BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Effective Models for Delivering Naturalization Services Using Citizenshipworks

BEST PRACTICES DEFINED

Best practices are operating processes that produce consistently better results than other techniques. We glean best practices from the good practices of frontline organizations, and improve them through reflection, feedback, and experimentation. Best practices may be born through the efforts of one community and transformed when they are adopted by others in a new context, but the underlying understanding of their utility remains constant and is always measured against desired results.

ABOUT THIS SERIES	ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT
Identifying and spreading best practices requires a learning network for peer-to-peer exchange of ideas. This toolkit series serves as one mechanism for us to share and build on best practices.	This guide provides an overview of best practices and service delivery models for nonprofit partners who would like to use Citizenshipworks to implement more efficient, applicant-driven naturalization services in order to increase the number of applicants they serve and reduce costs. It also includes an overview of the Citizenshipworks mobile application.

ABOUT CITIZENSHIPWORKS

Citizenshipworks is a free online system that allows eligible Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) to complete their N-400, Application for Naturalization, screen for potential legal issues, and connect with nonprofit legal service providers either in-person or online. It is currently available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. Nonprofit legal providers can use Citizenshipworks to promote and manage naturalization workshops involving Citizenshipworks, create co-branded portal pages to promote their services, review applicants' forms in-person or virtually, and more. Citizenshipworks came to fruition in the first five years of the New Americans Campaign and was developed by the Immigration Advocates Network and Pro Bono Net, along with legal content from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center.

Becoming a Citizenshipworks Partner

The Citizenshipworks Partner Network is made up of nonprofit organizations across the country that provide free or low-cost naturalization application assistance. Nonprofit legal providers offering services through Citizenshipworks must have a licensed attorney or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) Accredited Representative enrolled in their organization's account to provide oversight and legal services. All organizations must also attend a one-on-one training, which can be scheduled online at http://tinyurl.com/cwtrainingcenter. This training provides an overview of Citizenshipworks, facilitates the enrollment process, and offers best practices and resources for implementing Citizenshipworks. There is no cost to becoming a Citizenshipworks Partner.

Interested organizations may also contact support@citizenshipworks.org for help getting started.

"Our organization has come to rely on Citizenshipworks as its preferred method for providing efficient, client-centered assistance with adequate legal safeguards. It has not only transformed the way we process applications for citizenship at CLS, it has changed how we think about the process itself." – Catholic Legal Services of the Archdiocese of Miami

The Benefits of Citizenshipworks

By empowering applicants to be directly involved in completing their application, Citizenshipworks helps naturalization applicants to better understand the process and allows advocates or volunteers to spend less time per case, thereby increasing the number of applicants served and reducing the cost per application.

There are many advantages to using Citizenshipworks. The system produces a typed form, which is more professional in appearance and easier to read than a handwritten form. Citizenshipworks allows applicants to directly answer questions about their case. This not only empowers them to better understand their application, but also reduces the need for volunteers and staff to guide the applicant through the form. This may reduce wait times for applicants at group workshops, especially if applicants arrive at the workshop having partially completed the form on their own. Citizenshipworks will flag any issues with the application that require legal review and advice. Citizenshipworks also includes the ability to facilitate legal review and consultations with off-site staff and volunteer attorneys, which can allow organizations to expand the scope of the applicants they serve.

"One of our clients recently completed his N-400 application using Citizenshipworks. He said that he would like to use Citizenshipworks for 3 other family members because Citizenshipworks is so customer friendly. Based on the positive feedback from all the individuals that completed their N-400s using Citizenshipworks, Detroit NAC partners have become believers. We plan to use Citizenshipworks more often during workshops because it will improve our efficiency, increase customer satisfaction and provide a better applicant experience." – International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit

The New Americans Campaign encourages partners to experiment with using Citizenshipworks to find an approach that meets their organization's needs, available technology resources, and staff capacity. Organizations are welcome to provide feedback on successful models and best practices so that the Immigration Advocates Network and the New Americans Campaign can share them with other partners.

Technology Requirements for Citizenshipworks

Citizenshipworks has been designed to allow users to access the website from anywhere where there is internet using a computer, laptop, or tablet. However, bear in mind that older users or users who are less familiar with technology often find a larger screen resolution easier to use.

