

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
INFORMATION PAPER**

**SERVICE/AGENCY:** US NAVY

**SUBJECT:** Recruit Training Command (RTC) Naturalization Process Brief

**DATE:** 02 November 2023

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Recruit Training Command (RTC) in coordination with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) Midwest, and the U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois has an established effective process for allowing eligible and interested recruits to become naturalized citizens during their time at Basic Military Training (BMT).
- So far in 2023, there are 1,011 recruits who became naturalized citizens prior to graduation at RTC and there are currently 2,308 recruits who have started their application with RTC's naturalization program.

**BACKGROUND:**

- RTC started the naturalization pilot program in November 2021. In January 2022, the pilot was officially enacted and is currently the established method for naturalization going forward. A total of 1,193 Sailors have taken their oath at RTC.
- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, each incoming training group had between 21-79 non-citizen applicants. A total of 182 Recruits took the Oath of Allegiance and became citizens.
- The number of non-citizens per training group was between 15-78 in FY23. RTC increased the average completion percentage of each training group to 53.4 percent, due to a higher level of knowledge and experience gained. To date a total of 1,011 Recruits from FY23 training groups have taken the Oath of Allegiance and have become citizens.
- Since program inception RTC has filed applications for 4,152 Recruits and this number is expected to continue to grow as the program success is used as a recruiting initiative.

**DISCUSSION:**

- During the first five days at RTC, the Recruit Division Commanders identify all non-citizens. On the first Saturday all non-citizens attend an in brief for the naturalization program and are given the opportunity to either enroll in the program or opt out.
  - Recruits who enroll in the program will begin their Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service and Application for Naturalization at the in brief. RTC has special authorization to file these applications on paper vice an online submission.
  - Recruits who choose to opt out of the program are briefed on their rights to enroll at any time during their military service including post-boot camp.
- Week 2: Recruits complete their biometrics with USCIS and sit down with a representative from RLSO to review their application for naturalization.
- Week 3: All applications are sent to USCIS in order to complete naturalization in the expedited model.

- Week 7 or 8: Recruits receive the opportunity to interview. This is accomplished remotely via Microsoft Teams with a USCIS agent. RTC has a 95 percent pass rate for civics interviews.
- Week 9 or 10: Recruits accepted by USCIS will take the Oath of Allegiance onboard RTC. With assistance from USCIS and the U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois RTC holds a bi-weekly ceremony to ensure all eligible Recruits take the Oath prior to graduating.