

USCIS INITIATES CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADORSHIP TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP

WASHINGTON— Today, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced the launch of the first-ever citizenship ambassador initiative. Through this new initiative, USCIS will partner with community leaders who will promote citizenship through their own immigrant experience. The initiative is designed to make a personal and local connection to the more than 9.1 million lawful permanent residents who may be eligible to apply for naturalization and who otherwise may not have access to or knowledge of the naturalization process.

“Granting citizenship is vital to our nation’s economic prosperity, and a future built on America’s promise as a nation of welcome and possibility,” said USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou. “The citizenship ambassador initiative is a positive step towards raising awareness of the many benefits of U.S. citizenship and providing tools that help immigrants become successful as they embark on their journey as new citizens and beyond.”

The citizenship ambassador initiative was created to support implementation of President Biden’s [Executive Order 14012](#) to promote naturalization, and is guided by the principles of the [Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization](#).

To help demystify the naturalization process and share the life-changing impact of U.S. citizenship, USCIS selected eight community leaders across the United States to connect with aspiring citizens. Newly selected citizenship ambassadors will connect eligible populations with the USCIS mission by:

- Sharing their own experiences with the naturalization process;
- Highlighting available information and resources;
- Emphasizing the advantages of U.S. citizenship;
- Addressing myths and misconceptions; and
- Providing inspiration for others pursuing citizenship.

The eight citizenship ambassadors include:

- **Magdalena Alvarado**, President, Ser y Hacer Galveston, Galveston, TX;
- **Abdirizak Bihi**, Executive Director, Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center, Minneapolis, MN;
- **Myriam Mezadieu**, Chief Operating Officer, Catholic Legal Services, Miami, FL;
- **Nam Loc Nguyen**, Former Director of Immigration and Refugee Department, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Orange County, CA;
- **Margarita Rocha**, Executive Director, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, Central Valley, CA;
- **Luis Shephard**, Community Leader, Boston, MA;
- **Dr. Mara Vaughn**, Professor, University of North Texas at Dallas, Dallas-Fort Worth, TX; and
- **Pao Yang**, Executive Director, President and CEO, The Fresno Center (TFC), Fresno, CA.

[Citizenship ambassadors](#) will serve on a voluntary, unpaid basis and coordinate with USCIS staff at the local level to promote and encourage others in their communities to apply for U.S. citizenship. Citizenship ambassadors will assist with outreach to more isolated communities and advise on best engagement strategies and messaging, helping to build trust between USCIS and their communities.

More than 200 years after our founding, naturalized citizens are still an important part of American democracy. Citizenship is the common thread that connects all Americans. The United States is a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality. Citizenship offers many benefits and equally important responsibilities and demonstrates an immigrant's commitment to this country and form of government.