

**A GUIDE TO  
NATURALIZATION**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT  
OF HOMELAND  
SECURITY**

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**A Guide to**

# **Naturalization**

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# Welcome

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*E Pluribus Unum - Out of Many, One*

-Motto inscribed on the Great Seal of the United States

# Welcome

## What Is Naturalization?

We are very pleased that you want to

Naturalization is commonly referred to as

become a U.S. citizen. The United

the manner in which a person not born in

States is a nation of immigrants.

the United States voluntarily becomes a

Throughout our history, immigrants

U.S. citizen.

have come here seeking a better way of life

and have strengthened our Nation in the

## What Is This *Guide* for?

process.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

(USCIS) created this *Guide* to provide

For more than 200 years, the United

better and more consistent information

States has remained strong because of our

to people interested in naturalization. It

citizens and the common civic values we

is written mainly for people 18 years or

share. Deciding to become a U.S. citizen

older who want to become citizens. Please

is one of the most important decisions in

take the time to review this information  
a person's life. If you decide to apply for  
to make sure that you are eligible to apply  
naturalization, you will be showing your  
for naturalization. You can find more  
permanent commitment to the United  
information at **www.uscis.gov** or by calling  
States. You will also be showing your  
Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283** or  
loyalty to its Constitution and its people.  
**1-800-767-1833** (for hearing impaired).

When you are naturalized, you agree  
to accept all of the responsibilities of  
being a citizen. You agree to support the  
United States, its Constitution, and its  
laws. In return, you are rewarded with all  
the rights and privileges that are part of  
citizenship. We welcome your interest and  
hope you will read on to learn more about  
naturalization.

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# **What Are the Benefits and**

*Responsibilities of Citizenship?*

**Benefits**

# Responsibilities

The Constitution and laws of the United States give many rights to both citizens and non-citizens living in the United States. However, some rights are only for you become a U.S. citizen, including 2

the Oath of Allegiance. The oath includes

and non-citizens living in the United

several promises you make when

States. However, some rights are only for you become a U.S. citizen, including 2

citizens, such as:

promises to:

- **Voting.** Only U.S. citizens can vote
- Give up all prior allegiance to any other

in Federal elections. Most States

nation or sovereignty;

also restrict the right to vote, in most

elections, to U.S. citizens.

- Swear allegiance to the United States;

- **Bringing family members to the**

# United States.

- Support and defend the Constitution

Citizens generally

get priority when petitioning to bring

and the laws of the United States; and

family members permanently to this

country.

- Serve the country when required.

- **Obtaining citizenship for children**

U.S. citizens have many responsibilities

**born abroad.** In most cases, a child

other than the ones mentioned in the

born abroad to a U.S. citizen is

Oath. Citizens have a responsibility

automatically a U.S. citizen.

to participate in the political

process by registering and voting in

- **Traveling with a U.S. passport.**

elections. Serving on a jury is another

A U.S. passport allows you to get

responsibility of citizenship. Finally,

assistance from the U.S. government

America becomes stronger when all of

when overseas.

its citizens respect the different opinions,



cultures, ethnic groups, and religions

- **Becoming eligible for Federal jobs.**

found in this country. Tolerance for

Most jobs with government agencies

differences is also a responsibility of

require U.S. citizenship.

citizenship.

- **Becoming an elected official.** Many

When you decide to become a U.S.

elected offices in this country require

citizen, you should be willing to fulfill

U.S. citizenship.

the responsibilities of citizenship. We

hope you will honor and respect the

- **Showing your patriotism.** In addition, freedoms and opportunities citizenship becoming a U.S. citizen is a way to

gives you. At the same time, we hope

demonstrate your commitment to your you become an active member of your

new country.

community. It is by participating in your

community that you truly become

The above list does not include all the

an American.

benefits of citizenship, only some

of the more important ones.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q 1. How can I become a U.S. citizen?

A You may become a U.S. citizen **(1)** by birth or **(2)** through naturalization.

## Q 2. Who is born a U.S. citizen?

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A Generally, people are born U.S. citizens if they are born in the United States or if they are born to U.S. citizens:

### **(1) If you were born in the United States:**

Normally you were a U.S. citizen at birth.<sup>1</sup> (Including, in most cases, the

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the territories of Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and after November 4, 1986, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), **(2) If you were born abroad to TWO U.S. citizens:**

And at least one of your parents lived in the United States at some point in his or her life, **then in most cases you are a U.S. citizen.**

### **(3) If you were born abroad to ONE U.S. citizen:**

In most cases, you are a U.S. citizen if **all** of the following are true:

- One of your parents was a U.S. citizen when you were born;
- Your citizen parent lived at least 5 years in the United States before you were born; and

- At least 2 of those 5 years in the United States were after your citizen parent's 14th birthday.<sup>2</sup>

Your record of birth abroad, if registered with a U.S. consulate or embassy, is proof of your citizenship. You may also apply for a passport to have your citizenship recognized. If you need additional proof of your citizenship, you may file an

“Application for Certificate of Citizenship” (Form N-600) with USCIS to get a

Certificate of Citizenship. Call the USCIS Forms Line at **1-800-870-3676** to request Form N-600, or download the form at **www.uscis.gov**.

<sup>1</sup> The exception is persons who were born not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, such as children of foreign diplomats.





# Back

“A-number”

This card does  
not have Port-  
of-Entry on it.

Date you became a  
Permanent Resident  
*(January 1, 1980)*

Date you  
became a  
“A-number”

Permanent  
Resident  
*(April 3, 1980)*

Port-of-Entry  
Port-of-Entry or  
or office  
office where you  
where you  
were granted  
were granted  
adjustment of  
adjustment of  
status  
status

Date you

became a

Permanent

“A-number”

Resident

*(July 12, 1991)*

**NOTE:** The “A-number” is the Alien Registration Number

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**Q 6. What form do I use to file for naturalization?**

**A** You should use an “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400). Call the USCIS

Forms Line at **1-800-870-3676** to request Form N-400. You may also download the form at **www.uscis.gov**.

**Q 7. If I have been convicted of a crime but my record has been expunged, do I need to write that on my application or tell a**

**USCIS officer?**

**A** Yes. You should always be honest with USCIS about all:

- Arrests (even if you were not charged or convicted);
- Convictions (even if your record was cleared or expunged);
- Crimes you have committed for which you were not arrested or convicted; and
- Any countervailing evidence, or evidence in your favor concerning the

circumstances of your arrests, and/or convictions or offenses that you would like USCIS to consider.

Even if you have committed a minor crime, USCIS may deny your application if you do not tell the USCIS officer about the incident. Note that unless a traffic incident was alcohol or drug related, you do not need to submit documentation for traffic fines and incidents that did not involve an actual arrest if the only penalty was a fine less than **\$500** and/or points on your driver’s license.

## **Q 8. Where do I file my naturalization application?**

**A** You should send your completed “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400) to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox Facility that serves your area, see page 34 for detailed instructions. Also see page 34 for separate filing instructions for members of the Armed Forces and the spouses of active members of the Armed Forces. Remember to make a copy of your application. **Do not** send original documents with your application unless the Document Checklist included with this *Guide* states that an original is required.

**Always** make copies of documents that you send to USCIS.

## **Q 9. Will USCIS help me, or make accommodations for me, if I have a disability?**

**A** USCIS will make every effort to make reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities who need modifications to the naturalization process in order to demonstrate their eligibility. For example, if you use a wheelchair, we will make sure you can be fingerprinted, interviewed, and sworn in at a location that is wheelchair accessible. If you are hearing impaired, the officer conducting your interview will speak loudly and slowly, or we will work with you to arrange for an American sign language interpreter.

If you require an American sign language interpreter at the oath ceremony, please 8 indicate that in your Form N-400 in the section where you are asked if you need an



accommodation for a disability. If you use a service animal such as a guide dog, your animal may come with you to your interview and oath ceremony.

We are continuing to work on better ways to make the naturalization process easier for applicants with disabilities. If you know in advance that you will need some kind of accommodation, write a letter explaining what you will need and send it to the USCIS district office that will interview you after you receive your interview notice. If you have a physical or developmental disability or a mental impairment so severe that you cannot acquire or demonstrate the required knowledge of English and civics, you may be eligible for an exemption of those requirements. To request an exemption, you must file a “Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions” (Form N-648). See page 26 of this *Guide* for more information.

## **Q 10. Where is my local USCIS office?**

**A** To find the local USCIS office that serves your area, please use the field office locator at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

## **Q 11. What is the fee for processing an application?\***

**A** The current fee for processing a naturalization application can be found on the single page titled “Current Naturalization Fees” in the back of this *Guide*. If you are under 75 years old, you must also



pay a fee to have your fingerprints taken.\*\*

### **Q 12. How can I pay my application fee?**

**A** You must send the fee with your application. Pay the fee with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank payable to the **Department of Homeland Security**. Do not use the initials DHS or USDHS. **Do Not Send Cash.**

Residents of Guam should make the fee payable to the “Treasurer, Guam,” and residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands should make the fee payable to the “Commissioner of Finance of the Virgin Islands.”

