

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Citizenship & Immigration Services**

### **Catholic Charities of Orange County**

We have created this landing page as a digital resource for your review to help you understand the Citizenship and Immigration Services offered by Catholic Charities of Orange County. Thank you for visiting!

### **Services Offered**

#### **What specific citizenship and immigration services do you provide?**

Catholic Charities of Orange County is Recognized by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide Immigration Legal Services. Our Immigration Counselors are each accredited by the DOJ which allows them to prepare and submit applications to the United States Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS).

The following are the list of Citizenship and Immigration legal services provided:

- US Citizenship and Naturalization
- Derivative Citizenship
- Legal Consultation
- Family Petition
- Family Visa
- Religious Worker Visa
- Adjustment of Status
- Affidavit of Support
- Removal of Conditions
- DACA Initial and Renewal
- Legal Permanent Resident Card Renewal / Green Card Renewal
- Parole (Humanitarian, Advance, Military)
- Employment Authorization
- U Visa (Victim of crime)
- VAWA (Violence Against Women Act)
- Temporary Protective Status (TPS)
- Fiancé Visa
- Asylum
- Legal Representation
- USCIS Fee Waiver

## **Do you offer legal consultations for immigration cases, and if so, how can I schedule one?**

We require a legal consultation for most immigration services provided by our office. Consultations are provided at no cost and can be scheduled by calling 714-347-9610 for English and Spanish or for Vietnamese call 714-347-9622.

Catholic Charities of Orange County provides legal consultations to help individuals understand their rights, obligations, and options when navigating complex immigration laws. A consultation helps individuals understand their specific options, whether they are eligible for a visa, green card or other immigration remedy under the current immigration laws and regulations.

Legal consultations allow our immigration attorneys and DOJ accredited counselors to assess whether a person qualifies for a particular immigration remedy or program. They evaluate eligibility criteria and inform clients about potential hurdles or requirements that need to be met.

### **Eligibility**

#### **Are there any specific eligibility requirements for receiving services?**

As a DOJ recognized agency our focus is to assist low-income families who would not otherwise be able to afford an immigration attorney. Grant funding may have specific guidelines that may impact our ability to assist an individual.

#### **Are services available for undocumented individuals?**

That is a very complex question. Each immigration case is unique. A legal consultation with a DOJ representative or Attorney would be scheduled to see what status the individual has and if there is an immigration remedy available for them.

#### **Are services available for those who are in complex immigration situations?**

Cases that are beyond our program's ability to thoroughly represent are referred to an outside agency or private attorney.

### **Fees and Costs**

As a DOJ recognized agency and non-profit we prioritize serving low-income clients. Currently we have funding to cover many of our services. We will continue to offer services free of charge while such funding lasts. These services for which we are not charging are specified in our fee schedule. For others we continue to charge fees as specified in our fee schedule. No client will be refused services for their inability to pay.

#### **Are there fees for your services?**

Yes.

#### **If so, what is the fee structure for different types of services?**

Please contact our office for specific fees for services.

**Do you offer financial assistance or a sliding scale for low-income applicants?**

A fee waiver is available for CCOC fees to clients who can demonstrate financial hardship.

**How is your program funded?**

Grants, Client Fees, and Donations specific to the Citizenship and Immigration program.

**Documentation Assistance**

**Can you help with gathering the required documentation for applications?**

It is the client's responsibility to provide the necessary supporting documentation. Immigration Counselors will assist by advising applicants on which documents are required, where to obtain them, and by evaluating the documentation that is submitted.

In certain instances, staff will submit FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requests to public agencies requesting information on behalf of a client.

**Do you provide assistance with completing forms for specific immigration applications (e.g., Form N-400 for naturalization)?**

Yes, CCOC is recognized by the Department of Justice, Immigration Counselors are accredited by the Department of Justice and are approved to prepare and submit Citizenship and Immigration forms to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services department (USCIS) and department of State (DOS).

**Application Process**

**What is the typical process for beginning an immigration or citizenship case with your office?**

**Citizenship Process:**

1. Register and attend Citizenship Informational Workshop and complete screening
2. Fill out the Intake packet and return it to Citizenship and Immigration office
3. Schedule appointment to complete Citizenship Application
4. Meet with Attorney/Immigration Counselor to complete application

**Immigration Process:**

Most other immigration services start with a consultation with an immigration counselor. The main purpose of the consultation is to evaluate the nature of the client's immigration case and to determine if the case falls within the scope of the immigration services offered by our program. During this time, the counselor/attorney assesses the merits of each client's case under current immigration law.

If an immigration remedy is determined to be available, the client will be provided with an intake packet specific to their immigration process. This packet will outline the required information and supporting documents. The client will be asked to complete the packet and return it along with the necessary documentation. Once the completed intake and supporting documents are received, the client may schedule an appointment with an Immigration Counselor to proceed with the application.

DACA renewals, Work Permit renewals and Green Card renewals do not require consultations. The applicant can simply call to schedule an appointment.

