



ATLANTA CHAPTER

## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AILA)**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CITIZENSHIP DAY NATURALIZATION DRIVE AND INFORMATION SESSION**  
**FREE ASSISTANCE FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP APPLICANTS**  
**SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2010 ~ 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM**  
**ATLANTA - ROSWELL - DECATUR - DORAVILLE**

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, March 17, 2010 – On April 17, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) will sponsor “Citizenship Day 2010,” a single-day workshop with sites around the country providing assistance to lawful permanent residents eligible for naturalization. This is the fourth year that the Citizenship Day event will be conducted on a national scale. In 2007, fourteen AILA chapters held “citizenship drives” at 27 different locations around the country. More than 350 attorneys and 500 non-attorney volunteers assisted 1,700 clients with their citizenship applications. In 2008, twenty five AILA chapters participated and organized more than 65 sites nationwide, which were staffed by more than 500 attorney and 800 non-attorney volunteers serving over 1900 legal permanent residents on the road to citizenship. In 2009, we surpassed our 2008 numbers, assisting approximately 2000 Legal This year, AILA’s Atlanta Chapter has again partnered with various community based organizations including Catholic Charities, the North Fulton Bar Association, the Latin America Association, Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services of Atlanta, Refugee Women’s Network, the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association, Georgia Association for Latino Elected Officials (GALEO), the Center for Pan-Asian Community Service, the Emory Immigration Law Society and the British American Business Group to provide free assistance with the United States citizenship application process. Chapter attorneys and trained volunteers will provide assistance at no cost at four Atlanta Metro area locations during this one-day event on April 17, 2010. The event will take place in Atlanta, Roswell, Decatur and Doraville between 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This event is being co-chaired by AILA immigration attorneys Elizabeth L.A. Garvish, Vivien Peaden and Udai Singh. Event Co-Chair, Elizabeth L.A. Garvish, states “This annual event highlights one of the most important events in an immigrant’s life – becoming a U.S. citizen. Attorneys and volunteers from across the country will come together on one day to demonstrate the importance of being a U.S. citizen and assist others on their road to naturalization.”

Lawful permanent residents (“green card” holders) may apply for U.S. citizenship. Citizenship confers the right to vote, bear a U.S. passport, petition for relatives abroad, and obtain public benefits. Recent developments and initiatives regarding immigration issues, including a dramatic increase in the filing fees for naturalization cases and the increased difficulty of the required testing for naturalization applicants, among others, have resulted in an even greater surge of lawful permanent residents seeking citizenship as they become eligible to do so. Each year, hundreds of thousands of immigrants, from all corners of the globe, embrace the ideals of freedom and democracy and become United States citizens.

To apply for citizenship, a person must be at least 18 years old and have been a lawful permanent resident for five years, or for three years if married to a U.S. citizen. In addition, applicants must demonstrate that they can read, write, and speak in English, have paid income taxes, pass a civics test, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members. For more on the national organization, go to [www.aila.org](http://www.aila.org). **The press is invited to cover any of the Citizenship Day workshops taking place at the four Metro Atlanta locations. For more information, please contact:**

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