Fees for biometric services, which include your photograph and signature, are separate from your application fee. Remember that your application fee is not refundable even if you withdraw your application or if your case is denied.

\* If you are applying for naturalization based on your own service in the Armed Forces of the United States, no filing fee is required. Please see “Naturalization Information for Military Personnel” (Form M-599) for more information.

\*\* If you are 75 years or older, or if you are filing on the basis of your service in the Armed Forces of the United States, or if you are filing from abroad, **do not** send the biometric services fee for fingerprinting with your application.

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### **Q 13. How long will it take to become naturalized?**

**A** The time it takes to be naturalized varies by location. USCIS is continuing to modernize and improve the naturalization process and would like to decrease the time it takes to an average of 6 months after the Form N-400 is filed.

### **Q 14. Where can I be fingerprinted?**

**A** After we receive your application, we will tell you where you should get fingerprinted. For more information about fingerprinting, see page 35.

### **Q 15. How do I find out the status of my naturalization application?**

**A** You may check the status of your naturalization application by visiting **www.uscis.gov** or by calling Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283**

**(TTY: 1-800-767-1833).**

### **Q 16. What if I cannot go to my scheduled interview?**

**A** It is very important not to miss your interview. If you have to miss your interview, you should write the office where your interview is to be conducted as soon as possible and ask to have your interview rescheduled. Rescheduling an interview may add several months to the naturalization process, so make all attempts to attend your original interview date.

If you miss your scheduled interview without notifying USCIS, we will

“administratively close” your case. If we close your case because you missed your interview, we will notify you at your last address of record. Unless you contact us to schedule a new interview within 1 year after we close your case, we will deny your application.

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### **Q 17. What do I do if my address has changed?**

**A** It is important that USCIS has your most current address. If we do not, you may not receive important information from us. For example, we may not be able to notify you about the date and time of your interview or about additional documents you may need to send or bring.

If you move after filing your “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400), call Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283 (TTY: 1-800-767-1833)** to change your address on your pending Form N-400. Every time you move, you are required by law to inform USCIS of your new address. To meet this legal requirement, you must file an “Alien’s Change of Address Card” (Form AR-11), in addition to calling Customer Service. You must file the Form AR-11 within 10 days of your move. There is no fee to file this form.

You should also notify the U.S. Postal Service of your new address to help ensure that any mail already on its way may be forwarded to you.

### **Q 18. Can I change my name when I naturalize?**

**A** Congress did not give USCIS legal authority to change a person’s name when that person naturalizes. Therefore, there are only two ways that USCIS can issue your Certificate of Naturalization under a new name:

1. If you present proof that you have already changed your name according to the legal requirements that apply to persons living in your State, USCIS can issue the Certificate of Naturalization with your new name. Such proof might include a marriage certificate or divorce decree showing that you changed your name when you married or divorced. It might also include some other State court order establishing that you changed your name.
2. If you are going to take the Oath of Allegiance at a Naturalization Ceremony that is held in Court, you may ask the Court to change your name. If the Court grants your request, your new name will appear on your Certificate of Naturalization.

### **Q 19. If USCIS grants me naturalization, when will I become a citizen?**

**A** You become a citizen as soon as you take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States in a formal naturalization ceremony. In some places, you can choose to take the oath the same day as your interview. If that option is not available, or if you prefer a ceremony at a later date, USCIS will notify you of the ceremony date with a “Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony” (Form N-445).

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**Q 20. What should I do if I cannot go to my oath ceremony?**

**A** If you cannot go to the oath ceremony, you should return the “Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony” (Form N-445) that you received to your local USCIS office. Include a letter saying why you cannot go to the ceremony. Make a copy of the notice and your letter before you send them to USCIS. Your local USCIS office will reschedule you and send you a new “Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony” (Form N-445) to tell you when your ceremony will be.

**Q 21. What can I do if USCIS denies my application?**

**A** If you think that USCIS was wrong to deny your naturalization application, you may request a hearing with an immigration officer. Your denial letter will explain how to request a hearing and will include the form you need. The form for filing an appeal is the “Request for Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings under Section 336 of the INA” (Form N-336). You must file the form, including the correct fee, to USCIS within 30 days after you receive a denial letter.

If, after an appeal hearing with USCIS, you still believe you have been wrongly denied naturalization, you may file a petition for a new review of your application in U.S.

District Court.

**Q 22. Can I reapply for naturalization if USCIS denies my application?**

**A** In many cases, you may reapply. If you reapply, you will need to complete and resubmit a new Form N-400 and pay the fee again. You will also need to have your fingerprints and photographs taken again. If your application is denied, the denial letter should indicate the date you may reapply for citizenship.

If you are denied because you failed the English or civics test, you may reapply for naturalization as soon as you want. You should reapply whenever you believe you have learned enough English or civics to pass both tests.

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**Q 23. What do I do if I lose my Certificate of Naturalization? What do I use as proof of citizenship if I do not have my certificate?**

**A** You may get a new Certificate of Naturalization by submitting an “Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document” (Form N-565) to USCIS. You

may request Form N-565 by calling the USCIS Forms Line (**1-800-870-3676**), or by downloading the

form at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). Submit this form with the appropriate fee to the Nebraska or Texas Service Center, depending on which Service Center has jurisdiction over your residence.

If you have one, you may use your U.S. passport as evidence of citizenship while you wait for a replacement certificate. It is strongly recommended that you apply for a passport as soon as you become a citizen.

**Q 24. If my Permanent Resident Card expires while I am applying for naturalization, do I still need to apply for a new card?**

**A** If you apply for naturalization **6 months or more before** the expiration date on your Permanent Resident Card (formerly known as an Alien Registration Card or “Green Card”), you do not have to apply for a new card. However, you may apply for a renewal card if you wish by using an “Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card” (Form I-90) and paying the appropriate fee. Call the USCIS Forms Line or visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

If you apply for naturalization **less than 6 months before** the expiration date on your Permanent Resident Card, or do not apply for naturalization until your card has already expired, you must renew your card.

**Q 25. If I am a U.S. citizen, is my child a U.S. citizen?**

**A** A child who is born in the United States, or born abroad to a U.S. citizen(s) who lived in (or came to) the United States for the required period of time prior to the child’s birth, is generally considered a U.S. citizen at birth.

A child who is:

- born to a U.S. citizen who did not live in (or come to) the United States for the required period of time prior to the child’s birth, or
- born to one U.S. citizen parent and one alien parent or two alien parents who naturalize after the child’s birth, or
- Adopted (stepchildren cannot derive or acquire citizenship through their stepparents) *A Guide to Naturalization*

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and is permanently residing in the United States can become a U.S. citizen by action of law on the date on which all of the following requirements have been met:

- The child was lawfully admitted for permanent residence\*; and
- Either parent was a United States citizen by birth or naturalization\*\*; and
- The child was still under 18 years of age; and
- The child was not married; and

- The child was the parent’s legitimate child or was legitimated by the parent before the child’s 16th birthday (children born out of wedlock who were not legitimated before their 16th birthday do **not** derive United States citizenship through their father); and
- If adopted, the child met the requirements of section 101(b)(1)(E) or (F) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and has had a full and final adoption; and
- The child was residing in the United States in the legal custody of the U.S. citizen parent (this includes joint custody); and
- The child was residing in the United States in the physical custody of the U.S. citizen parent.

If you and your child meet all of these requirements, you may obtain a U.S. passport for the child as evidence of citizenship. If the child needs further evidence of citizenship, you may submit an “Application for Certificate of Citizenship” (Form N-600) to USCIS to obtain a Certificate of Citizenship. (**NOTE:** A child who meets these requirements before his or her 18th birthday may obtain a passport or Certificate of Citizenship at any time, even after he or she turns 18.)

**\*NOTE** – Children who immigrated under the “IR-3” or “IR-4” categories must have had an immigrant petition filed on their behalf before their 16th birthday; see answers to Question 26. All adoptions for any other type of immigration benefit, including naturalization, must be completed by the child’s 16th birthday, with one exception: A child adopted while under the age of 18 years by the same parents who adopted a natural sibling who met the usual requirements.

**\*\*NOTE** – The “one U.S. citizen parent” rule applies only to children who first fulfilled the requirements for automatic citizenship (other than at birth abroad) on or after February 27, 2001. In order to qualify for automatic citizenship (other than at birth abroad) on or before February 26, 2001, both of the child’s parents must have been United States citizens either at birth or through naturalization—both parents if the child had two parents; the surviving parent if a parent had died; the parent with legal custody if the parents were divorced or legally separated; or the mother only, if the child had been born out of wedlock and the child’s paternity had not been established by legitimation.

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**26. If I am a U.S. citizen, but my child does not meet the requirements listed above,**

**Q can I still apply for citizenship for my child?**

A child who is regularly residing **in** the United States can become a citizen of the United States **only**

A by meeting the requirements listed in the answer to Question 25. If a child regularly resides **in** the United States and is not a lawful permanent resident, he or she cannot acquire citizenship automatically until he or she is granted lawful permanent residence. If a child who has been lawfully admitted for permanent residence fails to qualify for citizenship under the provisions of law, he or she may apply for naturalization after reaching 18 years of age by filing Form N-400, provided that he or she has the required 5 years of lawful permanent residence.

