

Do Not Vote Unless You Are a U.S. Citizen

Amelia has her green card. When she got her driver's license, someone told her that she could register to vote. She registered to vote. In November, she voted in the election. Later that year, she applied for citizenship. At her citizenship interview, the USCIS officer asked if she had voted. She said yes. They denied her citizenship application. They put her into deportation proceedings.

Who can vote in the U.S.?

Only citizens can vote in Federal, State, and most local elections. Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) cannot vote until they become naturalized U.S. citizens.

Who can register to vote in the U.S.?

Only U.S. citizens can register to vote. Do not vote if you are not a U.S. citizen, even if someone tells you that you can.

I am not a citizen. I voted in the U.S. What can the USCIS do?

They can deny your application for citizenship. They may even seek to deport you.

I am not a U.S. citizen. I registered to vote. What should I do?

Remove your name from the registered voter list. Send your County Auditor's Office a letter saying, "Please cancel my voter registration."

I am not a U.S. citizen. I voted in the U.S. What should I do?

See an immigration attorney. Do not apply for citizenship before speaking with an attorney.

You can visit a lawyer in person or get advice from one by calling a legal hotline. If you are low-income and live outside King County, call CLEAR at 1-888-201-1014. If you live in King County, call the King County Bar Association's Neighborhood Legal Clinics at (206) 267-7070 between 9:00 a.m. and noon, weekdays, to schedule a free half-hour of legal advice.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

This information is current as of November 2017.

© 2017 Northwest Justice Project — 1-888-201-1014.

(Permission for copying and distribution granted to the Alliance for Equal Justice and to individuals for non-commercial purposes only.)