

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Hungary Electronic System for Travel Authorization Validity and Eligibility

**AGENCY:** Office of Strategy, Policy, & Plans; DHS.

**ACTION:** Announcement of Electronic System for Travel Authorization validity period and eligibility.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the U.S. Department of State, is normalizing Hungary's Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) travel authorization validity period, and changing the eligibility for citizens or nationals of Hungary traveling under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to the United States. This announcement reverses the 2023 DHS determination to reduce the ESTA travel authorization validity period for travel by citizens or nationals of Hungary from two years to one year, and to limit the validity of an ESTA for citizens or nationals of Hungary to a single use for ESTA applications. DHS is making these changes because Hungary has addressed the vulnerabilities that led to earlier ESTA restrictions.

**DATES:** This decision was effective on September 11, 2025. The changes will be implemented by September 30, 2025.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Caitlin Finn, Office of International Affairs, Office of Strategy, Policy, & Plans, Department of Homeland Security, 2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20528.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### I. Background

##### A. The Visa Waiver Program

Pursuant to section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1187, the Secretary of Homeland Security (the Secretary),<sup>[1]</sup> in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate certain countries for participation in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) if certain requirements are met. Those requirements include, among others:

(1) a rate of nonimmigrant visitor visa refusals for citizens or nationals of the country below the statutorily established threshold;

(2) certification by the government seeking designation for VWP participation that it issues machine-readable passports that comply with internationally accepted standards;

(3) a determination by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of

State, that the country's designation would not negatively affect U.S. law enforcement and security interests;

(4) an agreement to report, or make available through INTERPOL or other designated means authorized by the Secretary, information about the theft or loss of passports to the U.S. government within the designated timeframe;

(5) the country's government's acceptance for repatriation of any citizen, former citizen, or national not later than three weeks after the issuance of a final order of removal; and

(6) an agreement with the United States to share information regarding whether citizens and nationals of the country traveling to the United States represent a threat to the security or welfare of the United States or its citizens.

INA section 217(c)(2)(A)–(F), 8 U.S.C. 1187(c)(2)(A)–(F).

The INA also sets forth requirements for countries' continued VWP eligibility and, where appropriate, probation, suspension, or termination of program countries. See INA section 217(c)–(f), 8 U.S.C. 1187(c)–(f).

Citizens and nationals of VWP countries may apply for admission to the United States at U.S. ports of entry as nonimmigrant visitors for business or pleasure for a period of ninety days or less without first obtaining a nonimmigrant visa, provided they are otherwise eligible for admission under applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. To travel to the United States under the VWP, an alien must, without limitation:

(1) be seeking entry as a visitor for business or pleasure for ninety days or less;

(2) be a citizen or national of a VWP country;

(3) present a valid unexpired electronic and machine-readable passport that meets program requirements and is issued by a designated VWP country to the air or vessel carrier before departure;

(4) execute the required immigration forms;

(5) if arriving at a port of entry into the U.S. by air or sea, arrive on an authorized carrier;

(6) not represent a threat to the welfare, health, safety or security of the United States;

(7) not have failed to comply with the conditions of any previous admission as a nonimmigrant visitor;

(8) possess a round-trip transportation ticket;

(9) obtain an approved travel authorization via Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA);

(10) waive the right to review or appeal a decision regarding admissibility at the port of entry or to contest, other than on the basis of an application for asylum, any action for removal; and

(11) meet other program requirements. INA section 217(a)–(b); 8 U.S.C.

1187(a)–(b); see also 8 CFR part 217.

Hungary was designated for participation in the VWP on November 17, 2008. See 73 FR 67711 (Nov. 17, 2008).

#### B. ESTA Validity Period and Eligibility

Pursuant to DHS regulations, a travel authorization issued under ESTA is generally valid for a period of two years from the date of issuance for all citizens and nationals of that VWP country. See 8 CFR 217.5(d)(1). However, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may increase or decrease the ESTA travel authorization validity period and eligibility for a designated VWP country. See 8 CFR 217.5(d)(3); see also INA section 217(h)(3)(C)(i), 8 U.S.C. 1187(h)(3)(C)(i) (“[T]he Secretary of Homeland Security may revoke any such determination [of an ESTA travel authorization validity period] or shorten the period of eligibility under any such determination at any time and for any reason.”).<sup>[2]</sup> DHS publishes notice of any changes to ESTA travel authorization validity periods in the **Federal Register** and updates the ESTA website to reflect the specific ESTA travel authorization validity period. See 8 CFR 217.5(d)(3).

#### II. Change to Hungary's ESTA Validity Period and Eligibility

DHS conducts the statutorily required review of each VWP country at least once every two years to evaluate the effects that continuing the country's designation in the program will have on U.S. national security, law enforcement, and immigration enforcement interests. See INA section 217(c)(5)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1187(c)(5)(A). Prior administrations reduced the validity period of ESTA travel authorizations for Hungarian travelers and limited the validity of an ESTA for Hungarian travelers to a single use. See 88 FR 50759 (Aug. 2, 2023).

DHS, in consultation with DOS, has since determined that Hungary has sufficiently addressed the vulnerabilities that led to the ESTA restrictions and has confidence in its ability to continue to partner with DHS to meet all VWP security requirements. DHS, therefore, is extending the ESTA validity period to two years, and allowing multiple entries for applications received beginning September 30, 2025.

Consistent with DHS's statutory obligations to review each VWP country's compliance with all program requirements every two years, DHS will review Hungary's implementation of all VWP requirements and report findings to Congress. The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, also retains the authority to suspend or terminate Hungary's designation as VWP country.