U.S. citizens with children by birth or adoption (stepchildren do not qualify) who do **not** regularly reside in the United States, may apply for citizenship for such a child if all of the following conditions are met:

- The child is under 18 years of age; and
- The child is not married; and
- The child regularly resides outside the United States; and
- The child is temporarily present in the United States pursuant to a lawful admission and is maintaining such lawful status; and
- The child is in legal and physical custody of a parent who is a U.S. citizen; and
- The child is the U.S. citizen's legitimate child, or was legitimated before the child's 16th birthday (children born out of wedlock who were not legitimated before their 16th birthday may be eligible for this procedure through his or her mother); and
- If adopted, the child meets the requirements of section 101(b)(1)(E) or (F) of the INA and had a full and final adoption; and
- Either of the following is true:
  - The citizen parent has lived at least 5 years in the United States, and at least 2 of which were after the citizen parent's 14th birthday; or
  - If the child's citizen parent has not lived in the United States for at least 5 years, 2 of which were after that parent's 14th birthday, the citizen parent currently has a parent (the child's grandparent) who:
    - Is also a U.S. citizen; and
    - Lived in the United States for 5 years, at least 2 of which were after the citizen grandparent's 14th birthday; and
    - Is living or deceased at the time of the adjudication of the application and the taking of the oath.

If the foregoing conditions are met, the citizen parent can apply for citizenship and a Certificate of Citizenship on behalf of the child using an "Application for Citizenship and Issuance of a Certificate under Section 322" (Form N-600K). Both the citizen parent and the child must appear at an interview with a USCIS officer in the United States. The child must meet **all** of the required conditions at the time he or she takes the Oath of Allegiance. (**NOTE:** The oath may be waived if the child is too young to understand it.)

A Guide to Naturalization



# Who Is Eligible for

## *Naturalization?*

Naturalization is how immigrants

In the next few pages, we describe the

become citizens of the United States.

naturalization eligibility requirements for

If you wish to apply for naturalization,

persons who will use Form N-400.

you should use the “Application for

Naturalization” (Form N-400).

The following table summarizes the

naturalization requirements for *most*

If you want to apply for citizenship

types of applicants. After the table is a

for a child who is under 18 years old,

section that provides more information

you should use the “Application for

on each requirement. If you still have

Certificate of Citizenship” (Form

questions about your eligibility, you

N-600) or “Application for Citizenship

should consult an immigrant assistance

and Issuance of a Certificate under

organization or USCIS.



Section 322” (Form N-600K). For  
more information about applying  
for citizenship for your children, see  
Questions 25-26 on pages 13-15.

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**Time as**

**Permanent**

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Resident**

# Continuous Residence

## **If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Have been a Permanent Resident for the past 5 years and have no special circumstances.

*NOTE: Over 90% of applicants fall into this category.*

## **If you are at least 18 years old and:**

3 years

3 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Are currently married to and living with a U.S. citizen;

**and**

Have been married to and living with that same U.S.  
citizen for the past 3 years;

**and**

Your spouse has been a U.S. citizen for the past 3 years.

**If you:**

You must be a

Not Required

Permanent Resident

on the day of your

Are in the U.S. Armed Forces (or will be filing your

interview.

application within 6 months of an honorable discharge);

**and**

Have served for at least 1 year.

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the

United States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Were in the U.S. Armed Forces for less than 1 year

OF APPLICANT

**or**

*NOTE: If you were out of the country as part of your*

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

*service, this time out of the country does not break your*

Were in the U.S. Armed Forces for 1 year or more, but you

*continuous residence. It is treated just like time spent in*

were discharged more than 6 months ago

*the United States. See “Naturalization Information for*

*Military Personnel” (Form M-599) for more information.*

**TYPE If you:**

You are not required

Not Required

to be a Permanent

Performed active duty military service during:

Resident.

- World War I (April 6, 1917-November 11, 1918);

*NOTE: If you did not*

- World War II (September 1, 1939-December 31, 1946); *enlist or reenlist in the United States or its*

- Korea (June 25, 1950-July 1, 1955);

*outlying possessions,*

- Vietnam (February 28, 1961-October 15, 1978);

*you must be a*

*Permanent Resident on*

- Persian Gulf (August 2, 1990-April 11, 1991); or

*the day you file your*

- On or after September 11, 2001.

*application.*

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

You must be a

Not Required

Permanent Resident

on the day of your

Were married to a U.S. citizen who died during a period of  
interview.

honorable active duty service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

*NOTE: You must have been married to and living with  
your U.S. citizen spouse at the time of his/her death.*

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

You are not required

The same requirements as any other applicant for

to be a Permanent

• Are a U.S. national (a non-citizen who owes permanent  
Resident.

naturalization, depending on your qualifications.

allegiance to the United States); **and**

*NOTE: Any time you resided in American Samoa or*

• Have become a resident of any State; **and**

*Swains Island counts the same as the time you resided*

• Are otherwise qualified for naturalization.

*within a State of the United States.*



# Where to go for more information.

Page 22

Pages 22-23

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**Attachment**

**Time in USCIS**

# **Good Moral**

**English & Civics**

**to the**

**Physical Presence in the United States**

**District or State**

**Character**

**Knowledge**

# Constitution

**30 months**

3 months

Required

Required

Required

18 months

3 months

Required

Required

Required

Not Required

Not Required

Required

Required

Required

30 months

3 months

Required

Required

Required

***NOTE:** Time in the U.S. Armed Forces counts*

*as time physically present in the United States*

*no matter where you were. See “Naturalization*

*Information for Military Personnel” (Form M-599)*

*for more information.*

Not Required

Not Required

Required

Required

Required

Not Required

Not Required

Required

Required

Required

The same requirements as any other applicant for

3 months or not

Required

Required

Required

naturalization, depending on your qualifications.

required, depending

***NOTE:*** *Any time you resided in American Samoa or on your qualifications.*

*Swains Island counts the same as the time you*

*resided within a State of the United States.*

Pages 23-24

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Pages 26-27



**Time as a**

**Permanent**

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Resident**

# Continuous Residence

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United

States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Served on a vessel operated by the United States

***NOTE:** If you were out of the country while serving on a vessel,*



**or**

*this time out of the country does not break your continuous*

**If you:**

*residence. It is treated just like time spent in the United States.*

Served on a vessel registered in the United States and owned

by U.S. citizens or a U.S. corporation.

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United

States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Are an employee or an individual under contract to the U.S.

**NOTE:** *An absence from the United States for 1 year or more will*

Government.

*break your continuous residence. You may keep your continuous*

*residence if you have had at least 1 year of unbroken continuous*

*residence since becoming a Permanent Resident and you get an*

*approved Form N-470 before you have been out of the United*

*States for 1 year.*

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United

States for trips of 6 months or longer.

Are a person who performs ministerial or priestly functions

for a religious denomination or an interdenominational

**NOTE:** *An absence from the United States for 1 year or more*

organization with a valid presence in the United States.

*will break your continuous residence. You may keep your continuous residence if you have had at least 1 year of unbroken continuous residence since becoming a Permanent Resident and you get an approved Form N-470 at any time before applying for naturalization.*

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

5 years as a Permanent Resident without leaving the United

Are employed by one of the following:

States for trips of 6 months or longer.

- An American institution of research recognized by the

**NOTE:** *An absence from the United States for 1 year or more will Attorney General;*

*break your continuous residence. You may keep your continuous*

- An American-owned firm or corporation engaged in the

*residence if you have had at least 1 year of unbroken continuous*

development of foreign trade and commerce for the United

*residence since becoming a Permanent Resident and you get an*

States; or

*approved Form N-470 before you have been out of the United*

OF APPLICANT • A public international organization of which the United States for 1 year.

States is a member by law or treaty (if the employment

began after you became a Permanent Resident).

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

5 years

Not Required

Have been employed for 5 years or more by a U.S. nonprofit organization that principally promotes the interests of the TYPE United States abroad through the communications media.

**If you are at least 18 years old and:**

You must be

Not Required

Are the spouse of a U.S. citizen who is one of the following:

a Permanent

- A member of the U.S. Armed Forces;

Resident at

- An employee or an individual under contract to the U.S.

the time of

Government;

your USCIS

- An employee of an American institution of research

interview.

recognized by the Attorney General;

- An employee of an American-owned firm or corporation engaged in the development of foreign trade and commerce

for the United States;

- An employee of a public international organization of which the United States is a member by law or treaty; or

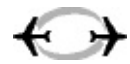
• A person who performs ministerial or priestly functions for a religious denomination or an interdenominational organization with a valid presence in the United States **and** You will be proceeding to join your spouse whose work abroad under orders of the qualifying employer will continue for at least 1 year after the date you will be naturalized. Form N-400 should be filed prior to departing.

