

Avoid Immigration Fraud (Scams)

KEEP IN MIND:

- Only attorneys or non-attorney accredited representatives working with DOJ recognized agencies may give you legal advice or represent you before the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- Some individuals provide immigration advice or services illegally and may charge you to submit fraudulent applications to USCIS. They often call themselves immigration consultants or “notarios.” Submitting false or inaccurate applications with USCIS on your behalf may result in negative consequences and jeopardize your ability to get an immigration benefit.

IF YOU NEED A PRIVATE ATTORNEY:

- New York City Bar Association Legal Referral Panel **212-626-7373**
- American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) www.aialawyer.com

IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD A PRIVATE ATTORNEY:

- Find a free or low-cost immigration legal service provider at www.immigrationlawhelp.org.
- Find an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ recognized agencies provide free or low-cost immigration legal services. Find a list of these immigration legal service providers at www.justice.gov/eoir/ra/raroster.htm.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO AVOID BEING A VICTIM OF UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRATION SERVICE PROVIDERS:

- www.uscis.gov/avoidscams
- www.stopnotariofraud.org

TO REPORT IMMIGRATION SCAMS OR DENOUNCE IMMIGRATION SERVICE PROVIDERS WHO VICTIMIZED YOU:

- NY County District Attorney’s Office, Immigrant Affairs Program **212-335-3600**: to take action against an unlawful service provider.
- NY State Office of the Attorney General Consumer Helpline at **800-771-7755**. To try to recover the money you paid.
- NY State New Americans Hotline: **1 (800) 566-7636**.
- Report scams to the Federal Trade Commission by calling **877-FTC-HELP**, or you can file a complaint online at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

NOTE: Information provided to the District Attorney’s, the Attorney General’s offices, and the NY State New Americans Hotline is confidential and not reported to the federal government. These offices assist immigrants regardless of immigration status.

OUR SERVICES

FREE Immigration Services for the People of New York

CUNY Citizenship Now! provides free consultations and application assistance for the case types below. We prioritize appointments and services for members of the CUNY Community – current students, faculty and staff – at all our service locations. Our services are open to other members of the public based on capacity of the individual location. There is no minimum income requirement to receive services through CUNY Citizenship Now! **All services are FREE!**

WE PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMUNITY WITH:

- Naturalization
- Certificates of Citizenship
- Renewal and Replacement of immigration documents
- Fee Waivers
- Family-Based Petitions
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Request (FOIA)
- Adjustment of Status
- Consular Processing

Connect with CUNY Citizenship Now!

-  cuny.edu/citizenshipnow
-  facebook.com/citizenshipnow
-  [@CUNYCitizenship](https://twitter.com/CUNYCitizenship)
-  [@cunycitizenshipnow](https://www.instagram.com/cunycitizenshipnow)

OUR LOCATIONS

FULL TIME CENTERS

BRONX	Hostos Community College Immigration Center 718-518-4395
BROOKLYN	Medgar Evers Immigration Center 718-270-6292
MANHATTAN	City College Immigration Center 212-650-6620 CUNY Xpress Immigration Center 646-664-9350
QUEENS	Flushing Immigration Center 718-640-9223 York College Immigration Center 718-262-2983

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE

Please call for an appointment

To register for events, please call 646-664-9400

PART-TIME LOCATIONS

We offer part-time services at more than 30 New York City Council Member Offices and Affiliated Sites. For contact information, directions and hours of service, visit www.cuny.edu/citizenshipnow.



HOW TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN



FREE Immigration Services for the People of New York



CUNY Citizenship Now!

WE ARE THE LARGEST UNIVERSITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN THE NATION, PROVIDING FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION LAW SERVICES. We believe in empowering immigrants so that they are in control of their immigration case, a model of legal assistance called pro se. Through this model, our attorneys and paralegals help more than 15,000 individuals each year, all on the path to citizenship. In addition to our one on one services, we have also developed an event model to help large groups with their immigration applications. The model is nationally recognized, has been implemented by other organizations, and has served thousands of immigrants who cannot afford to pay for private attorneys. We also work with our partners to offer Civics classes and workshops about immigrant rights, business creation, and finances.

Our History

We started operations in 1997, offering free citizenship and immigration services to the students, faculty, and staff of the City University of New York (CUNY). At that time, we only had one center at City College and traveled around to the various colleges assisting with naturalization. Today, we operate six full-time immigration centers recognized by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and more than 30 sites in the offices of New York City council members where we provide a variety of immigration law services. Annually, we hold more than 20 community-based events, not including seminars or classes.

