Important Information for New Citizens

Congratulations
on becoming a U.S. citizen

Today marks a very special milestone in your life. With a solemn oath, you are now a citizen of the United States of America. You pursued this day wholeheartedly and pledged your allegiance to this country; now we welcome you to the American family.

Your aspirations and actions enrich our society and strengthen our democracy. Remember that with the rights of citizenship come equally important responsibilities. Our system of government relies on an active and engaged citizenry. The future of our great republic is dependent upon the involvement of citizens like you.

With your new title of U.S. citizen, you have an opportunity to make lasting contributions to both your community and adopted country. Your efforts will help ensure that America's promise of freedom, democracy, and liberty is secured for generations to come.

Below is a list of some of the most important rights and responsibilities that all citizens—both Americans by birth and by choice—should exercise, honor, and respect. Some of these responsibilities are legally required of every citizen, but all are important to ensure the continued vitality of our country and democracy. Please accept our warmest welcome and best wishes for the future.

YOUR RIGHTS

- ★ Freedom to express yourself.
- ★ Freedom to worship as you wish.
- ★ Right to a prompt, fair trial by jury.
- ★ Right to vote in elections for public officials.
- ★ Right to apply for federal employment.
- ★ Right to run for elected office.
- ★ Freedom to pursue "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ★ Support and defend the Constitution.
- ★ Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.
- ★ Participate in the democratic process.
- ★ Respect and obey federal, state, and local laws.
- ★ Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.
- ★ Participate in your local community.
- ★ Pay income and other taxes honestly, and on time, to federal, state, and local authorities.
- ★ Serve on a jury when called upon.
- ★ Defend the country if the need should arise.

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NEXT STEPS: NOW THAT YOU ARE A U.S. CITIZEN . . .

Apply for a U.S. Passport

Now that you are a U.S. citizen, you can apply for a U.S. passport from the U.S. Department of State. You will need to submit your original Form N-550, Certificate of Naturalization, when applying for your U.S. passport. For more information, passport forms, and to find a passport acceptance facility near you please visit www.Travel.State.Gov. You may also apply for a U.S. passport for any children under the age of 18 who automatically acquired citizenship based on your naturalization.

Update Your Social Security Record

Go to your nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office to update your Social Security record soon after your naturalization ceremony. This is important because your Social Security record will be used to establish your eligibility for benefits and to demonstrate your authorization to work. The nearest Social Security office can be found by calling 1-800-772-1213 or visiting www.socialsecurity.gov. In order to update your citizenship status, you will need to present your Certificate of Naturalization or your U.S. passport.

Register to Vote

As a new U.S. citizen, you may register to vote. You can register to vote by applying in person, by mail, at public assistance offices, or when you apply for or renew your driver's license. Visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's website at www.eac.gov for more information.

Obtain a Certificate of Citizenship for Your Child

If you have a child who is a lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 on the day you naturalize, he or she may have automatically acquired U.S. citizenship. To obtain evidence of your child's acquired U.S. citizenship status, you may apply for a U.S. passport from the U.S. Department of State or for a Certificate of Citizenship using Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, from USCIS. For more information, see the "How Do I" Customer Guides at www.uscis.gov/howdoi and select "U.S. Citizens." Download the guide called "How Do I Get Proof of My U.S. Citizenship?"

Sponsor Family Members to Come to the United States

As a citizen of the United States, you may petition for certain relatives to become lawful permanent residents by obtaining what is often referred to as a "Green Card." To do so, you need to sponsor your relative and be able to prove that you have enough income or assets to support your relative(s) in the United States. For more information, see the "How Do I" Customer Guides at www.uscis.gov/howdoi and select "U.S. Citizens." Download the guide called "How Do I Help My Relative Become a U.S. Permanent Resident?"

Protecting Your Right to Work

Federal law states that employers cannot discriminate against you because of your citizenship or immigration status or national origin. Employers cannot treat you differently because of your citizenship or because of your place of birth, native language, accent, or appearance. Employers may not demand more or different documents than necessary when completing Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, or treat you differently when using E-Verify based on your citizenship or immigration status or national origin. Employers cannot retaliate against you if you complain about the treatment above. For more information about your rights, or to file a complaint, call the Office of Special Counsel at 1-800-255-7688 or 1-800-237-2515 (TTY for the hearing impaired). Interpreters are available to help you. You also can visit www.justice.gov/crt/osc for more information.

Replacing Your Certificate of Naturalization

If you lose your Form N-550, Certificate of Naturalization, you may submit Form N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/ Citizenship Document, to USCIS. Follow the instructions on Form N-565 to determine where to submit this application and the current filing fee. You may request Form N-565 by calling the USCIS Forms Line (1-800-870-3676) or by downloading the form at www.uscis.gov/forms. You may use your U.S. passport as evidence of citizenship until you receive your replacement certificate.

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