Like any web-based application, Citizenshipworks performs best when users access it through a reliable internet connection. Wired (Ethernet) connections are are most reliable, however users can also use Wi-Fi networks and hotspots with strong, consistent signals. A number of variables factor into how many computers can be connected to a Wi-Fi connection or a mobile hotspot, like strength of the device, strength of mobile data, and numbers of browsers open, among other factors. In the event that signal is lost from these connections, Citizenshipworks saves the answers entered by the user after each screen. This ensures that any information that has been entered will be saved if the internet connection is lost.

Although Citizenshipworks can be used with any browser, it is optimized for Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox (both of which are free to download). Users are encouraged to update their browsers, PDF software (like Adobe Reader), and operating systems (either Windows or Mac OS) for optimal results. Partners who will be using Citizenshipworks on borrowed computers should check that they are compatible with the system before using.

Citizenshipworks Service Delivery Models

Citizenshipworks allows nonprofit legal providers to implement the program through a range of service delivery models, allowing providers to choose an approach that works best for their organization and the immigrants they serve. At its core, Citizenshipworks provides applicants with a safe and simple way to complete their N-400, while at the same time allowing advocates to focus their time on legal review rather than application completion. While partners are encouraged to experiment with different models to find what works best for their program, this guide highlights the most common models used by Citizenshipworks partners: walk-in computer stations or kiosks, virtual assistance, and workshop models.

"As a collaborative, site-wide workshop at one of our partners' office, we utilized Citizenshipworks to assist a number of applicants who otherwise would be waiting for an attorney, BIA-accredited representative, or trained volunteer to provide direct assistance. This was supervised by one person and permitted us to help more people in an efficient manner."
– Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

The Walk-in Model

A very effective model for partners who wish to assist a larger number of applicants outside of a workshop setting is the walk-in model. While a workshop allows partners to serve multiple applicants at once, the walk-in model allows organizations to efficiently manage a steady flow of one or more applicants at a time while also delivering high-quality, individualized services. Volunteers with computer skills can help.

"This quarter we recruited and trained an intern to assist with Citizenshipworks. The intern started operating a small one-computer drop-in CW station three times a week, making it possible to serve more LPRs." *– Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte*

An important advantage of the walk-in model is that it allows applicants to complete the form at their own pace, either at an organization or offsite (for example at a library), without requiring significant staff time. It also allows organizations to provide services at times that are convenient for applicants.

Appointment-Based

Partners who have limited legal capacity and need to control when legal review takes place can implement a model where applicants schedule an appointment for legal review after they have completed their application. By scheduling an appointment for legal review, the organization is able allocate scarce attorney or BIA time, and the

advocate is able to prepare by reviewing the application in advance and can provide instructions to the applicant on documents to bring to the appointment or additional information needed to complete their application.

TIP: Some organizations require that an applicant complete a large percentage of the application before they meet with a legal staff to review it. This saves time for the BIA representatives or attorneys, and ensures that they focus on legal review instead of Citizenshipworks support.

Non-Appointment Based

Partners that have the capacity to complete legal review on-the-spot can implement a more flexible model. After the applicant completes the N-400, he or she can then immediately have the application reviewed by an advocate. This approach allows the advocate to focus on the questions in the application that require legal expertise. Organizations that are able to recruit pro bono attorneys to provide legal review (in-person or virtually) may also find this model to be more effective and efficient.

TIP: Use the Citizenshipworks "Walk-in" feature to let applicants know what your organization's hours are for this service. Also, the "notes" section in an applicant's account can be used to track ad hoc information about the applicant, particularly if the applicant needs to come back for multiple visits.

Many organizations that implement this model have one or more computers available for applicants to use to complete their application at their own pace, or partnerships with other organizations that do (e.g., libraries or community technology centers). Some organizations have even set up in-house computer labs, consisting of up to 15 or so computers in one room that any number of applicants can access on a regular basis.

"This quarter, we began running a bi-monthly citizenship clinic in our agency computer lab. The walk-in clinic has worked out really well for us because we are able to reach clients that are not able to find the time to make one-on-one appointment with our staff. We hand out flyers prior to the event so clients who plan on attending the clinic are better prepared. We have also tried to outreach to LPRs with the help of the New Americans Campaign online calendar and the Citizenshipworks event page." – Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Seattle

The Virtual Model

While many applicants engage with partners through workshops or walk-in hours, Citizenshipworks can also be used to provide virtual legal assistance. This allows advocates to connect with applicants through the system as opposed to in-person. This model is particularly effective for serving rural and hard-to-reach populations, though partners have found success using it for all types of applicants. The virtual model can reach communities in parts of the country that do not have a New Americans Campaign collaboration or other naturalization services.

