



NATURALIZATION WORKING GROUP

(Updated October 13, 2023)

The History of the NWG

In 2011, the Naturalization Working Group (NWG) became the policy complement of the New Americans Campaign. Members of the NWG, who include NAC partner organizations, possess unique insights into the opportunities of and barriers to naturalization, gained in part from their vast experience. The NWG communicates with USCIS and other policymakers with a coordinated and strategic voice that enhances our influence in shaping a broad array of policies and practices.

The Importance of NAC Partners and Other Community-based Organizations

NAC partners and other community-based organizations play an invaluable role in advancing the work of the NWG.

- Practitioners' experience and advice guides NWG policy recommendations and advocacy priorities.
- Policymakers see CBOs as important constituents, and your affiliation with the NWG enhances our credibility as advocates.
- The ability to speak on behalf of a critical mass of organizations strengthens the NWG's influence.

NWG Services

The NWG provides continuous updates, audiences with key officials, and other opportunities to its members and partners. Organizers track naturalization law and policymaking and share timely news through a listserv and the dissemination of educational and advocacy programs and materials. The NWG also sponsors policy briefings that educate and inform broad audiences. NWG leaders sustain regular contact with executive staff at USCIS headquarters and other government offices, and coordinate conversations with government decisionmakers during which NWG members can raise critical questions and concerns. Our longstanding relationships have made it possible to elevate problems encountered by practitioners to the attention of those at the highest level of USCIS decision-making, and to get results.

In addition to all this, the NWG organizes group sign-on letters to officials, and provides templates for and assistance with proposing and commenting on regulatory changes.

NWG Accomplishments

The NWG works exclusively on matters that affect naturalization and U.S. citizenship, from the test preparation process and application form and fees to swearing-in ceremonies and access to adequate documentation of citizenship. Its focused efforts have helped address some of the most important and persistent barriers to naturalization over the past decade, including:

- delays in the processing of naturalization applications, and reducing application backlogs;
- managing the fee-setting process, including limiting increases to naturalization fees, and preserving the fee waiver and reduced cost filing options;
- raising critical questions for USCIS about its approach to re-designing the naturalization examination, including concerns about the fairness of the proposed test and the ability of a broad group of stakeholders to effectively participate in the re-design process; and
- helping persuade USCIS to revise the Form N-400, streamline the scope of questions on the form, and make it more accessible.

Some examples of NWG sign-on letters on the foregoing issues include:

- [Letter](#) to USCIS raising concerns about naturalization exam re-design (August 23, 2023).
- [Letter](#) to USCIS regarding proposed revisions to Form N-400 (June 20, 2023).
- [Letter](#) to USCIS urging the reduction or stabilization of naturalization fees (May 27, 2022).
- [Letter](#) urging USCIS to address applications backlogs resulting from problems with "A-Files" stalled at the Federal Records Center (May 4, 2022).
- [Letter](#) to Biden-Harris transition team regarding naturalization policy priorities (January 19, 2021).

NWG Working Groups

The NWG carries out its efforts through smaller working groups that focus on specific activities or issues. These include an Advocacy Working Group, and a Citizenship Test Working Group that is closely following USCIS's plans to redesign naturalization examinations.

We welcome you to join the NWG!

NWG meetings and activities, including engagements with policymaking officials, participation with smaller working groups, and sign-on letters, are generally open to all NAC partners and other naturalization stakeholders. It is very important that we hear from NAC partners and other community-based organizations about challenges you are experiencing in the field with naturalization procedures or practices, particularly if they may indicate system-wide problems that we can help address.

Please contact [Erin Hustings](#) or [Lucas Cabral](#) with the NALEO Educational Fund to share feedback about systemic issues and successes with naturalization procedures, to get involved in NWG efforts, or to learn more.