**Where to go for more information.**

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**Attachment**

**Time in USCIS**

# **Good Moral**

**English & Civics**

**to the**

**Physical Presence in the United States**

**District or State**

**Character**

**Knowledge**

# Constitution

**30 months**

3 months

Required

Required

Required

***NOTE:** Time served on the vessel counts as time*

*“physically present” in the United States no*

*matter where you were.*

30 months

3 months

Required

Required

Required

***NOTE:** Time spent in this type of employment*

*counts as time physically present in the United*

*States no matter where you are as long as you get*

*an approved Form N-470 before you have been*

*out of the United States for 1 year.*

30 months

3 months

Required

Required

Required

***NOTE:** Time spent in this type of employment*

*counts as time physically present in the United States no matter where you are as long as you get an approved Form N-470 before you apply for naturalization.*

30 months

3 months

Required

Required

Required

Not Required

Not Required

Required

Required

Required

Not Required

Not Required

Required

Required

Required

Pages 23-24

Page 24

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Pages 28-29

A Guide to Naturalization





# Time as a Permanent Resident

unless you can prove otherwise. Read the Permanent Residents are people who “Document Checklist” in the back of this have “permanent resident” status in the *Guide* to find out what information you United States as provided for under U.S. must give to prove you did not break your immigration laws. Permanent Residents continuous residence. are normally given Permanent Resident Cards, also known as “Green Cards.”

## What if I was outside the United States

(NOTE: These cards used to be called **for 1 year or longer?** In almost all cases, Alien Registration Cards.)

if you leave the United States for 1 year or more, you have disrupted your continuous

In most cases, you must be a Permanent residence. This is true even if you have a Resident for a certain number of years Re-entry Permit.

before you may apply for naturalization.

but, it is not enough to be a Permanent

If you leave the country for 1 year or

Resident for the required number of years;

longer, you may be eligible to re-enter as a

you must also be in “continuous residence” Permanent Resident if you have a Re-entry during that time.

Permit. but none of the time you were in

the United States *before you left* the country

# Continuous Residence

counts toward your time in continuous

“Continuous residence” means that you residence.

have not left the United States for a long

period of time. If you leave the United

If you return within 2 years, some of your

States for too long, you may interrupt

time *out of the country* does count. In

your continuous residence.

fact, the last 364 days of your time out of

the country (1 year minus 1 day) counts

## **What if I was outside the United States**

toward meeting your continuous residence

**between 6 and 12 months?** If you leave

requirement.

the United States for more than 6 months,

but less than 1 year, you have broken

or disrupted your continuous residence

You may file Form N-400 ninety (90) calendar days before you complete your permanent residence requirement if your eligibility for naturalization is based upon being a:

- Permanent resident for at least 5 years; or
- Permanent resident for at least 3 years if you are married to a U.S. citizen.

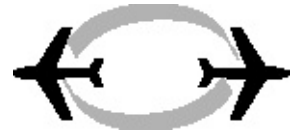
To determine your 90-day early filing date, begin by identifying your 5-year or 3-year date as a permanent resident. For example, if the date on your Permanent Resident Card says “July 4, 2006,” you meet the 5 year permanent resident requirement on

“July 4, 2011.” If you have met all other eligibility requirements, you may file your completed Form N-400 90 days before

“July 4, 2011.” The earliest date you may apply for naturalization would be “April 5, 2011.”

Locate the USCIS Early Filing Calculator on the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov/n-400](http://www.uscis.gov/n-400). The calculator will help you verify that you file your Form N-400 with USCIS no more than 90 days prior to your permanent resident anniversary date. USCIS will deny your Form N-400 if you file your Form N-400 more than 90 days prior to your anniversary date.

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The continuous residence requirement

# Physical Presence

does not apply to certain types of

# in the United States

applicants, such as members of the U.S.

“Physical presence” means that you

Armed Forces serving during designated have actually been in the United periods of conflict.

States. Most applicants must be physically present in the United

Other provisions allow a few other types States for a certain number of months to of applicants to remain abroad more

be eligible for naturalization.

than 1 year without disrupting their

continuous residence status. To maintain **What is the difference between**

their continuous residence while out of

**“physical presence” and “continuous**

the country, these people must file an

**residence”?** Physical presence concerns

“Application to Preserve Residence for

the total number of days you were in the

Naturalization Purposes” (Form N-470).

United States during the period required

See the table at the beginning of this

for your naturalization. Continuous

section for more information on who can residence concerns the time you resided use Form N-470 and when it must be

lawfully in the United States without

filed.

any single absence long enough to

“break” that continuity for naturalization

purposes.

### “Continuous Residence” Example

- An applicant became a Permanent Resident on January 1, 1994.
- She lived in the United States for 3 years, then returned to her native country for 1 year and 3 months.
- She got a Re-entry Permit before leaving the United States so that she could keep her Permanent Resident status.
- The applicant re-entered the United States with Permanent Resident status on April 1, 1998.

**Question:** When is the applicant eligible for naturalization?

**Answer:** On April 2, 2002, 4 years and 1 day after she returned to the United States. The last 364 days the applicant was out of the United States count toward her time as a Permanent Resident in “continuous residence,” but the 3 years in the United States before leaving do not.

A Guide to Naturalization

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When counting the total number of  
days you have been out of the country,



# Effect of Removal Proceedings

include all trips you have taken outside the United States. This includes short trips and visits to Canada and Mexico. If you have been ordered removed, you are no longer eligible for naturalization. Your naturalization application also cannot be approved if a removal proceeding is pending against you. These restrictions apply to all naturalization applicants, except for those who are eligible for naturalization based on partial days spent in the United States service in the Armed Forces. count as whole days spent in the United States. Certain types of applicants may count time abroad as time physically present in the United States. An example of this exception is an applicant who is abroad in the employment of the U.S. Government. See the table at the beginning of this

section for more information.

**Time as a Resident in a**

# USCIS District or State

Most people must live in the USCIS district or State in which they are applying for at least 3 months before applying. A district is a geographical area defined by USCIS and served by one of the USCIS “District Offices.”

Students may apply for naturalization either where they go to school or where their family lives (if they are still financially dependent on their parents).

# **Important Information for Military Personnel**

If you are applying for naturalization based on your own service in the Armed Forces of the United States, you may be eligible to apply under special provisions provided for in the Immigration and Nationality Act. For more information, request “Naturalization Information for Military Personnel” (Form M-599) from the USCIS Forms Line at 1-800-870-3676.

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# Good Moral Character

Please note that if you have committed

To be eligible for naturalization you must

certain serious crimes, USCIS may decide

be a person of good moral character. USCIS to remove you from the United States.

will make a determination on your moral

If you have questions, you may want to

character based upon the laws Congress has seek advice from an immigrant assistance passed. In the following section, we describe organization or an immigration attorney some of the things USCIS may consider.

before applying.

**Criminal Record.** Committing certain

**Lying.** If you do not tell the truth during

crimes may cause you to be ineligible for

your interview, USCIS will deny your

naturalization (USCIS calls these “bars” to

application for lacking good moral character.

naturalization). You cannot establish that

If USCIS grants you naturalization and you

you are a person of good moral character if

are later found to have lied during your

you have been convicted of murder, at any

interview, your citizenship may be taken

time, or of any other aggravated felony, if

away.

you were convicted on or after November

29, 1990.

# Examples of Things that Might

## Demonstrate a Lack of Good Moral Character

Other offenses may be temporary bars to

naturalization. Temporary bars prevent an • Any crime against a person with intent to harm.

applicant from qualifying for citizenship

• Any crime against property or the Government that involves “fraud” or

evil intent.

for a certain period of time after the

•

offense.

Two or more crimes for which the aggregate sentence was 5 years or

more.

• Violating any controlled substance law of the United States, any State,

The “Application for Naturalization” (Form

or any foreign country.

N-400) asks several questions about crimes. • Habitual drunkenness.

You should report all offenses that you have • Illegal gambling.

committed including any that have been

• Prostitution.

expunged (removed from your record) and

• Polygamy (marriage to more than one person at the same time).

any that happened before your 18th

•

birthday. If you do not tell USCIS about

Lying to gain immigration benefits.

these offenses and we find out about them,

- Failing to pay court-ordered child support or alimony payments.

you may be denied naturalization (even

- Confinement in jail, prison, or similar institution for which the total confinement was 180 days or more during the past 5 years (or 3 years if the original offense was not a crime for which your case would have been denied).

- Failing to complete any probation, parole, or suspended sentence before you apply for naturalization.

If you have been arrested or convicted of a

- Terrorist acts.

crime, you must send a certified copy of the • Persecution of anyone because of race, religion, national origin, political arrest report, court disposition, sentencing, opinion, or social group.

and any other relevant documents, including

any countervailing evidence concerning

the circumstances of your arrest and/or

conviction that you would like USCIS to

consider. Note that unless a traffic incident

was alcohol or drug related, you do not need

to submit documentation for traffic fines and

incidents that did not involve an actual arrest

if the only penalty was a fine of less than

\$500 and/or points on your driver's license.

