

Improving the Naturalization Process: Better Immigrant Integration Leads to Economic Growth



[1]Anyone who has ever attended a naturalization ceremony cannot help but be moved by the power of the moment. The participants enter as men, women, and children of diverse countries, but leave the room as citizens of one—the United States. For many, the path to that naturalization ceremony has been long and arduous, irrespective of whether they entered the United States as wealthy entrepreneurs or as refugees with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The process of obtaining lawful permanent resident (LPR) status, and ultimately U.S. citizenship, is often daunting. A new country, new rules, high costs, and little targeted support for new immigrants makes what should be a journey of exploration and opportunity one that may be frustrating and lonely. Consequently, in order to focus on ways to improve the naturalization process itself, we must take a step back and consider the nature of immigrant integration in the United States. The better our integration policies—and the sooner they begin—the more likely we are to improve the rate of naturalization.

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