



FAQs

FISCAL YEAR 2009 CITIZENSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Through the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009 (Public Law 110-329), Congress created the Fiscal Year 2009 Citizenship Grant Program. This competitive grant program provides approximately \$1.2 million of federal funding—in the form of 12 \$100,000 individual awards—to support citizenship preparation programs for legal permanent residents (LPRs).

Following are answers to the most frequently asked questions USCIS has received thus far. This document will be updated as deemed appropriate.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS AND ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Q1: Does the project/program have to be 100% priority group or can we work with a more general audience as long as a significant number of students are from a priority group? For example, can I have 51% of students from a priority group and the rest general LPRs?

At least fifty percent of the audience must be from a priority immigrant group. Priority immigrant groups must be given enrollment and registration priority. Outreach and recruitment activities must be focused on priority immigrant groups.

Q2: Do I need to return any excess money after the 1 year performance period or do we get to keep it so I can plan for multi-year project.

All money must be spent during the award period. The grant is for one year only.

Q3: Can organizations apply for less than \$100,000?

Yes.

Q4: Does the community-based organization (CBO) need to demonstrate 501(c)(3) status or is it acceptable to simply be a nonprofit corporation?

In order to be considered a CBO, you must provide documentation as stated in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q5: How are organizations considered as a CBO?

In order to be considered a CBO, you must provide documentation as stated in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q6: Do individuals providing citizenship services to immigrants qualify as a CBO?

In order to be considered a CBO, you must provide documentation as stated in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q7: I see that small businesses are eligible to apply for this grant, yet the full announcement states that CBOs are eligible, without mention of small businesses.

A small business interested in applying must be able to demonstrate that it is a CBO as defined first in the synopsis and again in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q8: Can small businesses apply for this grant using a CBO as a subcontractor? Or perhaps, CBOs should prime using a small business as a subcontractor?

In order to be considered a CBO, you must provide documentation as stated in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q9: I am wondering whether for-profit small businesses are eligible applicants for the citizenship grant program?

In order to be considered a CBO, you must provide documentation as stated in section III, A of the funding announcement.

Q10: How is large immigrant population defined?

A large immigrant population may be defined using reputable or substantiated statistical data or evidence such as state or local government reports, regional analyses, published policy reports or U.S. Census Bureau data, such as the American Community Survey.

Q11: Are public schools and state and local governments eligible and/or considered to be part of a community-based organization for the purpose of this grant?

Public schools, local public education agencies (LEAs) and state and local governments meet the definition of a CBO and are considered eligible for this funding opportunity as long as they have demonstrated experience in providing citizenship and/or immigration-related services to legal immigrants and are representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provide educational or related services to individuals in the community. These organizations must also be able to supply documentation of non-profit or public status in the application.

Q12: Is our organization able to fill out the N-400 and N-648 forms?

Yes. These activities fall under assisting and completing applications as part of the naturalization process.

Q13: How many applications can one organization submit?

Organizations may only submit one application.

Q14: Does the single application limit per organization apply to national organizations?

No. All eligible affiliates may apply on their own and will be reviewed as individual applicants.

Q15: Are there limitations if an organization already receives federal funding?

No. There is a standard clause that reads: "Funds approved under this Award shall be used to supplement and not to supplant other funds dedicated to this effort."

Q16: Is the grant only focused on serving the groups listed under priority immigrants and immigrants ready for citizenship or to assist others (such as U visa holders) to be put on the path to citizenship?

The grant is focused on assisting those populations that are eligible, or soon to be eligible, to apply for naturalization.

Q17: The grant information on the website seems extremely broad, leaving an impression that anyone or organization that fits the eligibility requirement is eligible to file a N-400 application and provide eligibility advice to a client.

Although this is up to the organization's discretion, please note that demonstrated experience, sustainability, and past performance with providing direct services to priority immigrant groups is a selection criteria in the funding announcement.

Q18: Is this grant oriented only for preparing immigrants to become U.S. citizens in regards to classes (English or civics) or also in regards to the legal work?