A Guide to Naturalization





# English and Civics

**(c) If you are over 65 years old and**

According to the law, applicants must

**have lived in the United States as**

demonstrate:

# a Permanent Resident for periods

**totaling at least 20 years**, you do

- “An understanding of the English not have to take the English test. You language, including an ability to read, do have to take the civics test in the write, and speak...simple words and language of your choice. Designated test phrases...in ordinary usage in the questions have been selected for you to English language....”

study and are identified within the list of 100 civics test questions, which can be

- “A knowledge and understanding of the found at **www.uscis.gov** under Education fundamentals of the history, and of the and Resources.

principles and form of government, of the United States....”

To qualify for one of these exceptions, your time as a Permanent Resident does not

This means that to be eligible for have to be continuous. You are eligible for naturalization, you must be able to read, the exemption as long as your total time

write, and speak basic English. You must residing in the United States (as a also have a basic knowledge of U.S. Permanent Resident) is at least 15 or 20 history and government (also known as years. You may not count time when you “civics”).

were not a Permanent Resident.

**What if I cannot meet the English or civics requirements?** Certain applicants, because of age and time as a permanent resident; or others because of a disability, have different English and civics requirements.

*You must meet these requirements for age and time as a Permanent Resident at the*

**Age** — There are three important exemptions *time you file your application to qualify for* for English testing based on an applicant’s *an exemption.*

age and time as a Permanent Resident:

*If you qualify for an exemption of English*

**(a) If you are over 50 years old and**

*testing based on age and time as a*

**have lived in the United States as**

*Permanent Resident, an interpreter, who*

## **a Permanent Resident for periods**

*is proficient in English and the language*

**totaling at least 20 years, you do**

*of your choice, must accompany you to the*

not have to take the English test. You

*interview.*

do have to take the civics test in the

language of your choice.

**(b) If you are over 55 years old and**

**have lived in the United States as**

# a Permanent Resident for periods

**totaling at least 15 years**, you do not have to take the English test. You do have to take the civics test in the language of your choice.

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**Disability** — If you have a physical or

**Disability Accommodations** — Under

developmental disability or a mental

section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of

impairment so severe that it prevents

1973, USCIS provides accommodations

you from acquiring or demonstrating the

or modifications for applicants with

required knowledge of English and civics,

physical or mental impairments that

you may be eligible for an exception to

make it difficult for them to complete the

these requirements. To request an exception, naturalization process. In order for USCIS

you must file a “Medical Certification for

to have enough advance notice to respond

Disability Exceptions” (Form N-648). If

to accommodation requests, applicants

you believe you qualify, contact a licensed  
are encouraged to state their needs on the  
medical or osteopathic doctor or licensed  
place provided in the “Application for  
clinical psychologist who will need to  
Naturalization” (Form N-400).

complete and sign your Form N-648.

### **How can I prepare for the English and**

To apply for a disability exception, your  
**civics tests?** Many schools and community  
disability:

organizations help people prepare for their  
naturalization tests.

- Must be at least 1 year old (or be  
expected to last 1 year); and

USCIS has a variety of study materials  
available for the naturalization test at

- Must not have been caused by illegal

**www.uscis.gov**. These materials include  
drug use.

the 100 civics (history and government)  
questions and answers; reading and writing

If you qualify for this exception, an

vocabulary lists; Civics Flash Cards; and  
interpreter, who is proficient in English

the study booklet, *Learn About the United*

and the language of your choice, must

*States: Quick Civics Lessons*. In addition,

accompany you to the interview.

you can find links to other Internet sites that

can help you get more information on U.S.

history and government and help you find

English classes in your area.

*If you qualify for a medical exception from*

*the English and civics requirement, you*

*must still be able to take the Oath of*

*Allegiance to the United States. If you*

*cannot communicate an understanding of*

*the meaning of the oath because of a*

*physical or mental disability, USCIS may*

*excuse you from this requirement.*

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# Attachment to the Constitution

**(1) Renounce Foreign Allegiances.** As

All applicants for naturalization must be

stated in the oath, you must renounce

willing to support and defend the United

all foreign allegiances to become a U.S.

States and our Constitution. You declare

citizen.

your “attachment” to the United States and

our Constitution when you take the Oath of **(2) Support the Constitution.** You must Allegiance. In fact, it is not until you take

also be willing to support and defend the

the Oath of Allegiance that you actually

principles of the Constitution and the laws

become a U.S. citizen. If you are unwilling of the United States.

or unable to take the Oath of Allegiance

in its entirety please see Page 38 for more

**(3) Serve the United States.** When

information.

required by law, you must be willing to

(a) fight in the U.S. Armed Forces, (b)

**What does the Oath require?** When you

perform noncombatant service in the

take the oath, you must promise to do

U.S. Armed Forces, and (c) perform

three things:

civilian service for the United States.

**What else will USCIS consider about  
my promise to serve the United States?**

In addition to your promise to serve the

# The Oath of Allegiance

United States when required, USCIS also considers the following three things when

*I hereby declare, on oath,*

determining if you are truly willing to

*that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all*

serve the United States:

*allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince,*

*potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I*

**(1) Selective Service** — If you are male,

*have heretofore been a subject or citizen;*

you generally need to register with the

Selective Service System before applying

*that I will support and defend the Constitution and*

for naturalization. If you are male and lived

*laws of the United States of America against all*

in the United States (in any status other

*enemies, foreign and domestic;*

than as a lawful nonimmigrant) during ages

*that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;*

18 through 25, you must be registered with

the Selective Service System. If you are

*that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States*

male and entered the United States after

*when required by the law;*

you turned 26 years old, you do not have  
*that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed*  
to register with the Selective Service.

*Forces of the United States when required by the*  
*law;*

*that I will perform work of national importance under*  
*civilian direction when required by the law; and*

*that I take this obligation freely without any*  
*mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help*  
*me God.*

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If you were required to register, you will

***(2) Alien Discharge from the U.S. Armed***

need to provide your Selective Service

***Forces*** — If you ever received an

number to USCIS when you apply. You

exemption or discharge from the U.S.

may get your Selective Service number by

Armed Forces because you are an alien,

calling **1-847-688-6888**. For men born prior you may not be eligible for naturalization.

to 1960, this information can be obtained

by writing the Selective Service, Records

***(3) Desertion from the U.S. Armed***

Division at:

***Forces*** — If you were ever convicted of

desertion from the U.S. Armed Forces, you  
Selective Service System  
are not eligible for naturalization. Desertion  
National Headquarters  
means that you left military service before  
Arlington, VA 22209-2425  
you were discharged.

If you have not registered, you must  
register at a United States Post Office or  
on the Selective Service System's Internet  
site to receive a Selective Service number.  
The Selective Service System Internet site  
can be reached at **www.sss.gov** or through  
the USCIS Internet site at **www.uscis.gov**.  
You must have a Social Security number to  
register on the Internet.

If you were required to register, but did not  
register before you turned 26, you must do  
the following:

- Call **1-847-688-6888** or register  
online at **www.sss.gov** and complete  
the Selective Service System's  
Questionnaire Form. Note that  
registering online may speed up the  
process;

- Receive a “status information” letter from the Selective Service; and
- Send the “status information” letter with your application.

## A Guide to Naturalization

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**This page is intentionally left blank.**



# **What Should I Expect From**

*the Naturalization Process?*

# Preparing to Apply

- Read *A Guide to Naturalization*.
- Complete the Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet.
- Get an “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400).
- Visit our website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

## Completing Your Application and Getting Photographed

- Complete your application.
- Get two passport-style photographs taken.
- Collect the necessary documents.
- Send your application, passport-style photographs, documents, and fee (DO NOT SEND CASH) to the appropriate Lockbox Facility or Service Center.
- Keep a copy of everything you send to USCIS.



# Getting Fingerprinted

- Receive an appointment letter from USCIS.
- Go to the fingerprinting location.
- Get your fingerprints taken.
- Mail additional documents if USCIS requests them.
- Wait for USCIS to schedule your interview.

# Being Interviewed

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- Receive an appointment for your interview.
- Go to your local USCIS office at the specified time.
- Bring state-issued identification, Permanent Resident Card, and any additional documents specific to your case.
- Answer questions about your application and background.
- Take the English and civics tests.
- Receive case status.

# Taking the Oath

- Receive a ceremony date.
- Check in at the ceremony.
- Return your Permanent Resident Card.
- Answer questions about what you have done since your interview.
- Take the Oath of Allegiance.
- Receive your Certificate of Naturalization.

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# Preparing to Apply

## 1. Read *A Guide to*

**2. Complete the**

**3. Get an “Application**

*Naturalization*

# Naturalization

for Naturalization”

# Eligibility Worksheet

(Form N-400)

Reading *A Guide to*

*Naturalization* is the first step in Complete the Eligibility

Once you have completed the

the naturalization process. We

Worksheet in the back of

eligibility worksheet and believe

realize that some naturalization

this *Guide* to decide if you

that you are eligible for

requirements may be difficult to

are eligible to apply for

naturalization, you should obtain

understand. If you read this

naturalization. If you do not meet an application. The application

*Guide* before beginning the

all the requirements, you may

is called the “Application for

naturalization process, many of

save both time and money by

Naturalization” (Form N-400).

your questions will be answered. waiting until you are eligible to

You may obtain Form N-400 by

apply.

calling the USCIS Forms Line

We hope that the information in

**(1-800-870-3676)** or by

this *Guide* will help you prepare If you complete the Eligibility

downloading it from the Internet

your application. If you are well

Worksheet and have questions

at **www.uscis.gov**.

prepared, and send us the

about your eligibility, you should

necessary information and

seek advice by:

documents, we can process your

application more quickly. It is

- Calling Customer Service at

your responsibility to begin

**1-800-375-5283;**

the naturalization process fully

informed and ready to provide

- Reviewing the information on

the necessary information and

the USCIS website at

documents.