**Kristi Noem,**

*Secretary of Homeland Security.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2823–25; DHS Docket No. USCIS–2025–0008]

#### Notice of Implementation of 2025 Naturalization Civics Test

**AGENCY:** Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is reimplementing the 2020 Naturalization Civics Test, which was originally announced on November 13, 2020, with some modifications (henceforth “2025 Naturalization Civics Test”). This 2025 Naturalization Civics Test satisfies the statutory requirement for aliens to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of American history, and of the principles and form of government of the United States in pursuit of naturalization. This notice does not change the English language parts of the naturalization test (reading, writing, speaking, and understanding).

**DATES:** This notice is effective on September 18, 2025. USCIS will administer the 2025 Naturalization Civics Test to aliens who file their naturalization applications on or after October 20, 2025.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Residence and Naturalization Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 5900 Capital Gateway Drive, Camp Springs, MD 20746; or by phone at 240–721–3000.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### I. Purpose

United States citizenship confers rights, privileges, and responsibilities that are vital to the security and safety of the United States, unification around a common American identity, and dedication to the common welfare of the American people. The ability to become a naturalized citizen is the most meaningful immigration benefit the United States can bestow on an alien. In order to become a United States citizen, an alien must be willing and able to accept all of the responsibilities of being a United States citizen in return for certain rights and privileges. The rights of U.S. citizenship include the right to vote and the right to hold public office. The responsibilities of U.S. citizenship include serving on federal juries and most state juries, supporting and defending the United States and the U.S. Constitution, bearing loyalty to the United States and abjuring allegiance to any other country, and serving in the military or performing civilian service when called upon by the government.<sup>1</sup>

In recognition that aliens applying for naturalization must be willing and able to carry out these rights and responsibilities, Congress, among other things, required that such aliens must demonstrate English proficiency, knowledge of the fundamentals of American history, and U.S. government and civics.<sup>2</sup>

Demonstration of English and civics knowledge is essential to showing an alien's commitment to fulfill the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship and to actively assimilate into American society. Understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, engaging with the government, and fully contributing to the democratic process all rely on a basic understanding of U.S. government and civics. Further, knowledge of U.S. government and civics enables naturalized citizens to more fully engage with local and federal government agencies and be active and responsible members of their local communities, furthering the success of our democracy.

### II. Background

#### Legal Authority

Section 312 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1423, outlines the civics requirements for naturalization.<sup>3</sup> Candidates for

naturalization must have “knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, and of the principles and form of government, of the United States.” See INA sec. 312(a)(2), 8 U.S.C. 1423(a)(2).<sup>4</sup> Under INA sec. 312(b)(3), special consideration is provided for the civics test for aliens who are over the age of 65 when they file their naturalization application and have been living in the United States for periods totaling at least 20 years subsequent to lawful admission for permanent residence. In addition, INA sec. 332(a), 8 U.S.C. 1443(a), provides specific authority for administering the civics test. Specifically, the INA states that the Secretary “shall make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this part and is authorized to prescribe the scope and nature of the examination of applicants for naturalization as to their admissibility to citizenship.” INA sec. 332(b), 8 U.S.C. 1443(b), provides authority to “promote instruction and training in citizenship responsibilities of applicants for naturalization.” DHS develops and administers these tests pursuant to its regulations in 8 CFR part 312.

The language in INA secs. 312 and 332, 8 U.S.C. 1423 and 1443, as well as the Secretary's broad general authority under INA sec. 103(a), 8 U.S.C. 1103(a), and the Homeland Security Act,<sup>5</sup> authorize the Secretary to issue regulations and delegate certain duties to any organizational unit, including USCIS, to administer the immigration and naturalization of aliens,<sup>6</sup> and to

the Secretary of Homeland Security by operation of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA) (Pub. L. 107–296, 116 Stat. 2135) (codified at 6 U.S.C. 101 *et. seq.*). See 6 U.S.C. 202(3), 251, 271(b), 542 note, 557; see also 8 U.S.C. 1103(a)(1), (a)(3), (g), 1551 note; *Nielsen v. Preap*, 586 U.S. 392, 397 n.2 (2019).

<sup>4</sup> The requirements of INA section 312(a) do not apply to aliens who are unable because of physical or developmental disability or mental impairment to comply with them. INA sec. 312(b)(1), 8 U.S.C. 1423(b)(1).

<sup>5</sup> HSA sec. 102, 6 U.S.C. 112, specifically authorizes the Secretary to delegate any of the Secretary's functions to any officer, employee, or organizational unit of the Department.

<sup>6</sup> USCIS, previously known as the Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship Services, was established by HSA sec. 451, 6 U.S.C. 271. The Secretary delegated certain authorities to USCIS including broad authority over naturalization and citizenship of aliens. See Delegation 0150.1, *Delegation to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services* (Jun. 5, 2003) (“I hereby delegate to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services . . . [a]uthority under the immigration laws, including but not limited to sections 310 and 341 of the INA (8 U.S.C. 1421 and 1452), to grant applications for naturalization and certificates of citizenship (and revoke such naturalization), including administration of oaths, issuance of certificates, provision of citizenship materials and services to public schools to prepare

Continued

<sup>1</sup> See USCIS, *Citizen's Almanac* (Form M–76), pg. 2, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/guides/M-76.pdf> (Rev. Sept. 2014).

<sup>2</sup> INA sec. 312, 8 U.S.C. 1423; see 8 CFR part 312.

<sup>3</sup> Although several provisions of the INA discussed in this final rule refer exclusively to the “Attorney General,” such provisions now refer to