"CUNY Citizenship Now! operates a dedicated telephone line for LPRs and other community members who have immigration and/or naturalization needs. The line is staffed by our employees and is available to the public Monday through Friday during business hours (EST). In addition to providing information, referrals and light screenings, eligible callers are also directed to the CUNY Citizenship Now! Citizenshipworks portal page and encouraged to start the process on their own. A dedicated staff member monitors participation rates on Citizenshipworks and reaches out to participants to schedule in-person and virtual review appointments. We're also providing services to individuals outside the city and in other states." – CUNY Citizenship Now!, New York

Many of the best practices that apply to other models also apply here. An advocate or volunteer should connect with the applicant (via email, in-system message, or phone) to provide instructions on how to get started and

when to connect with an advocate for legal review. As the applicant continues to complete the naturalization application form, an advocate can make interventions to ensure that the applicant gathers supporting documents or to address any legal issues that may arise. Once the applicant has completed the form, the advocate can schedule an appointment with the advocate to provide a final, virtual review of the application, either by phone or through the integrated Citizenshipworks video chat feature.

TIP: Make sure to account for time zones if your organization provides virtual review to applicants in other areas of the country.

In preparation for legal review, organizations are encouraged to provide applicants with a list of supporting documents that need to be reviewed. Applicants can scan or take a picture (using a smartphone) of the documents and email or text them to the advocate ahead of the scheduled appointment.

TIP: If connecting through the video chat feature on Citizenshipworks, advocates should use a headset (with microphone) to connect. A headset will not only improve the audio quality, it will also allow the advocate to have their hands free to use the keyboard as they review and make any changes to the application.

Upon completing legal review, advocates can decide if the applicant should print the form and file it, or be referred to a Citizenshipworks partner or other legal service provider in the applicant's community for further assistance. Organizations can also use virtual review to engage pro bono attorneys in helping with legal review.

TIP: For applications with red flags, Citizenshipworks will generate an N-400 with a watermark to avoid inadvertent filing. For applicants who are ready to file, advocates should remember to remove the watermark after all edits have been completed, allowing the applicant to view and print the final, clean version of the N-400 form. The advocate should also provide clear instructions on how to file the form and what to expect upon filing. When an advocate has completed review, advocates should change the case status to "closed" to indicate that the case is complete. This will help organizations to better manage the progress of the applicants they assist.

"We have had continued success with the Citizenshipworks Lab. We have been able to assist many applicants who have started their applications at home. We have several cases where we have done virtual reviews in which applicants who emailed the Naturalization Coordinator will be interviewed by the Naturalization Coordinator over the phone and have their applications reviewed." – Catholic Legal Services of the Archdiocese of Miami

The Workshop Model

Citizenshipworks can be successfully implemented in a workshop setting, where it replaces or supplements the traditional hand-written application assistance model. While Citizenshipworks partners have had success implementing the program with applicants who are encountering it for the first time at the workshop, it is most efficient to leverage applicants' ability to get started on their Citizenshipworks application ahead of time. They can do this at home, at work, or at a library or community center that provides access to computers. This approach significantly reduces the time applicants spend at the workshop, increases the likelihood that computer-savvy applicants will use the platform, and allows advocates to focus on legal review and addressing specific questions or concerns applicants may have. It also allows organizations to draw upon the skills of computer literate volunteers who want to help.

"For the first time, we have incorporated the use of Citizenshipworks in a workshop structure. We have noticed that it is a tool that can be used for young LPRs that are tech savvy." – Latin American Coalition

"At recent workshops with employees of a partner company, we were able to fully implement and utilize Citizenshipworks with the applicants and had amazing results. Out of the 13 applicants, 12 completed their applications (from 90-100%) before the event, which led to a review process of around 30 minutes or less. We created a detailed instruction email to send out to those applicants prior to the event. It was well received by the applicants and the collaborating organizations were able to save a lot of time by implementing it. This collaboration was extremely successful and important in creating a significant impact on the way we use Citizenshipworks in our small workshops." – NALEO Educational Fund, New York

Workshop Location

Citizenshipworks workshops can occur at the office of a partner organization, or at a library, college, or other community-based partner institution with a computer lab or a well-wired space for laptops. Businesses with significant numbers of LPR employees can host Citizenshipworks workshops. Regularly-scheduled small workshops can serve a steady flow of LPRs efficiently. Even at very large workshops serving hundreds of LPRs in a single day, the workshop facility may be able to accommodate a Citizenshipworks station.

