



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# USCIS TODAY



A MESSAGE FROM  
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
ROBERT DIVINE

Recently, USCIS leaders from across the nation met for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual USCIS Leadership Conference. The conference featured discussion sessions organized around goals outlined in the USCIS Strategic Plan. Each general panel was followed by breakout sessions in smaller groups in which regional and field leaders expressed their opinions and spoke openly about the direction of USCIS. The Conference was a terrific success and I look forward to working closely with our leadership team to implement their suggestions from the Conference.

I am also pleased to announce the arrival of Tom Paar as the new USCIS Chief of Staff. Tom brings more than thirty years of experience at the Coast Guard and DHS headquarters to our team, and his expertise will help us implement new initiatives and programs at USCIS.

## SIGN UP FOR USCIS TODAY

[CLICK HERE](#) to subscribe and sign up to receive additional information specialized to your needs.

## SEPTEMBER 2005 CITIZENSHIP DAY EDITION

[Message from Acting Deputy Director Robert Divine](#)

[USCIS Celebrates Citizenship Day](#)

[DHS Announces National Preparedness Month](#)

[USCIS Exposes Immigration Fraud Scheme](#)

[Faces of America – New Citizens, Unique Stories](#)

[USCIS...A Day In The Life](#)

[News You Can Use](#)

[By the Numbers – Backlog Elimination Progress](#)

["How Do I...Become a Naturalized Citizen?"](#)

[Real People, Real Progress – Employee Spotlight](#)

## USCIS CELEBRATES CITIZENSHIP DAY

Under the theme "Celebrate Citizenship, Celebrate America," USCIS is holding a series of special naturalization ceremonies in honor of Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, to celebrate the civic values that define America as well as highlight the importance of integrating permanent legal immigrants into American civic culture.

This initiative echoes President Woodrow Wilson's efforts, back in 1915, where as part of National Americanization Day, the President himself, cabinet members, Administration officials as well as prominent public figures such as Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, gave speeches at naturalization ceremonies throughout the nation. This month, almost one hundred years later, USCIS celebrates this tradition by hosting Citizenship events across the nation.

### EVENT INFORMATION

#### **Jefferson Memorial Naturalization Ceremony (9/16/05)**

Keynote: The Honorable Michael Chertoff, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

#### **Ellis Island Naturalization Ceremony (9/16/05)**

Keynote: The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, Department of Labor

#### **Phoenix Naturalization Ceremony (9/18/05)**

Keynote: The Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor, Retired Supreme Court Justice

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information on these and other USCIS Citizenship Day events.

**INTEGRITY . RESPECT . INGENUITY**

---

# DHS ANNOUNCES NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Keeping in mind the lessons learned in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, throughout September, the Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross will work with local, state and federal government organizations and the private sector to highlight the importance of public emergency preparedness.

National Preparedness Month will provide Americans with a variety of opportunities to learn more about preparing for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist threats. Events, activities, and messages across the nation will encourage individuals to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, be informed about different threats and get involved in preparing their communities.

**September is National Preparedness Month**

**GET PREPARED. GET INVOLVED.**

VISIT [WWW.READY.GOV](http://WWW.READY.GOV)

Learn more about what you and your family can do to better prepare for natural disasters and potential terrorist threats including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological events at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). For specific questions about the area where you live, contact your local Office of Emergency Management, Citizen Corps council [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) or Red Cross chapter [www.redcross.org/preparedness](http://www.redcross.org/preparedness).

---

## USCIS EXPOSES IMMIGRATION FRAUD SCHEME

Recent interaction between the USCIS Texas Service Center, USCIS' Fraud Detection and National Security Unit (FDNS) and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has resulted in the cancellation of 2,550 fraudulently obtained Florida driver's licenses.

"This is a perfect example of the positive impact USCIS fraud detection programs are having not only within our agency but within our country as a whole," said Don Crocetti, the Director of FDNS. "By identifying patterns of immigration fraud and cooperating with state and federal enforcement agencies, we're protecting the integrity of our immigration system, ensuring national security and deterring criminal activity."

USCIS employees originally noticed a fraud pattern in certain "Applications for Employment Authorization" (form I-765) filed from Florida. The data indicated that non-immigrants were filing frivolous applications with USCIS in order to obtain a genuine "Receipt Notice" (form I-797).

In addition to canceling the 2,550 fraudulently obtained licenses the American Association of Motor Vehicles Administrators issued a national advisory cautioning member states not to accept certain "Receipt Notices" indicating an "Application for Employment Authorization" has been filed with USCIS as evidence of lawful status in the United States.



USCIS' **Fraud Detection and National Security Unit** develops, coordinates, and leads the national anti-fraud operations for USCIS and oversees and enhances policies and procedures pertaining to the processing of law enforcement checks on applicants and petitioners. Check next month's October issue of USCIS Today for more information on FDNS.

