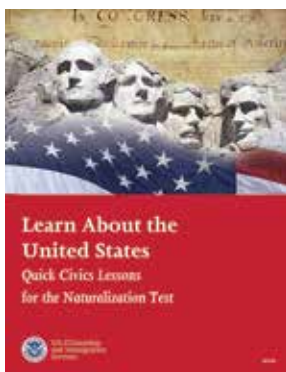
Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants/ Bienvenido a los Estados Unidos de América: Guía para nuevos inmigrantes

USCIS offers a comprehensive guide containing practical information to help immigrants settle into everyday life in the United States, as well as basic civics information that introduces new immigrants to the U.S. system of government. English and Spanish versions are provided in the *Toolkit*. The guide is available in additional languages at www.uscis.gov.



Civics Flash Cards

The *Civics Flash Cards* will help immigrants learn about U.S. history and government while preparing for the naturalization test. These easy-to-use flash cards contain each of the 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers on the naturalization test. Perfect for individual study or for use in the classroom, the *Civics Flash Cards* serve as a valuable instruction tool for citizenship preparation.



Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons

Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons contains short lessons based on each of the 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers on the naturalization test. This additional information will help immigrants learn more about important concepts in American history and government—moving beyond memorization—as they prepare for citizenship.



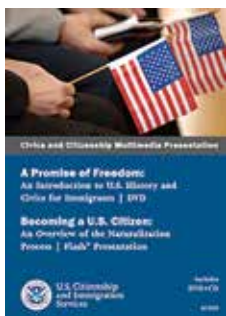
The Citizen's Almanac

The Citizen's Almanac is a collection of America's most cherished symbols of freedom and liberty, serving as a modern day lifeline to the rich civic history we all share as Americans. The booklet includes information on patriotic anthems and symbols, citizenship rights and responsibilities, the creation of our founding documents, biographical details on prominent foreign-born Americans, landmark decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, and important presidential and historic speeches on citizenship.



Pocket Size Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States

A pocket-size booklet containing the complete text of these two core documents of American democracy.



Civics and Citizenship Multimedia Presentation

A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants

This 12-minute film focuses on the history and founding of our nation and the important rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. Accompanying the DVD is a discussion booklet that encourages discussion and review of the basic concepts of American democracy outlined in the film. *A Promise of Freedom* is an excellent way to begin a session on immigration or citizenship. The film is available with English, Chinese, and Spanish subtitles.

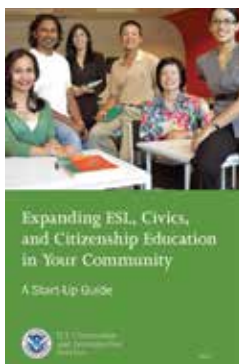
Becoming a U.S. Citizen: An Overview of the Naturalization Process

This 10-minute video for Adobe Flash provides a general overview of the naturalization process including where to find immigration information and the general requirements for obtaining U.S. citizenship.



The USCIS Naturalization Interview and Test

This 16-minute video provides an overview of the naturalization process and testing requirements. The video highlights scenes from the naturalization interview, including the English and civics (U.S. history and government) portions of the naturalization test. These simulated situations provide a closer look into the overall process. Individuals applying for citizenship may use this video as a reference tool to prepare for the naturalization interview. Teachers and volunteers can use the video to complement classroom instruction.



Expanding ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide

Many community, faith-based, and civic organizations and employers would like to help immigrants adjust to life in the United States and prepare for citizenship, but do not know where to begin. Fortunately, the experience and practices of existing ESL, civics, and citizenship programs can help you get started. This guide offers suggestions and strategies along with a framework you can adapt to suit your community's needs and circumstances. The guide also includes basic recommendations and sample forms and materials to help begin an ESL and/or citizenship program.

For more information on the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit*, including product updates, please visit www.uscis.gov/citizenshiptoolkit.