Both preparation and assistance with preparing and completing the naturalization application process (including case management) is allowable under the funding announcement.

Q19: Can the grant money be used to pay an agency to train others to become BIA accredited representatives?

Yes.

Q20: Do agencies need to be BIA accredited in order to provide some of the services outlined in the grant program?

No. Although this is up to the organization's discretion, please note that demonstrated experience, sustainability, and past performance with providing direct services to priority immigrant groups is a selection criteria in the funding announcement.

Q21: Do the priority immigrant groups need to have already achieved legal permanent resident status?

The grant is focused on assisting those populations that are now eligible, or are soon to be eligible, to apply for naturalization.

Q22: If we are doing outreach, it is likely that there might be both documented and undocumented attendees at the outreach sessions. How do we handle this in terms of the budget and program?

Funds associated with this grant program are intended for legal permanent residents only.

Q23: Is it correct to assume that there is no allowable expense or requirement for administrative grant costs or evaluation?

Please note that the 30 percent limitation applies to personnel providing other than direct services, such as administrative or management staff, to one of the priority immigrant groups. Costs associated with direct services are not subject to the 30 percent cap.

Direct services include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, English Language (EL)/Civics instruction, citizenship instruction, educational resources (textbooks, language software, computers, etc), assistance with preparing and completing the naturalization application process (including case management), citizenship-focused community outreach, and staff and volunteer training.

PERSONNEL COSTS AND PROJECT STAFFING

Q24: The funding announcement states that personnel costs will not exceed 30 percent of the budget.

Please note that the 30 percent limitation applies to personnel providing other than direct services, such as administrative or management staff, to one of the priority immigrant groups. Costs associated with direct services are not subject to the 30 percent cap.

Direct services include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, English Language (EL)/Civics instruction, citizenship instruction, educational resources (textbooks, language software, computers, etc), assistance with preparing and completing the naturalization application process (including case management), citizenship-focused community outreach, and staff and volunteer training.

Please note that program sustainability is one of the selection criteria for this funding opportunity and was one of the highest priorities during the development of the Fiscal Year 2009 Citizenship Grant Program. When a major portion of the budget of a time-limited grant program is used to hire new staff, programs often find they are forced to terminate such positions due to a lack of funds once the life of the grant has ended.

Q25: Can consultants or subcontractors be hired to provide direct services?

Yes.

Q26: If the volunteer coordinator is a refugee/immigrant, can we pay for them to recruit other ESL and citizenship class instructors who will teach free?

Yes. All employees must be able to show a work permit, otherwise known as an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

Please see allowable costs under direct services listed below.

Funds can only be used to provide direct services to immigrants. Specific services to be provided may include but are not limited to, English as a Second Language (ESL), English Language (EL)/Civics, citizenship instruction, educational resources (textbooks, language software, computers, etc), assistance with preparing and completing the naturalization application process (including case management), citizenship-focused community outreach, and staff and volunteer training.

GRANTS SELECTION CRITERIA

Q27: Is USCIS able to publish the points by which applicants will be judged?

See Section V, B of the funding announcement.

Q28: Which factors are considered the most important as related to the selection criteria?

See Section V, B of the funding announcement.

Q29: Will there be an online bidders' conference?

No. There will not be an online conference.

Q30: The letter of intent is not mandatory, but if I submit it, will its content be used in the application process?

No. The letter of intent is purely for USCIS planning purposes and will not be deemed as part of your organization's application.

Q31: On the Citizenship Grant Program funding announcement, it indicates the limit of pages the narrative should have (25), but it doesn't specify whether the text should be single or double spaced. Could you please clarify this?

Applicants may use either single or double space.

Q32: Is there a required format for the mandatory "Budget Narrative" and "Project Narrative"? I only saw that you could upload an attachment, but did not see specific guidelines in the instructions.

There is no standard required format for the Budget or Project Narrative.

For additional information on the grant program, please visit www.uscis.gov/grants.

To learn more about applying for federal funding opportunities, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/> or contact the Grants.gov support line at 1 (800) 518-4726.

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