

Naturalization Test Preparation Portal Launched

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ([USCIS](#)) and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History ([NMAH](#)) recently launched [Preparing for the Oath: U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship](#). This is a new Web-based learning tool, with an easy-to-use study guide to help immigrants prepare for the history and civics portion of the U.S. naturalization test. The tool is designed to help users better understand the naturalization process, and gain the necessary skills to be successful during the naturalization interview and test. Because it is a tool not only for individuals who are preparing for citizenship, but also for adult educators (including those serving English language learners) and immigrant-serving organizations, most information on the portal is written at the *low-intermediate ESL level*, and teacher guides are designed for *English language learners at the lower levels of instruction*.

"Preparing for the Oath is an invaluable addition to the citizenship preparation materials we offer to aspiring citizens," said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. "Using the Smithsonian Institution's extensive collection, this online tool will help individuals learn about the founding principles of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a meaningful way."

Preparing for the Oath is based on the 100 civics questions and answers from which the USCIS draws when administering the naturalization test. It is organized into themes related to U.S. history, government and civics, and offers a short video and self-test on the content of each civics question. The portal also includes lesson plans to assist teachers with their classroom activities, a word list with definitions of terms, and the opportunity for users to test themselves. In addition, the script of each narration has been transcribed and is available for printing.

According to OVAE Deputy Assistant Secretary, Johan Uvin, "[Preparing for the Oath: U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship](#) is a rich resource that will promote integration in new ways by taking full advantage of current technology. It will benefit thousands and thousands of individuals who are preparing for citizenship, as well as those who teach them or support them in other ways in community organizations across the country."

For more information, please access the USCIS bulletin about [Preparing for the Oath](#). We also encourage interested parties to access the USCIS [Citizenship Resource Center](#) and [Study materials page](#) (which includes Spanish versions of the resources).

Innovation for CTE to Build a Competitive Workforce

Innovation, the fourth core principle in [Investing in America's Future: A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education](#), is based on the notion that America's ability to build a competitive workforce hinges on whether, and to what extent, educators and leaders can find innovative solutions for preparing all students for college and careers. New models, strategies, and approaches developed at the local level will not suffice to support the type of transformation that the administration envisions for CTE unless they are validated, taken to scale and properly supported by systemic reform of state policies and practices. Thus, the *Blueprint* proposes two key reforms that reflect an innovative approach to the ways in which states can support transformation of the CTE system. These reforms will also help the U.S. Department of Education support the development of new practices at both the state and local levels.

The first reform is a set of conditions for innovation and success that would cover such areas as connecting CTE data to state longitudinal data systems, allowing rigorous CTE courses to be counted for academic credit, improving career counseling systems, and reducing state policy barriers to the transformation of CTE. Collectively, the conditions underscore the important role that states play in supporting rigorous, results-driven CTE programs and systemic reform. Meeting the conditions would signal that a state is ready to transform its CTE system, or has transformed it, to ensure that all students are prepared for further education and successful careers.

The second reform is a competitive CTE Innovation and Transformation Fund—administered by the U.S. Department of Education—to incentivize innovation at the local level and support system reform at the state level. The fund would comprise approximately 10 percent of total *Perkins* funding. To advance innovation at the local level, the fund would help test promising CTE practices, programs, and strategies and also support the expansion of proven approaches. To advance innovation at the state level, the fund would support policy and programmatic changes that considerably increase CTE access, expand state investments in CTE, and take actions to boost performance and outcome levels significantly. Finally, the fund could support [Pay for Success](#) projects that make awards to private non-profit or for-profit entities to undertake activities that achieve cost-effective outcomes in CTE. Awardees would receive payment based on the extent to which they achieve those outcomes.

Taken together, these reforms will ensure that the necessary supports are in place for existing and new delivery models of CTE to flourish so that both new and existing programs are equitable and accessible to all students regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.