



# Fact Sheet

July 16, 2012

## Outstanding American by Choice Initiative

Established by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in January 2006, the ***Outstanding American by Choice*** initiative recognizes the significant contributions and achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to this country and to the common civic values that unite us all as Americans. Throughout each year, USCIS will recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their community and their adopted country.

By recognizing those who have made the very personal decision to become an American by choice, and highlighting their contributions to this country, we hope to inspire and encourage new immigrants and new citizens alike to participate in their communities and exercise the important rights and responsibilities that accompany U.S. citizenship. Since January 2006, the ***Outstanding American by Choice*** initiative has recognized:

- Over 100 men and women from a variety of backgrounds and nearly all sectors of society;
- Recipients coming from more than 40 countries, including: Afghanistan, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, Haiti, India, Iran, Iraq, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, and Russia;
- Such notable Americans as Carlos M. Gutierrez, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce; Indra K. Nooyi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo; Elie Wiesel, Author and Nobel Peace Prize Winner; Franklin Chang Diaz, former NASA astronaut; Gerda Weissmann Klein, Founder of Citizenship Counts, Holocaust Survivor, Author, and Human Rights Activist; Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State; and Khaled Hosseini, Author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and UNHCR Goodwill Envoy.

A successful nominee for the ***Outstanding American by Choice*** recognition must:

- Be a naturalized U.S. citizen;
- Have exhibited leadership and outstanding achievements in at least one of the following categories: professional/business, culture and the arts, community service and civic participation, government service, military service, or overcoming adversity; and
- Have demonstrated responsible citizenship and a commitment to this country and the common civic values that unite us all as Americans.

For more information on the ***Outstanding American by Choice*** recognition, or to see a list of past recipients, please visit [www.uscis.gov/americansbychoice](http://www.uscis.gov/americansbychoice).

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