



Volunteer Guidelines for Naturalization Ceremonies - Thank you for volunteering to help register new citizens to vote at Naturalization Ceremonies. Your volunteer registration efforts represent the nonpartisan nature of the voter services work of the League of Women Voters. The ceremonies are usually very poignant events, with family and friends there to lend support.

1. Types of Ceremonies

- a. Administrative - conducted by members of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
- b. Judicial - presided over by one or more Federal judges and often more formal in nature.

2. Venues – Events take place in a variety of locations.

- a. USCIS Portland, ME Field Office, 207 Gannett Drive in South Portland
- b. Gignoux Courthouse, U.S. District Court, 156 Federal St. in Portland
- c. Margaret Chase Smith Federal Building and Courthouse, 202 Harlow St. in Bangor
- d. Acadia National Park
- e. Portland Public Library
- f. Schools and veterans' homes

3. Times & Preparation

- a. The LWV Coordinator will receive all information in emails from the Chair of the Tabling Committee with contact information for a staff person from either the USCIS or the Federal Court regarding scheduled ceremonies.
- b. Ceremonies at USCIS are usually in two sessions, 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM, for about 15-25 new citizens each. The room can be quite crowded. Citizens receive their certificates individually during the ceremony. Registering new citizens to vote takes place in the back of the room after the ceremony.
- c. Ceremonies at courtrooms and schools are usually at 10 AM and involve larger numbers of new citizens. Certificates are distributed after the event. A location is selected for new citizen voter registration.
- d. The time provided in any announcement is the "Call-in" Time when applicants/new citizens are allowed to start signing in. Volunteers should arrive about the same time. **No one is allowed entry before the "Call-in" time.** The naturalization ceremony itself usually starts about 30 – 60 minutes after the "call-in" time depending on how many new citizens are signing in for the ceremony. Depending on the location, there may be a security check to enter the building, so have a photo ID with you.
- e. The LWV Coordinator should check in with the senior manager from USCIS when they arrive to get the instructions on where the League can set up.

4. Rules for Registration at the Event

- a. The registration activity can only occur after the conclusion of the ceremony, when the candidates are officially US Citizens. Volunteers can NOT approach the candidates before the ceremony.
- b. If candidates inquire or approach the registration table before the ceremony, volunteers should explain that we are available to help them register AFTER the ceremony and invite them to return to the table

after the ceremony to complete a registration card. Registration cards cannot be provided before the end of the ceremony.

- c. Be respectful of the new citizens, offer them the Make Your Vote Count brochure in the language they are most comfortable with. Do NOT chase people down as they are exiting.
- d. You must never attempt to influence the party affiliation of a new voter on the registration card! If the new citizen is uncertain, the best option is for them to check “Unenrolled” and let them know they can change party affiliation at any time in the future.
- e. Review the completed voter registration card application before the new registrant leaves the table to be sure the application is fully and correctly completed AND is legible.
- f. Store completed cards in a safe and secure manner. It is recommended that the coordinator bring a large envelope for this purpose.

5. Submitting Completed Voter Registration Cards:

- a. Return completed registration cards to individual Town/City Election Clerks accompanied by a cover letter within 5 days of the event. The letter should indicate that these cards were collected at a Naturalization ceremony with the date and location. Please include your contact information. [Click here to access the form.](#)
- b. Completed registration cards must be submitted to Town/City Clerks at least 21 days before the next election in order for a voter to be registered for that election. If the time is too short, instruct the applicant that they may still register in person at the Town or City Hall during regular business hours before the election OR at the polls on the day of the election,

6. Background Information

- a. The [State of Maine Voter Guide](#) explains how to register and vote, and includes a sample voter registration card. <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/voterguide.html>
- b. Review the League’s [‘Information Packet for Naturalization and Voter Registration Volunteers’](#) to be sure you are familiar with your responsibilities. https://www.lwvme.org/voter_service.html
- c. The League’s [Make Your Vote Count](#) brochure is handed out to each new citizen. It is available in English and translated into 10 languages. <https://www.lwvme.org/MakeYourVoteCount>
- d. Complete the online Voter Registration Reporting Form to submit your totals after each voter registration event. <https://forms.gle/x9n1qM2bitFPYk99>

7. Other Important Considerations

- a. Casual business attire is appropriate for these celebrations. No jeans please.
- b. Our role is to help register new voters and to encourage them to become informed about the issues and candidates. ***To remain focused and nonpartisan at all times, it is best not to discuss politics, including current events.***