



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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PRESS RELEASE

USCIS Issues Questions and Answers for New Pilot Naturalization Exam

Advance Release Informs American Public and Stakeholders of Civics and U.S. History

WASHINGTON - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Emilio Gonzalez announced today the release of 144 questions and answers for the pilot test of a new naturalization exam. USCIS will administer the pilot exam in early 2007 to about 5,000 volunteer citizenship applicants in 10 cities.

“We found that the current naturalization exam process lacks standardization and encourages applicants to memorize facts just to pass a test, but that doesn’t guarantee that they understand the meaning behind the question,” said Director Gonzalez. “Our goal is to inspire immigrants to learn about the civic values of this nation so that after they take the oath of citizenship they will participate fully in our great democracy.”

USCIS included new questions that focus on the concepts of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In designing the new exam, USCIS received assistance and worked with test development contractors, U.S. history and government scholars, and English as a second language experts. USCIS also sought input from a variety of stakeholders, including immigrant advocacy groups, citizenship instructors and district adjudications officers.

The pilot will allow USCIS to work out any problems and refine the exam before it is fully implemented nationwide in the spring of 2008. The questions and answers are posted on the agency Web site, <http://www.uscis.gov>. Questions that are not successful in the pilot will be dropped, narrowing the list to the same 100 questions as the current exam. The range of acceptable answers to questions will increase so that applicants may learn more about a topic and select from a wider range of responses. In addition to new questions, USCIS will soon release a new civics-based vocabulary list to help applicants study for the English reading and writing portion of the proposed test.

During the trial period, volunteer applicants who choose to take the pilot exam can immediately take the current exam if they incorrectly answer a pilot question. To pass, applicants will have to correctly answer six of 10 selected questions. The 10 pilot test sites are: Albany, N.Y.; Boston, Mass; Charleston, S.C.; Denver, Col.; El Paso, TX; Kansas City, Mo.; Miami, Fla.; San Antonio, TX; Tucson, Ariz.; and Yakima, Wash.

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On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.