



July 21, 2015

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Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Modifications to Oath of Allegiance for Naturalization

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to clarify the eligibility requirements for modifications to the Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance for naturalization.

Background

In general, a naturalization applicant must take an oath of allegiance in a public ceremony, in addition to meeting other eligibility requirements, in order to naturalize. The oath includes the clauses to bear arms on behalf of the United States and to perform noncombatant service in the U.S. armed forces when required by law.¹ An applicant may be eligible for certain modifications to the oath to exclude the clauses based on religious training and belief or a conscientious objection. This guidance updates Volume 12 of the Policy Manual to clarify the eligibility requirements for the modifications.

Policy Highlights

- Explains eligibility requirements and standard of proof for modifications to the oath when an applicant is unwilling or unable to affirm to all clauses of the oath.
- Clarifies that an applicant may be eligible for modifications based on religious training and belief, or conscientious objection arising from a deeply held moral or ethical code.
- Clarifies that an applicant is not required to belong to a specific church or religion, follow a particular theology or belief, or to have had religious training in order to qualify.
- Clarifies that an applicant may submit, but is not required to provide, an attestation from a religious or other type of organization, as well as other evidence to establish eligibility.

Citation

Volume 12: Citizenship and Naturalization, Part J, Oath of Allegiance, Chapter 3, Oath of Allegiance Modifications and Waivers [[12 USCIS-PM J](#)].

¹ See [INA 337\(a\)\(5\)\(A\)](#) and [INA 337\(a\)\(5\)\(B\)](#).