




U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Commissioner

April 19, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

FROM: Troy A. Miller 
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner

SUBJECT: Updated Terminology for CBP Communications and Materials

This memorandum establishes updated language and aligns our communication practices with the Biden Administration's guidance regarding immigration terminology. The Administration has provided guidance on the preferred use of immigration terminology within the federal government. The Administration's view is also reflected in the *U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021*, which President Biden sent to Congress on January 20, 2021.

In response to the vision set by the Administration, CBP will ensure agency communications use the preferred terminology and inclusive language as outlined below. This guidance applies to communications such as agency outreach efforts, internal documents, and overall communications with stakeholders, partners and the general public. As needed and appropriate, CBP may use applicable terms defined in the Immigration Nationality Act in legal or operational documents, including when completing required forms, particularly where legally required or necessary to ensure the procedural rights of those whom CBP encounters.

I delegate the responsibility of determining how best to implement this guidance across the agency to the CBP leadership team included in this memorandum distribution. CBP offices are to begin implementing this guidance immediately in both external and internal correspondence and communications, where practical and appropriate. To ensure consistency across CBP, the table on page two lists prior terminology and the new terminology that CBP will use moving forward.

As the nation's premier law enforcement agency, we set a tone and example for our country and partners across the world. The way we communicate and conduct our agency's business must reflect the inherent professionalism of the men and women of CBP. We enforce our nation's laws while also maintaining the dignity of every individual with whom we interact. The words we use matter and will serve to further confer that dignity to those in our custody.

Terminology Changes:

| Previous | New |
|------------------------------|---|
| Alien | Noncitizen or migrant |
| Alienage | Noncitizenship |
| Unaccompanied alien children | Noncitizen unaccompanied children |
| Undocumented alien | Undocumented noncitizen, undocumented individual, migrant |
| Illegal alien | Undocumented noncitizen, undocumented individual, migrant |
| Assimilation | Integration or civic integration |
| Immigrant assimilation | Immigrant integration |
| | |

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