---

**NEED TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH USCIS?**

[CLICK HERE](#) to make an appointment online using InfoPass

---

[WWW.USCIS.GOV](http://WWW.USCIS.GOV)

---

# FACES OF AMERICA

## NEW CITIZENS – UNIQUE STORIES

### LANCE CORPORAL ANGEL GOMEZ - MEXICO



Lance Corporal Angel Gomez accepts the Oath of Allegiance and becomes an American Citizen



Angel signs his naturalization certificate

Lance Corporal Angel Gomez, age 19, is no ordinary Marine. Born in Mexico and the second eldest of eight children, Angel grew up in Farmersville, a hamlet near Visalia in California's central valley. As a permanent resident, he signed up for service in the Marine Corps when he was just 17 and was deployed to Iraq.

Last April, while on his second tour of duty, an improvised explosive device went off next to the Humvee he was driving and Angel suffered a serious brain injury. When he came to the Veterans Affairs Polytrauma Center in Palo Alto, CA, a month after being wounded, Angel was unable to move or speak. At the beginning of his 18-month recovery period, doctors weren't sure he would ever regain those abilities.

No ordinary Marine, on July 14, Angel decked himself out in his blue dress uniform, topped off with a protective headpiece, and took his oath of citizenship before his proud family, fellow marines, and friends. His right side was weakened by the blast, so he couldn't raise his right hand for the Oath of Citizenship. But he gamely raised his left hand and managed a soft "I do" at the proper moment. Today, Angel is able to use a walker and even said "thank-you" into television microphones recording his citizenship ceremony.

Angel received his U.S. citizenship as a result of a July 2002 executive order from President Bush declaring all active non-citizen military members eligible for naturalization. Since then, more than 16,000 military members have benefited through expedited naturalization.

ARE YOU ONE OF THE "FACES OF AMERICA?"

[CLICK HERE](#) TO SUBMIT YOUR STORY!

---

## USCIS...A DAY IN THE LIFE

Every day, more than 15,000 federal and contract USCIS employees accomplish the following at our 264 offices worldwide:

- Welcome **2,100** new citizens
- Naturalize **20** individuals serving in the United States military
- Accept **3,500** new permanent residents

Check the October issue or [CLICK HERE](#) for more statistics on what we do every day to effectively and efficiently administer our nation's immigration system.

LOOKING FOR THE NEAREST USCIS OFFICE?

To find your local office, [CLICK HERE](#)

---

**"SECURING AMERICA'S PROMISE"**

# NEWS YOU CAN USE...

## FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS



### [USCIS Welcomes America's Newest Citizens at Sea, 8/24/05](#)

Twenty-nine active-duty Sailors took the Oath of Allegiance and became America's newest U.S. Citizens during a special ceremony aboard the USS Kitty Hawk, the first time since World War II that U.S. service members were naturalized at sea.

### [DHS Announces 12-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status for Liberia, 8/16/05](#)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today announced a 12-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Liberia until October 1, 2006. Under this extension, those who have already been granted TPS are eligible to live and work in the United States for an additional year and continue to maintain their status.

### [USCIS Reaches 2006 H-1B Cap, 8/12/05](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that it has received enough H-1B petitions to meet the congressionally mandated cap for fiscal year 2006.

### [New Address Change Procedures For ABC Class Members, 8/05/05](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) notified class members of American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh (ABC) through publication of a notice in the Federal Register that the ABC Project Post Office box in Washington, D.C will close.

## BY THE NUMBERS...

### BACKLOG ELIMINATION EFFORTS

During the third quarter of FY 2005, the backlog was increased by about 174,000 asylum adjustment cases. These cases were added after the enactment of the REAL ID Act of 2005, wherein a previous statute limiting USCIS from completing more than 10,000 applications for Form I-485, *Adjustment of Status to Lawful Permanent Residence for Asylees*, was lifted. USCIS employees are working to address this influx of new cases, establish a maximum six-month processing period for every application received and eliminate the current backlogs by the end of FY 2006.

Date	Number of Backlog Cases	Percent Change
March	1,172,288	- 6.7 %
April	1,093,114	- 3.5 %
May	1,053,902	+ 12 %
June	1,183,099	- 3.8 %
July	1,137,722	

We are well on our way to reaching our goals. As of June 2005, USCIS has met current targets in 14 of 16 application form types and that has completed almost 750,000 more applications than received this year.

## USCIS ONLINE PRODUCTS...TOOLS YOU CAN USE!!!

USCIS offers a wide variety of educational materials online at our website.  
All of the products are free and available in several languages.

- New Immigrant Orientation Guide:** <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/welcomeguide/index.htm>  
**"How Do I...?" Series Factsheets:** <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/factsheet/index.htm>  
**Citizenship Test Flash Cards:** <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/flashcards/index.htm>  
**E-Filing Online Application Center:** <http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/eFiling.htm>  
**The USCIS Strategic Plan:** <http://uscis.gov/graphics/aboutus/repstudies/USCISSTRATEGICPLAN.pdf>

[WWW.USCIS.GOV](http://WWW.USCIS.GOV)

## “HOW DO I...?” FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT USCIS



# HOW DO I APPLY FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP?

United States (U.S.) citizenship carries many responsibilities with it. The decision to become a U.S. citizen is a very important one. Being granted U.S. citizenship is known as naturalization. In most cases, a person who wants to naturalize must first be a permanent resident. By becoming a U.S. citizen, you gain many rights that permanent residents or others do not have, including the right to vote. To be eligible for naturalization, you must first meet certain requirements set by U.S. law.