"During this past quarter, we hosted three workshops at the Brooklyn Public Library. We reached out to applicants via phone and email explaining in detail how to access the Citizenshipworks platform and complete the N-400 form prior to the event. This model has proven successful as it combines efficiency and great time savings." – International Rescue Committee, New York

TIP: A video by NYCity News Service, "From Software to Citizenship," features New York New Americans Campaign partners holding a workshop with Citizenshipworks at the Brooklyn Public Library. It is available at: https://vimeo.com/146466775

Scheduling a Citizenshipworks Event

Citizenshipworks partners can create events on the platform to allow applicants to register online in advance of a workshop and begin the process of completing their application. After an applicant registers, advocates can also begin to review the applicant's information and determine the legal issues they may need to address at the workshop. This approach allows advocates to intervene in advance of the workshop, particularly when a workshop may not be an appropriate venue for certain applicants to receive the legal help that they need.

TIP: Several Campaign collaborations have purchased shared technology banks that allow them to use Citizenshipworks. They store the technology at one partner's office, but make it available for any organization in the collaboration to use at any in-house or off-site workshop at which applicants will use Citizenshipworks. The banks include laptops, wireless hotspots, printers, extension cords, and technology carrying cases.

Event Outreach and Preparation

Each Citizenshipworks partner is assigned a portal page upon enrollment—see the sample screenshot of a portal page at the end of this toolkit. This page includes the partner's logo; contact information and a description of their organization; a list of any upcoming events; and a "Get Started" link that automatically enrolls the applicant into the partner's organization for purposes of Citizenshipworks. Before the scheduled event, organizations can promote their portal page and encourage applicants to register in advance. As applicants begin to register, partners can check-in on the applicants' progress prior to the event. Advocates can also review red flags and incomplete questions, and encourage applicants to complete as much of their application in advance as possible.

"Chhaya has continued to use Citizenshipworks at each of our workshops in the last three months. Recently, we have been

emailing clients with the Citizenshipworks application link 1-2 weeks in advance and assessing who is computer proficient and who is not. This gives clients an opportunity to gather their information in advance and fill out the application at home. Many clients have family members or friends who can assist them on a computer but who may not be able to do so at the time of our workshop. Additionally, information gathering is what has usually delayed the completion of applications at the workshop. As a result of shortening time with each client through these methods, we increased our capacity to serve more LPRs." – Chhaya Community Development Corporation

At the Event

Check-in

At the check-in station, organizations should confirm whether the applicant has registered using Citizenshipworks. If not, they should be assigned a volunteer to help them to prescreen using Citizenshipworks and create an account with an email address or mobile phone number.

Application Assistance

If the applicant has a Citizenshipworks account, partners should check that the applicant has completed as much of their application as they can (typically 95% or more) before sending them to Legal Review. If an applicant is missing information, partners should have them sign-in to Citizenshipworks to complete their interview, working with a volunteer if needed. If the applicant does not have a Citizenshipworks account, the applicant should start at the organization's portal page to create an account and complete the form on their own or with the help of a volunteer. On average, it takes an applicant between 45 minutes to one hour to complete the N-400 using Citizenshipworks.

TIP: Assign volunteers to monitor applicants who do not have a lot of experience with computers. Most applicants get the hang of it quickly, but some applicants will need more guidance. Citizenshipworks can also be used to guide volunteers through the entire form using plain language to help them ask the questions in a way that applicants will understand.

"We successfully used our interns to assist clients with Citizenshipworks. Applications were reviewed by an accredited representative after they were completed in the system. This cut down significantly on the time that representatives spent with clients." – New American Pathways

Legal Review and Quality Control

After completing the questions in their application, applicants can be directed to the Legal Review station for final review of their N-400 form. Legal Review is done by an advocate who has logged on to the organization's account, so printing is not necessary until the N-400 is ready to file. Since applicants have registered for the event or enrolled directly through the organization's portal page, they will automatically appear under the organization's client tab. Advocates are able to make changes directly within the online N-400 view provided in the system, resolve any red flags or incomplete questions, and remove the "Do Not File" watermark from an applicant's form. For a sample of the form view, see the screenshot at the end of this toolkit.