**What is the expected timeline for case processing and updates on the status of my application?**

Each immigration case is unique, USCIS processing times vary by application. Average processing times can be looked up at the following USCIS website:

<https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

**Legal Representation**

**Do you have attorneys or accredited representatives who can provide legal representation?**

Yes, we have attorneys and fully accredited representatives who are authorized to provide immigration legal representation. However, we do not provide legal representation in civil or criminal court proceedings.

**Can you represent clients in the immigration court?**

CCOC Immigration Attorneys specialize in representing individuals and families who are in Immigration court proceedings. These cases are typically for those seeking Asylum based on fear of being or having been persecuted because of their Race, Religion, Nationality, Political Opinion, Membership in a particular society and those who have suffered or fear torture.

**Can you represent clients at USCIS interviews?**

Yes. Our DOJ accredited representatives and attorneys can represent clients at USCIS interviews. Due to limited resources, we only attend interviews for clients with special needs such as age or mental disability.

**Language Support**

**Are your services available in multiple languages?**

Yes, we provide services in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

**Do you provide interpreters if needed during consultations or interviews?**

**Consultations:** Clients are assigned staff based on language. Interpreters have been used when necessary.

**Interviews:** Staff have provided translation at USCIS interviews however this is not a service we offer on a regular basis due to limited resources.

**Workshops and Educational Resources**

**Do you host any workshops or informational sessions about the citizenship and immigration process?**

We provide Citizenship informational workshops twice weekly, **every Wednesday at 10:00 am and 4:00 pm**. We also provide two 12-week Citizenship preparation courses to assist those who are applying to become US Citizens. The courses assist students prepare for the US Civics and History knowledge requirement as well as assist with English comprehension.

**Are these workshops free, and how often are they held?**

**Workshops are all at no cost.** There is a textbook fee associated with the Citizenship course. Citizenship Information Workshops are held each **Wednesday at 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.** Please call 714-347-9610 to register.

The 12-week Citizenship Classes are offered **Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:00pm.** Classes start at the beginning of each calendar quarter (January, April, July, October). Please call 714-347-9610 to schedule an assessment to be placed in the appropriate class.

**DACA and Other Special Programs**

**Do you offer specific support for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) applicants or renewals?**

Currently there is no specific support for DACA applicants other than assistance with the preparation of the DACA applications.

**Are there programs for refugees, asylum seekers, or those facing deportation?**

**Refugees:** CCOC **does not** offer specific refugee resettlement services. Refugees do require immigration services that our team does provide. Refugees enter the United States already assigned to a resettlement agency. The assigned resettlement agency provides services that the refugee is eligible to obtain such as housing and job placement assistance.

**Asylum:** CCOC **does** represent clients seeking Asylum. Asylum cases can be filed with USCIS as an affirmative application or can be filed in Immigration Court depending on the circumstances of the client. Asylum seekers do not have any specific programs for support.

**Deportation:** If an individual is facing deportation or removal from the United States, CCOC does not offer programs specifically designed to assist with deportation defense.

**Post-Application Support**

**Do you provide follow-up support after the application has been submitted?**

An immigration counselor on file will maintain communication with applicants as needed.

**Can you help if a client receives a request for additional information from USCIS?**

CCOC does assist clients with requests for evidence (RFE) for cases prepared by our office. Applications submitted to USCIS are accompanied by form G-28 which lists the Immigration Counselor as the DOJ representative on record, communications from USCIS are mailed to both the client and the representative on record.

**Community Resources and Referrals**

**Can you connect clients to additional support services, such as housing, employment, or healthcare?**

We share information about other services offered by Catholic Charities of Orange County and will continue to promote additional support services as they become available to our clients.

**Does Catholic Charities of Orange County partner with other organizations that provide related services?**

We are partners with the New American Campaign (NAC), the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), and the Immigration Legal Resource Center, Western Law School, UCI.

**Confidentiality and Privacy**

**How do you ensure confidentiality in immigration cases?**

All staff and volunteers who work in the Citizenship and Immigration Services department are required to sign and abide by our confidentiality statement. Case files are scanned and maintained on our secure server and physical files are kept in secure file cabinets. We keep case files for at least 7 years. Case files are destroyed utilizing a private shredding company. Staff Attorneys are held to CA BAR association rule 1.6 Confidential Information of a Client.

**How do you handle personal information, and what are your privacy policies?**

All client data shared with our staff is treated as private and confidential. Physical files are securely stored in locked file cabinets, while electronic records are maintained on a secure server. Access to data is strictly controlled and limited to authorized personnel. Staff are required to use strong passwords, and all documents containing sensitive information are professionally shredded to ensure secure disposal.

This FAQ is intended to give you a clearer understanding of the services Catholic Charities of Orange County can provide and to help you determine the best approach for your needs.

If you wish to schedule an appointment with our Citizenship & Immigration Services Team, please contact our office. We'll be happy to assist you.

Email: [ccocimmigration@ccoc.org](mailto:ccocimmigration@ccoc.org) or call:

Assistance in English & Spanish: 714-347-9610 or text: 714-347-9693

Assistance in Vietnamese: call/text: 714-347-9622

**For media related questions, please contact: [communications@ccoc.org](mailto:communications@ccoc.org)**