The “How Do I...?” Section of USCIS Today contains answers to frequently asked questions received by USCIS employees. The information provided in this section is available in English and Spanish on the [USCIS website](#).

## WHAT ARE THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY FOR NATURALIZATION?

Generally, to be eligible for naturalization you must:

- Be age 18 or older; and
- Be a permanent resident for a certain amount of time (usually 5 years); and
- Be a person of good moral character; and
- Have a basic knowledge of U.S. history, government; and
- Have a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the U.S.; and
- Be able to read, write and speak basic English (With specific exceptions for age and disability).

## WHEN CAN I APPLY FOR NATURALIZATION?

You may be able to apply for naturalization if you are at least 18 years of age and have been a permanent resident of the U.S.:

- For at least 5 years; or
- For at least 3 years during which time you have been, and continue to be, married to and living in marriage with your U.S. citizen husband or wife; or
- Have honorable service in the U.S. military.

Certain spouses of U.S. citizens and members of the military may be able to file for naturalization sooner.

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR NATURALIZATION?

To apply for naturalization, file the *Application for Naturalization*, Form N-400. This form is available online, [CLICK HERE](#).

To learn more about Naturalization procedures for Military Personnel [CLICK HERE](#).

For more detailed information on the naturalization process, including a list of 26 frequently asked questions and information on Citizenship qualifications, please see our online manual, [A Guide to Naturalization](#), available online in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese and Vietnamese.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

Send your application, two photos, documents, and fee to the appropriate [Service Center](#). USCIS will then contact you to begin the formal naturalization process.

This process requires potential new citizens to submit fingerprints and visit a local USCIS office for an interview with an Adjudications Officer. Later, you will also be asked to take the English and U.S. Civics tests. For help preparing, USCIS has created a series of question and answer civics flash cards. These cards are available online, [CLICK HERE](#).

Upon successful completion of these requirements, you will receive a formal decision and a Naturalization Ceremony date, where you will take the Oath of Allegiance and return your Permanent Residency Card.

**USCIS WILL NATURALIZE MORE THAN 2,000 NEW AMERICANS  
DURING CITIZENSHIP DAY AND CONSTITUTION WEEK CEREMONIES**

INTEGRITY . RESPECT . INGENUITY

---

# REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

## USCIS RECOGNIZES EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

### Background:

An immigrant from a devout family of ten, Hezekiah "Zeke" Orji was born in Nigeria, lived through a brutal Civil War from 1967 to 1970. Later, as a young man, he received a student visa and his family sent him to study Business Administration at Bellevue University, in Nebraska.

Upon finishing his studies, Zeke felt a need to give back to his adopted country. Zeke enlisted in the U.S. Army, and was deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm where he saw active duty as a Legal Liaison. After his Military Service, he worked in Veterans Affairs, then joined legacy INS as an Immigration Information Officer. One year later, he became a District Adjudications Officer, his current position.

### What's the most memorable moment you've experienced at USCIS?

On July 4, 2000, I stood side-by-side with U.S. District Court Judge Robert R. Beezer to admit over 500 applicants into United States citizenship at the Seattle Center. I have conducted administrative ceremonies, including one where my mother was among the candidates. So I was privileged to admit my mother into U.S. citizenship.

### How has USCIS changed since March 2003?

The Service has evolved very much since the March 2003 reconstitution under the newly created Department of Homeland Security. To me, these changes permeated all facets of operation in processing immigration benefits requests. In a nutshell, we're more careful in the work we do, we try harder not to make mistakes. All this due to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

### Which of your contributions to USCIS are you most proud of?

As the president of the Nigerian Community Association of Washington State (NCAWS) and the Secretary of the African Communities Network, I have helped strengthen the rapport between the Seattle district office and the diverse Washington state communities.

I believe that my colleagues at the district are proud of the fact that I worked on my Doctor of Management degree in Organizational Leadership and received the 2004 Spirit of America Award for community services while working with them in Seattle, Washington.



**Name:** Hezekiah "Zeke" Orji

**Position:** District Adjudications Officer

**Location:** Seattle District

---

## USCIS POSITION PROFILE

### DISTRICT ADJUDICATIONS OFFICER

Each year millions of people apply for various types of immigration benefits from the United States government. The benefits they seek include permission to import foreign workers, permission for relatives to immigrate and permission to become American citizens.

Adjudications Officers determine eligibility for this wide variety of benefits. They review applications and often conduct interviews of the applicants. Adjudications Officers have the dual responsibility of providing courteous service to the public while being alert to the possibility of fraud and illegal activity, and usually perform their duties in an office environment. District Adjudications Officers are located in USCIS offices nationwide.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

Visit USAJOBS Online for more information on openings and opportunities at USCIS and other federal agencies.  
<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

---

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT USCIS OCOMM 202.272.1200