"We continue to incorporate Citizenshipworks into our monthly workshops by having applicants complete their application online. An applicant who has completed the application online can arrive at a workshop and bypass application assistance, going from step 1 (legal screening) to step 3 (legal review) immediately. This has benefitted our service capacity and enabled us to efficiently utilize our volunteers by providing regular attorney volunteers with a constant stream of applicants. This prevents a gap in time after all applicants have been screened, with attorneys waiting

on them to have completed the N-400. This is also a valuable resource because it allows new attorney volunteers to shadow an experienced attorney in reviewing an application if there is no client immediately in need of attention."
– Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston

Check-out and Packaging:

Alongside packaging the completed and printed form at the check-out station, organizations should provide applicants with instructions for gathering necessary documents and filing their N-400. If the applicant cannot fully complete the application at the workshop, partners should provide referral information to a local organization or attorney who can help.

"In this quarter, we had fewer volunteers come out to our monthly citizenship workshop. So, we utilized Citizenshipworks. We were able to have our clients who spoke English fairly well and were comfortable with using the computer complete the application online using our BPSOS-Houston portal link. We had many clients complete their application on Citizenshipworks before coming to the workshop and also for clients we made appointments to come to our office. This was very efficient for us and we were able to assist more clients." – Boat People SOS, Houston

Citizenshipworks Mobile App

The Citizenshipworks mobile app is a free companion resource currently available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Korean. It can help applicants prepare for multiple steps in the naturalization process, from application completion to test preparation. It includes tools to help clients prepare for citizenship tests, such as reading and writing quizzes and civics touch flashcards, calculators to track days out of the country, multimedia functionality (using audio to dictate phrases to be written in English), legal assistance locators, and more. Organizations can encourage applicants to download the app as part of the resources they provide to applicants at check-out during a workshop, or during any interaction with applicants.

The mobile app includes the following sections: Eligibility Requirements, Appointment Checklist, Study Tools, Find Legal Help, Citizenship & Finances, and More Citizenship Resources. Organizations have found it helpful to encourage their applicants to use the app in preparation for an upcoming workshop or appointment, and to support applicants in preparing for the English and civics tests that are part of the naturalization interview. Screenshots of the app are available at the end of this toolkit.

To download the app, search for "Citizenshipworks" in the iTunes App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android).

"To improve the efficacy of our eligibility screening, we have asked many of our applicants to download the Citizenshipworks app on their smartphones. This technological tool has helped us pre-screen the eligibility of clients, particularly their physical presence requirement, over the telephone before they come to our offices for application processing. The Appointment Checklist tab on the app has also helped reduce the number of clients we have asked to return for future appointments due to a lack of required documents. The app has also helped us assist clients who are apprehensive of applying for naturalization due to their fear of the Civics and English Reading and Writing exams during their interview. We encourage our applicants to utilize the app for their daily reviews for the examinations."
– Filipino American Service Group Inc., Los Angeles
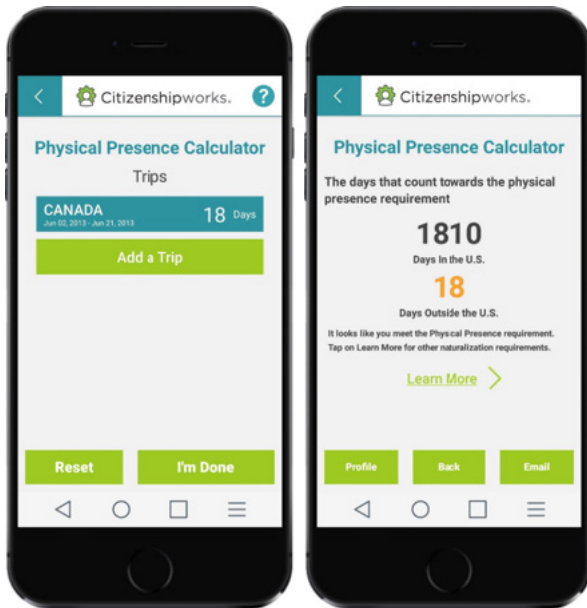
Citizenshipworks Mobile App Screenshots