**www.uscis.gov;**

- Going to a USCIS



information counter;

- Contacting a community

immigrant assistance

organization; or

- Talking to an immigration

attorney.

USCIS has developed educational materials, such as Civics Flash Cards and *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons*, to help you prepare for the naturalization interview.

You can find these resources and other study materials for the naturalization test at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

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### ***Completing Your Application and Getting Photographed***

# 1. Complete your

you do not send the necessary

# application

documents with your application,  
the processing of your application

Once you have Form N-400,  
may be delayed. In most cases,  
you must fill it out completely.

you should send a copy of a  
USCIS may ask for additional  
document, but you should be  
information if your application is  
prepared to bring the originals  
incomplete. This will delay the  
with you to your interview. We  
processing of your naturalization  
may also ask you to send other  
application.

Finally, your head should be  
documents to us before your  
bare (unless you are required by  
interview, or to bring additional  
You will be required to answer  
your religious beliefs to wear a  
documents with you to your  
questions about your application  
headcovering). In all cases, your

interview.

at your interview. When

facial features must be visible.

completing your application, you

be sure to send an English

should answer all questions

You should print your name and

translation with any document

honestly. be sure to keep a copy

“A-number” lightly in pencil on

that is not already in English.

of your completed application for the back of each photograph. For The translation must include a your records.

more information on photograph

statement from the translator that

requirements, see the single page he or she is competent to translate

## **2. Get two photographs**

titled “USCIS is Making Photos

and that the translation is correct.

# taken

Simpler,” at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

If you do not have a required

You must include two standard,

For more information on photo

document and cannot get a

passport-style, color photographs standards, visit the Department

certified copy of the original,

with your application.

of State’s website at [www.travel](http://www.travel).

submit a certification from the

[state.gov](http://state.gov) or contact Customer

original recording authority

be sure there is enough white

Service at **1-800-375-5283**.

explaining why it cannot be

space in the margin of the

provided. In that case we will

photographs so you will have

### **3. Collect the**

**consider other evidence such as**

room to sign your full name if

# necessary documents

notarized affidavits.

your application is approved. The

photographs must also be:

Applicants who are lawful

permanent residents of the United

- Unmounted and printed

States must submit photocopies

on thin paper, on a white

(front and back) of Form I-551

background with a full frontal (Permanent Resident Card).

*The Document Checklist will*

view of your face; and

Depending on the circumstances, *tell you when you need to send*

some applicants must send

*original documents and when*

- Taken within 30 days of the

certain documents with their

*you may send copies. Remember*

date they are sent to USCIS.

application. For more information *to make and keep copies of all*

on the documents you must

*documents you send to USCIS.*

send with your application, see

the Document Checklist located



at the back of this *Guide*. If

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#### **4. Send your application,**

If you reside in Alabama,

**What if I live overseas? If**

**documents, and fee to the**

Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, you are overseas and filing

# USCIS Lockbox Facility

District of Columbia, Florida,

Form N-400, you should send

Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana,

your application to the USCIS

Send your application directly to Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Lockbox Facility that serves the the USCIS Lockbox that serves

Mississippi, New Hampshire,

USCIS office where you want to

your area. If you try to take or

New Jersey, New Mexico, New

be interviewed.

mail your application to a local

York, North Carolina, Oklahoma,

USCIS office, it will be returned

Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode **What if I am currently serving**

to you.

Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, **in active duty status in the**

Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West

**military?** If you are applying for

The current fee you must send

Virginia, or U.S. Virgin Islands,

naturalization based on qualifying

with your application is on the

send your application to:

military service, and are currently  
one-page insert titled “Current  
serving in an active duty status,  
Naturalization Fees” in the back

# USCIS Lockbox Facility

you may go to your service's

of this *Guide*. Military applicants

**USCIS**

**personnel office for information**

filing for citizenship under

**P.O. Box 660060**

**on how to prepare your**

Sections 328 and 329 of the INA

do not require a fee.

**Dallas, TX 75266**

application. You should speak to

your personnel office even if you

If you reside in Alaska, Arizona,

**Private Courier (non-USPS)**

are stationed overseas. For more

California, Colorado, Hawaii,

**Deliveries:**

information, see “Naturalization

Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa,

# USCIS

## **Information for Military**

Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota,

### **Attention: N-400**

Personnel” (Form M-599).

Missouri, Montana, Nebraska,

**2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business**

Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio,

# Suite 400

Oregon, South Dakota, Utah,

**Lewisville, TX 75067**

Washington, Wisconsin,

Wyoming, Territory of Guam, or

Northern Mariana Islands, send

**Military Members and Spouses:**

your application to:

If you are a veteran or an active

member of the U.S. Armed



# USCIS Lockbox Facility

Forces and are eligible to apply

**USCIS**

**for naturalization under Section**

**P.O. Box 21251**

328 or 329 of the INA, **or are**

**Phoenix, AZ 85036**

**the spouse of a current member**

**of the U.S. Armed Forces, send**

**Private Courier (non-USPS)**

your application to:

**Deliveries:**

**USCIS**

# **USCIS Service Center**

**Attention: N-400**

**Nebraska Service Center**

**1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S.**

**P.O. Box 87426**

# **Suite 100**

**Lincoln, NE 68501-7426**

**Phoenix, AZ 85034**

**Private Courier (non-USPS)**

**Deliveries:**

**Nebraska Service Center**

**850 S Street**

**Lincoln, NE 68508**

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# Getting Fingerprinted

**1. Receive an appointment 3. Get your fingerprints**

**4. Mail additional**

**letter from USCIS**

**taken**

**documents if USCIS**

# requests them

## Once you have filed your

Currently, all sites take application, USCIS will fingerprints electronically.

While the FbI is checking send you a letter telling you

However, manual workstations your background, USCIS will where and when to have your are available for applicants locate your immigration file.

fingerprints taken.

whose prints cannot be taken

Sometimes USCIS may need electronically.

additional documents from you

In most cases, the letter will tell

before we can schedule your

you to go to an Application

In order to do a criminal

interview. If USCIS needs more

Support Center. A van may be

background check, USCIS will

information from you, we will



available in certain areas of

send your fingerprints to the

send you a letter telling you

Alaska and Hawaii to fingerprint Federal bureau of Investigation what information we need and applicants who are located far

(FbI). In some cases, the FbI

where to send it.

from the nearest fingerprinting

may reject your fingerprints

location. Your notice from

because of the quality of the

## **5. Wait for USCIS to**

USCIS will tell you if a van  
prints.

# **schedule your interview**

serves your area.

If the FbI rejects your

## **2. Go to the**

Once everything is ready,

fingerprints, USCIS will notify

# fingerprinting location

USCIS will schedule you for an interview and schedule a second visit interview. USCIS will send you to the fingerprinting site. You will not be asked to pay again. Take your notice letter from USCIS, your Permanent Resident Card, and another form If the FBI rejects your and place of your interview.

of identification (driver's license, fingerprints twice, you will be asked to provide police card) with you. Your second clearances for each place you form of identification should have lived in the past 5 years. have your photograph on it.

You will need to contact the police departments in the places

*If you are 75 years or older*

you have lived to get these  
*at the time you file your*  
clearances.

*application, you do not have to be fingerprinted. If you are living overseas, USCIS will tell you to have your fingerprints taken at a U.S. consular office.*

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*Being Interviewed*

# 1. Receive an appointment

*Rescheduling an interview may add* • Your character;

# for your interview

*several months to the naturalization*

*process, so try to attend your*

- Your attachment to the

USCIS will send you a notice in the *original interview date*.

Constitution; and

mail telling you when and where

you must appear for your



### **3. Bring identification**

- Your willingness to take an interview. You will not receive a

**and provide additional**

Oath of Allegiance to the United

second notice.

# documents if USCIS

States.

# requests them

## What if I cannot go to my

In addition, the USCIS officer

**interview?** If you must reschedule

You should bring the following

may ask you some other questions

your interview, you should write to

identification to your interview: (a)

to make sure that you meet all

the office where your interview is

your Permanent Resident or Alien

the eligibility requirements. be

scheduled as soon as possible. You

Registration Card, (b) your passport prepared to explain any differences

should explain your situation and

(even if it has expired), (c) State

between your application and the

ask to have your interview

Identification Card, and (d) any Re-

other documents you provided to

rescheduled. When a new date has

entry Permits you have.

USCIS.

been set, USCIS will send you a

new interview notice.

In some cases, USCIS may ask you to bring additional documents to the interview. These documents will be listed on your appointment letter. *Remember that you are under oath.*

If you don't bring the

*Always tell the truth during your*

*To make sure you get your interview necessary documents, your case*

*interview. If you lie during your*

*notice, you must notify USCIS every may be delayed or denied. USCIS*

*interview, you will be denied*

*time your address changes.*

strongly recommends that you

*citizenship. If you are granted*

also bring two additional passport-

*citizenship, but then USCIS*

## **2. Go to your local USCIS**

style photographs with you to the

*finds out that you lied on your*

# **office at the specified time**

interview.

*application or during your*

*interview, your citizenship may be*

## 4. Answer questions

You should go to the office where  
*taken away.*

you are to be interviewed at least

# **about your application**

30 minutes before the time of your



## **and background.**

If you want a representative to interview. Many USCIS offices are crowded, so unless you need to, you At your interview, a USCIS officer will explain the purpose of the interview, ask to see your identification, and place you under oath. He or she will ask you about: you are exempt from the English interview and do not contact requirements, you may bring an USCIS beforehand, we will

you must first send us a “Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative” (Form G-28) with your application. Also, if

If you do not go to your interview and do not contact requirements, you may bring an USCIS beforehand, we will

- Your background;

interpreter to the interview or “administratively close” your case. USCIS may select one for you.

If we administratively close your

- Evidence supporting your case;

If you have any disabilities, you  
case and you do not contact USCIS  
may bring a family member or  
within 1 year to reopen your case,

- Your place and length of  
legal guardian to be present with  
we will deny your application.

residence;

you during the interview at the  
discretion of the USCIS officer.

## **5. Take the English and**

questions. You must answer six (6) to come back for another

## **civics tests**

out of 10 civics questions correctly interview, usually within 60-90  
to achieve a passing score. All 100 days of the first interview. At that

During your interview, a USCIS

civics questions have been publicly time, you will be tested again. If

officer will also test your ability to released by USCIS and are

you fail the test(s) a second time,

read, write, and speak English

available at **www.uscis.gov** under

we will deny your application.

(unless you are exempt from the

Education and Resources.

English requirements). You will

**(2) Provide additional**

also be given a civics test in

## 6. Receive a decision

**documents.** If USCIS needs

English (to test your knowledge

more information from you, we

and understanding of U.S. history

After your interview, we will give

will give you a Form N-14. This

and government) unless you are

you a Form N-652 that gives you

form explains what information

exempt. Even if exempt from the

information about the results of

or documents you must provide

English test, you will need to take

your interview. based on all the

us, and tells you when and how

the civics test in the language of

information you have given us, we you should return the information

your choice or qualify for a waiver. will either grant, continue, or deny to us. If you do not follow the  
your naturalization application

instructions, we may deny your

**English.** Study materials have

after your interview.

application.

been publicly released by USCIS

and are available at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) **Granted**. Sometimes USCIS can **Denied**. USCIS may also deny

under Education and Resources.

tell you if you will be granted

your application for naturalization.

Your English skills will be tested

citizenship at the end of your

If USCIS denies your application

in the following ways:

interview. In some cases, you may for naturalization, you will receive

be able to attend an oath ceremony a written notice telling you why.

**(1) Reading.** To test your ability

the same day as your interview

to read in English, you must

(where available). Otherwise,

**What can I do if USCIS denies**

read one sentence, out of

you will receive a notice telling

**my application?** If you feel that

three sentences, in a manner

you when and where your oath

USCIS was wrong to deny you

suggesting to the USCIS

ceremony will be.

citizenship, you may request a

officer that you understand the

hearing with a USCIS officer. Your

meaning of the sentence.

**Continued.** The USCIS officer

denial letter will explain how to

may also “continue” your case.

request a hearing and will include

**(2) Writing.** To test your ability

This means your case is put on

the form you need. The form for

to write in English, you must

hold. If your case is continued, it

filing an appeal is the “Request

write one sentence, out of three will add time to your naturalization for Hearing on a Decision in sentences, in a manner that

process. The most common reasons Naturalization Proceedings under

would be understandable as

for continuation are (a) failing the

Section 336 of the INA” (Form N-

written to the USCIS officer.

English and civics tests, and (b)

336). You must file the form with

**(3) Speaking.** Your ability to speak failing to give USCIS the correct USCIS, including the correct fee,

English is determined by your

documents.

within 30 days after you receive a

answers to questions normally

denial letter.

asked by USCIS officers during When your case is continued, you

the naturalization eligibility

will be asked to do one of two

If, after an appeal hearing with

interview on Form N-400.

things:

USCIS, you still believe USCIS

was wrong to deny you citizenship,

**Civics.** During your interview,

**(1) Come back for a second**

you may file a petition for a new

the USCIS officer will ask you

**interview.** If you fail one or both

review of your application in U.S.

to orally answer a set of civics

of the tests, we will reschedule you District Court.

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*Taking the Oath*



# 1. Receive a

to your local USCIS office.

questions carefully and mark

# ceremony date

## You should include a letter

your answers before you arrive

explaining why you cannot be at the ceremony.

If USCIS approves your

the ceremony and asking USCIS

application for naturalization,

to reschedule you.

you must attend a ceremony and

take the Oath of Allegiance to

The naturalization ceremony is

the United States. USCIS will

a solemn and meaningful event.

notify you by mail of the time

Please dress in proper attire to

and date of your ceremony.

respect the dignity of this event

*Answer the questions on the*

(please no jeans, shorts, or flip

*back of Form N-445 only for the*

The notice USCIS sends

flops).

*time since your interview.*

you is called the “Notice of

Naturalization Oath Ceremony” **3. Return your Permanent 5. Take the Oath**

(Form N-445). In some cases,

# Resident Card

USCIS may give you the option

Every naturalization candidate

to take the oath on the same day You must return your Permanent is required to recite the Oath of as your interview.

Resident Card to USCIS when

Allegiance to become a U.S.

you check in for your oath

citizen. The words of the Oath

If you arrange to take a “same-

ceremony. You will no longer

of Allegiance can be found on

day” oath, USCIS will ask you

need your Permanent Resident

Page 28. The Oath of Allegiance

to come back to the office later

Card because you will get your

must be recited at a formal

that day. At this time, you will

Certificate of Naturalization at

naturalization ceremony in

take the oath and receive your

the ceremony.

front of a USCIS official. Once

Certificate of Naturalization.

recited, USCIS will issue you a

**4. Answer questions about** Certificate of Naturalization.

**2. Check in at**

**what you have done since**

**the ceremony**

**your interview**

# Waiver or Modification of

**the Oath of Allegiance.** In

When you arrive at the

If more than a day has passed

certain circumstances there can

ceremony, you will be asked

between your interview and

be a modification or waiver of

to check in with USCIS. You

the ceremony, we will ask

the Oath of Allegiance. These

should arrive at least 30 minutes you several questions. These

circumstances are as follows:

before your scheduled ceremony. questions will be on the back of

Remember that there are often

the notice (Form N-445) USCIS • If you are unable or unwilling

many other people being

sends you.

to promise to bear arms or

naturalized with you who must

perform noncombatant service

also be checked in with USCIS.

Some questions on the back

because of religious training

of the N-445 include: “Have

and belief, you may request

If you cannot attend the

you traveled outside the United

to leave out those parts of

ceremony on the day you are

States?” and “Have you claimed

the oath. USCIS may require

scheduled, you should return

exemption from military

you to provide documentation

the USCIS notice (Form N-445) service?” You should read the

from your religious

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organization explaining its

This is important because your

by all employers who use

beliefs and stating that you are Social Security record will be

E-Verify. In order to prevent

a member in good standing.

used to establish eligibility for

name-related mismatches in

benefits and to demonstrate

E-Verify, the name that you

• If you are unable or unwilling authorization to work. The

provide on your “Employment

to take the oath with the  
nearest SSA office can be found  
Eligibility Verification” (Form  
words “on oath” and “so help  
by calling 1-800-772-1213 or at  
I-9) must match the name that  
me God” included, you must

**[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).**

is in SSA’s records. Therefore,  
notify USCIS that you wish  
we encourage you to update  
to take a modified Oath of



# To Update your Citizenship

your records with SSA as soon

Allegiance. Applicants are

**with SSA.** In order to update

as possible.

not required to provide any

your citizenship status in your

evidence or testimony to

SSA record, you will need

**Apply for a U.S. Passport.** We

support a request for this type to present your Certificate of

strongly recommend that you

of modification. See 8 CFR

Naturalization or your U.S.

apply for a U.S. passport soon

337.1(b).

passport to the SSA.

after your oath. You will not be

able to travel abroad until you

• USCIS can waive the Oath of

**To Change your Name in SSA's** have your U.S. passport. Please

Allegiance when it is shown

**Records.** If at the oath ceremony allow sufficient time between

that the person's physical or

you also changed your name

your ceremony and any planned

developmental disability, or

from that shown in your SSA

travel to receive your passport.

mental impairments, makes

record, and your Certificate of

them unable to understand,

Naturalization does not show

• In addition to your Certificate

or to communicate an

your old and new names, you

of Naturalization, a passport

understanding of, the meaning will also need to present:

serves as evidence of

of the oath. See 8 USC 337.

citizenship. If you lose your

• A State driver's license or

Certificate of Naturalization,

**Hereditary Titles.** If you have

other acceptable form of

you may request a replacement

any hereditary titles or positions

identification in your old name

by filing an "Application for

of nobility, you must renounce at

as shown in your SSA record.