Our Citizenship Events

A vital part of our activities is our Volunteer Corps, a multicultural group of volunteers trained to help us at our events. We prepare our volunteers to act in

legal and non-legal capacities under our supervision, which increases our capacity to provide services at community events. The Corps brings together attorneys, paralegals, community activists and retirees from the diverse communities of New York City. We partner with New York City Council members, the New Americans Campaign (NAC), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund and other elected officials to bring these events to the community.

Naturalization

THIS BROCHURE WAS PREPARED BY CUNY CITIZENSHIP NOW! TO PROVIDE GENERAL INFORMATION TO PERMANENT RESIDENTS ON THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS, THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN.

The naturalization process can be complicated. This brochure is not a substitute for legal advice in a particular case. For free legal assistance at one of the CUNY Citizenship Now! centers, call the numbers listed on the back of this brochure or visit www.cuny.edu/citizenshipnow.

Requirements

If you are a permanent resident, you can apply to become a U.S. citizen, if you meet **all** of the following requirements:

- You have resided in the United States as a permanent resident continuously for five years. You can qualify after only three years of permanent residence if you have been married to and living with the same U.S. citizen for the past three years and your spouse has been a U.S. citizen for the past three years (also applies to same sex couples.);
- You have been physically present in the United States for at least half of the five (or three) years;
- You have resided for at least three months in the state or USCIS District in which the naturalization application will be filed;
- You are a person of good moral character;
- You have a basic knowledge of U.S. government and history (with exceptions for some disabled permanent residents);
- You are able to read, write, and speak basic English (with exceptions for some older and long-time permanent residents, and for some disabled permanent residents);
- You are at least 18-years-old and legally competent to take an oath of allegiance to the United States;
- You are willing to express your allegiance to the United States.

Attention

As part of the application process, USCIS will review your immigration history and criminal history. If you have any reason to believe that USCIS may question your right to become a U.S. citizen, you should see an authorized immigration law expert. USCIS may question your right to become a U.S. citizen if **any** of the following apply to you:

- You have ever been arrested or had any contact with law enforcement.
- You have ever lied to government officials, immigration officers, or officers at a consulate abroad.
- You have ever failed to pay spouse or child support.
- You are a male who lived in the United States at any time between your 18th and 26th birthdays and did not register with the Selective Service.
- You married someone only to get a green card.
- Since becoming a lawful permanent resident you have spent a lot of time outside of the United States, especially if trips lasted more than six months.
- Since becoming a permanent resident you failed to file an income tax return when required to do so.
- One of your parents became a U.S. citizen before you turned 18. You may already be a U.S. citizen.

The Naturalization Process

1. N-400 FORM COMPLETION

To obtain Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, and verify current fees and mailing information, go to www.uscis.gov or call **800-870-3676**. Speak with an immigration law expert to find out about additional documents that are required to support your application.

At our centers we can provide you with a consultation on your eligibility for citizenship, review your completed form N-400, advise on the application process, and give you a guide on how to complete Form N-400 (the guide includes materials to prepare for the English and civics test, and referrals to free or low cost civics and English classes).

2. BIOMETRICS APPOINTMENT

After mailing your application, USCIS will mail you a receipt notice and a letter advising you to appear for fingerprinting and photographs. After this biometrics appointment, you will receive a notice for an interview with a USCIS officer.

3. THE USCIS INTERVIEW

At this interview you must demonstrate your eligibility for naturalization and you will be tested on your basic

knowledge of English and United States civics. If you fail the English exam or the civics exam at the interview, the USCIS officer, on that same day, will give you an appointment for a second interview.

4. NOTIFICATION

After the interview, you will receive either an invitation to attend your swearing in ceremony, at which you will become a citizen of the United States, or a letter stating the reason for the denial of your citizenship request.

Benefits of Citizenship

The Constitution and laws of the United States give some rights only to U.S. citizens, including:

- Voting for the politician of your choice and fully participating in U.S. democracy.
- Holding any public office, except President and Vice President.
- Becoming eligible for state and federal jobs, and other jobs where U.S. citizenship is required.
- Obtaining government benefits available to U.S. citizens only.
- Traveling with a U.S. passport: You have the privilege of traveling in and out of the United States and getting assistance from the U.S. consulate overseas.
- Obtaining citizenship for children born abroad: If you become a citizen before your lawful permanent resident child turns 18, and your child is residing with you in the United States, he/she might become a citizen through you with all the rights and privileges as you, the naturalizing parent.
- Expand the category of family members you can bring to the United States and getting priority when petitioning for certain family members' green cards.

Responsibilities of Citizenship

When you decide to become a U.S. citizen, you must be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. Many of these responsibilities are included in the Oath of Allegiance, which each person takes when they naturalize:

- Give up all prior allegiance to any other nation or sovereignty;
- Swear allegiance to the United States and support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States;
- Serve the country when required;
- Register and vote in elections;
- Serve on a jury.