Main Page
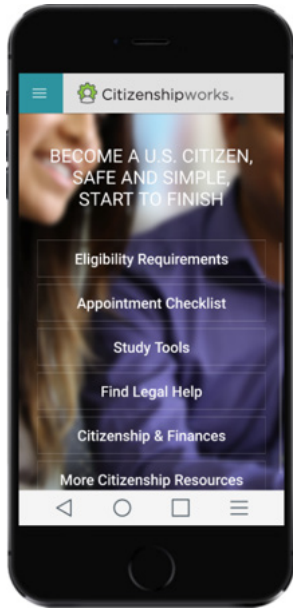
Civics and English Study Resources
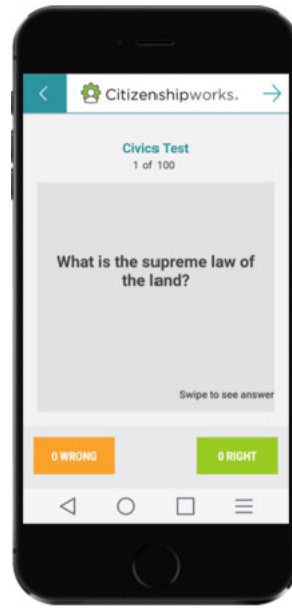
Appointment Checklist

Physical Presence Calculator

Sample Organization-Branded Portal Page

Every partner organization can insert a logo, contact information, and content

Sample "Form View" for Advocates

◄ | 1 / 20 | ►   DO NOT FILE MODE: OFF ▼   (Last Updated on 05/16/2016 by Andrea Advocate) **Save Changes**
Generate N-400

Application For Naturalization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form N-400
OMB No. 1615-0052
Expires 03/31/2019

For USCIS Use Only	Date Stamp	Receipt	Action Block
Remarks			

▶ **START HERE - Type or print in black ink.** Type or print "N/A" if an item is not applicable or the answer is none, unless otherwise indicated. Failure to answer all of the questions may delay U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processing your Form N-400. **NOTE: You must complete Parts 1. - 15.**

If your biological or legal adoptive mother or father is a U.S. citizen by birth, or was naturalized before you reached your 18th birthday, you may already be a U.S. citizen. Before you consider filing this application, please visit the USCIS Website at www.uscis.gov for more information on this topic and to review the instructions for Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, and Form N-600K, Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322.

NOTE: Are either of your parents a United States citizen? If you answer "Yes," then complete **Part 6. Information About Your Parents** as part of this application. If you answer "No," then skip **Part 6.** and go to **Part 7. Biographic Information.**

Part 1. Information About Your Eligibility (Select only one box or your Form N-400 may be delayed)

Enter Your 9 Digit A-Number:
▶ A- 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

1. You are at least 18 years old **and:**

A. ☑ Have been a lawful permanent resident of the United States for at least 5 years.

B. ☐ Have been a lawful permanent resident of the United States for at least 3 years. In addition, you have been married to and living with the same U.S. citizen spouse for the last 3 years, **and** your spouse has been a U.S. citizen for the last 3 years at the time you filed your Form N-400.

C. ☐ Are a lawful resident of the United States **and** you are the spouse of a U.S. citizen **and** your U.S. citizen spouse is regularly engaged in specified employment abroad. (See the Immigration and Nationality Act(INA) section 319(b).) If your residential address is outside the United States and you are filing under Section 319(b), select the USCIS Field Office from the list below where you would like to have your naturalization interview:

[▼]

D. ☐ Are applying on the basis of qualifying military service.

E. ☐ Other (explain): [   ]

Part 2. Information About You (Person applying for naturalization)

1. Your Current Legal Name (**do not provide a nickname**)

Family Name (Last Name)	Given Name (First Name)	Middle Name (if applicable)
Applicant	Alicia	

2. Your Name Exactly As It Appears on Your Permanent Resident Card (if applicable)

Family Name (Last Name)	Given Name (First Name)	Middle Name (if applicable)
Applicant	Alicia	

⚙ **Citizenship**works   **THIS IS A DRAFT**
DO NOT PRINT. DO NOT FILE.

Save Changes

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Thanks to those who contributed to this document: