



Citizenship

Alfonso Aguilar is the Chief of the Office of Citizenship (OoC). OoC, established in September 2003, is responsible for promoting instruction and training on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and providing immigrants with information and tools necessary to successfully integrate into American civic culture.

The Office of Citizenship (OoC) develops products and initiatives to assist immigrants through each step of the immigration process. During FY2007, the OoC completed and introduced a variety of products and initiatives aimed at strengthening integration efforts in the United States, including:

- o **The Citizen's Almanac** – In April 2007, the Office of Citizenship introduced The Citizen's Almanac during a special naturalization ceremony at the National Archives. This publication is a collection of America's most cherished symbols of freedom and liberty. The Citizen's Almanac was developed for new citizens and includes information on U.S. history, rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, biographical details on prominent foreign-born Americans, landmark decisions of the Supreme Court, presidential speeches on citizenship, and several of America's founding documents including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Citizen's Almanac, along with a pocket size version of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States, is distributed to new citizens during naturalization ceremonies.
- o **A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants** – *A Promise of Freedom* is an inspiring short film for immigrant audiences based on the National Constitution Center's award-winning presentation Freedom Rising. This 12-minute film focuses on the history and founding of the U.S. and the important rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. The role of immigration in U.S. history is highlighted throughout the film. *A Promise of Freedom* is part of a two-disc set which also includes an accompanying workbook and a Flash® presentation on the naturalization process.
- o **Redesigned Naturalization Test** – For the first time in nearly 20 years, the federal government announced a comprehensive review of the naturalization test. The major aim of the redesign process was to ensure that naturalization applicants have uniform, consistent testing experiences nationwide and that the civics test can effectively assess whether applicants have a meaningful understanding of U.S. history and government. To accomplish these goals, the Office of Citizenship initially piloted a new naturalization test—with an overhauled English reading and writing section and new history and government questions—in ten sites across the U.S.

The feedback from this pilot was used to finalize testing procedures, English reading and writing prompts and a list of 100 revised U.S. history and government questions. To ensure the pilot accounted for a representative sample of candidates with a variety of education levels, a supplemental study was conducted at adult education sites nationwide. The resulting redesigned test was publicly introduced September 27, 2007. Naturalization applicants will begin taking the revised test on October 1, 2008. The revised test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, will help encourage citizenship applicants to learn and identify with basic American values.

The Office of Citizenship is also spearheading the efforts of the Task Force on New Americans - an interagency federal task force created by President George W. Bush to enhance and coordinate government-wide immigrant integration initiatives. During FY2007, the Task Force launched:

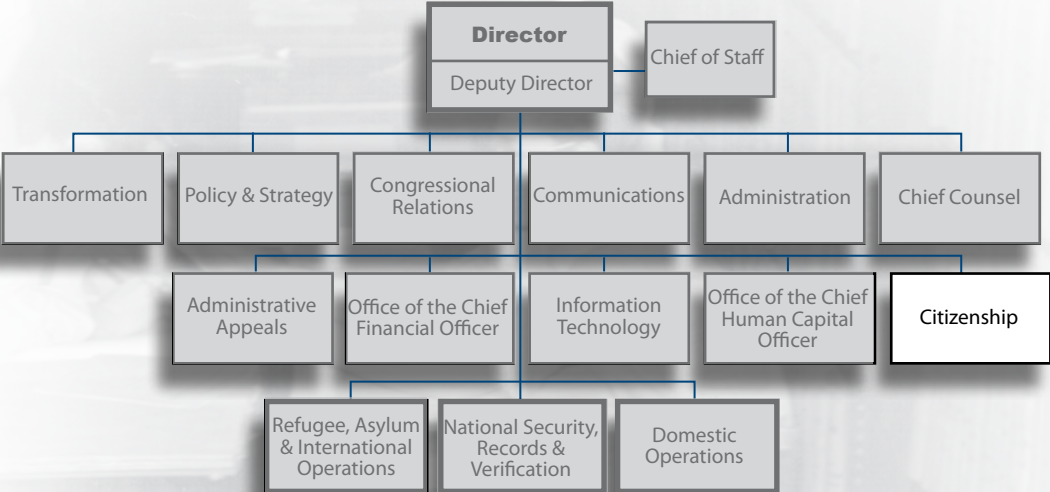
- o **WelcometoUSA.gov** – Developed in partnership with the General Services Administration, *www.welcometoUSA.gov* serves as the U.S. Government’s official web portal for new immigrants. With *www.welcometoUSA.gov* the federal government presents newcomers with basic information, through a comprehensive web portal, on settling in the U.S. In addition to settlement information, *www.welcometoUSA.gov* contains links to help new immigrants find English classes and methods to get involved in their community through volunteering.
- o **Web-Based Training and Resources for Volunteers and Adult Educators** – Responding to requests by adult educators across the country, in FY2007 the Office of Citizenship introduced U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online: Resource Center for Instructors. This web-based tool provides stakeholders with a single source for locating appropriate educational resources to incorporate civics into English as a Second Language instruction and to prepare adult students for naturalization. U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online provides links to educational curricula, lesson plans, teacher assessments and other instructional material on civics and citizenship. In partnership with the Department of Education, the OoC launched the first phase of an online module, titled EL/Civics Online, for volunteers and adult educators that includes courses and materials on the naturalization process, U.S. government and civics education.
- o **The New Americans Project** – In partnership with the White House Office of USA Freedom Corps, the Office of Citizenship (OoC) led efforts to implement the New Americans Project - an initiative that seeks to encourage volunteerism among both U.S. citizens and new immigrants. In FY2007, a zip code based search engine listing volunteer opportunities to work with immigrants was introduced along with a public service campaign with the message, “America Needs You.” In addition, the OoC held outreach events to promote this initiative in Boston, MA and Phoenix, AZ.

- o **Civics and Citizenship Toolkit.** In FY2007, the Office of Citizenship began distributing the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit, which contains educational materials to help immigrants learn about the United States. Since June 2007, more than 4,000 public libraries have registered and received a free copy of the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit.
- o **External Outreach.** Throughout FY2007, the Office of Citizenship (OoC) conducted a diverse series of outreach efforts both within the U.S. and around the world. OoC traveled across the U.S. providing information on the redesigned naturalization test and how best to utilize USCIS educational products. A highlight was the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference in Seattle, WA, where the OoC held a series of well-attended training sessions addressing how to prepare students for the revised naturalization test. Internationally, the OoC was able to speak to many partners on comparative integration and citizenship practices. Highlights included travel to the United Kingdom and Switzerland, as well as briefings for visiting officials from Mexico, France, Norway, Taiwan and the Netherlands.



Newly naturalized citizens review Citizen's Almanac

USCIS Organizational Chart



Citizenship