Replacement Naturalization/

the oath ceremony.

This identity document in your

Citizenship Document” (Form

former name can be unexpired

N-565).

## **6. Receive your Certificate**

or expired. It must contain

# of Naturalization

your photo and/or biographical • You can get an application information about you.

for a passport at your

Once you have taken the oath,

oath ceremony in the U.S.

you will receive your Certificate • If you changed your name

Citizenship Welcome Packet

of Naturalization. You may use

more than two years ago,

or at most United States Post

this document as proof that you

you will also need to present

Offices. On the web, visit

are a U.S. citizen.

a recently issued identity

<http://travel.state.gov>.

document showing your new

We strongly recommend that

legal name as shown on your

you go to your nearest Social

Certificate of Naturalization or

Security Administration (SSA)

U.S. passport.

office to update your Social

Security record soon after your

• **E-Verify Program.** SSA's

naturalization ceremony.

records will be used to verify

your employment eligibility

A Guide to Naturalization

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**This page is intentionally left blank.**

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# What Kind of Customer Service

## *Can I Expect?*

### **You should expect USCIS staff to be:**

- Professional.
- Courteous.
- Knowledgeable.

### **You should expect the naturalization process to be:**

- Fair.
- Consistent.
- Timely.

### **You should expect information on the naturalization process and on the status of your application to be:**

- Accurate.
- Readily available.

### **USCIS also expects certain things from you. You should:**

- Treat USCIS employees with courtesy.
- Read *A Guide to Naturalization*.
- Read and follow the instructions on your application.
- be prepared at each step of the process.

# Making a Customer Service Complaint

USCIS realizes that in some offices it takes a long time to process applications. We are currently working to reduce processing times. If you have a question about processing, please visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) or call Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283 (TTY: 1-800-767-1833)**.

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If you have a complaint about the way that a USCIS employee treated you, you should speak with that employee's direct supervisor if possible. If your complaint is not handled to your satisfaction, or if you could not speak with the supervisor, you may write a letter to the director of your USCIS District Office. Filing a complaint will not affect your eligibility for naturalization.

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## *Where Do I Go for Help?*

There are many resources

**Adult Education Classes.** In

**Immigration Attorneys.** If

available to naturalization

many communities, there are

you have questions about your

applicants. Some of these are:

adult education classes to help

eligibility for naturalization,

you learn English. Some classes you may want to talk to an

**Customer Service.** If you need can teach you English and U.S. immigration attorney. Attorneys more information about the



civics and history at the same  
are usually listed in the phone  
naturalization process and you  
time. To find these classes, you  
book under “Lawyers” or  
live in the continental United  
can call your local community  
“Attorneys.” In many cases, the  
States, you may call Customer  
college or public school district phone book also has a directory  
Service at no charge **(1-800-**  
office. Look in the blue pages  
of attorneys by the type of law  
**375-5283)** for help. Not all  
of your phone book under  
they practice. You may be able  
services may be available to  
“Schools - Public.” Some CbOs to find attorneys who assist  
callers from all areas.  
and public libraries also offer  
immigrants by looking in the  
English classes.  
directory under “Immigration  
**Community-Based**  
and Naturalization.”

**Organizations (CBOs).** In

most communities, there

# USCIS Information Counters.

**are organizations that assist**

If you have questions that have  
immigrants who want to become  
not been answered either by this  
citizens. These organizations

*You should be certain that the  
Guide* or by the other resources

often offer classes to prepare  
*organization or attorney you*

listed here, you may always go  
immigrants for the English and

*contact is reliable and has a*

to the information counter at

civics requirements. They may  
*good reputation. One way to*

your local USCIS office. There  
also help immigrants complete

*be sure of the quality of a CBO*

you may speak directly to a

their applications. CbOs may

*is to ask them for references*

USCIS representative. To make

charge a fee or they may offer

*or if the Board of Immigration*

an appointment at your local

their services free of charge.

*Appeals (BIA) accredits them.*

USCIS office, visit our website

at **www.uscis.gov** and click on

You may locate a CbO by

**USCIS Internet Site.** You can

InfoPass.

contacting your local USCIS

learn more about immigration

office. You may also look in the and naturalization, download

phone book under “Immigration relevant forms, including

and Naturalization” or

Form N-400, and *A Guide*

“Immigration and Naturalization to *Naturalization*, and get

Consultants” or talk to other

other information, including

immigrants who have been

educational materials to help

naturalized.

you prepare for the English and

civics tests, from the USCIS

website at **www.uscis.gov**.

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A Guide to Naturalization

**This page is intentionally left blank.**

# Glossary of Terms

*A Guide to Naturalization* – The

**Community-Based Organization Districts** – The geographic

booklet you are reading .

**(CBO)** – Organizations that assist

divisions of the United States used

immigrants who are new to the

by USCIS.

**Aggravated Felony** – Usually

United States or who are going

refers to particularly serious

through the naturalization process.

**G-28, “Notice of Entry of**

crimes. If you have committed

Many CbOs will help you

# Appearance as Attorney or

an aggravated felony, you may

complete your application and

**Representative”** – The form you

be permanently ineligible for

guide you through the

must file with your Form N-400 if

naturalization. The Immigration

naturalization process. CbOs may

you wish to bring a representative

and Nationality Act and the laws

charge a fee or offer their services

with you to your USCIS interview.

in each State determine what is

free of charge.

considered an aggravated felony.

**Good Moral Character** – Good

**Constitution** – The supreme law

moral character is an important

# Application Support Center

of the United States. It may be  
eligibility requirement for  
**(ASC)** – USCIS offices where  
changed only through amendment  
naturalization. When determining  
applicants usually have their  
by Congress and ratification by  
if an applicant has good moral  
fingerprints taken. Once you have  
three-fourths of the States.

character, USCIS considers such  
filed your application with USCIS,  
things as honesty and criminal  
you will receive a notice telling

**Continued** – One of three things  
records.

you which ASC serves your area.

that may happen to your case after

your interview (granted, denied, or **Granted** – One of three things that **AR-11, “Alien’s Change of**  
continued). If your case is

may happen to your case after your

**Address Card**” – This is the form continued, it is put on hold until interview (granted, denied, or  
you use to tell USCIS when you  
further action is taken by you or



continued). If USCIS determines

have moved to a new address. The USCIS. If your case is continued,

that you are eligible, your

AR-11 is pre-printed with USCIS'

USCIS may ask you to provide

application will be approved or

address. It is very important to tell more documents or to come to an

“granted.” After you take the Oath

USCIS when your address changes. additional interview.

of Allegiance, you will be a United

This way, you will receive any

States citizen.

information USCIS sends you,

**Continuous Residence – An**

including interview notices and

important requirement for

requests for additional documents.

naturalization. Continuous

residence may be broken if you

**Certificate of Naturalization –**

take a single trip out of the country

A certificate given at the oath

that lasts for 6 months or more.

ceremony. It serves as evidence of

your citizenship. USCIS also

**Denied** – One of three things that recommends getting a United States passport as evidence that you are a U.S. citizen.

interview (granted, denied, or continued). If your application is denied, USCIS has determined that you have not met the eligibility requirements for naturalization.

8

A Guide to Naturalization

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**N-400, “Application for**

**N-600K, “Application for**

**Oath of Allegiance to the United**

**Naturalization”** – The N-400 is

# Citizenship and Issuance of

**States** – The oath you take to

the form that all people 18 years

# Certificate under Section

become a U.S. citizen. When you

of age or older use to apply for

**322**” – Qualified children born to take the Oath of Allegiance to the naturalization.

U.S. citizen parents, and currently United States, you are promising

residing outside the United States, to give up your allegiance to other

**N-445, “Notice of Naturalization** may obtain naturalization and a

countries and to support and

**Oath Ceremony”** – If you are

Certificate of Citizenship by filing defend the United States and its

approved for naturalization, you

Form N-600K.

Constitution and laws. Ability

will receive an N-445 telling you

to take and understand the

when and where to attend your

**N-648, “Medical Certification**

Oath of Allegiance is a normal

oath ceremony. On the back of the **for Disability Exceptions”** –

requirement for becoming a

form will be several questions that The form used to apply for a

naturalized U.S. citizen.

you must answer before you check disability exemption. If you have

in at the ceremony.

a qualifying medical disability that **Outlying Possessions** – The

prevents you from fulfilling the

current outlying possessions of the

**N-470, “Application to Preserve English and civics requirement,**

United States are American Samoa

# **Residence for Naturalization**

you must have a licensed medical and Swains Island.

**Purposes”** – The N-470 is a form or osteopathic doctor, or licensed

that certain types of applicants

clinical psychologist complete

**Permanent Resident** – A

who plan to remain longer than

and sign an N-648. Applicants are Permanent Resident is a person

a year outside the United States

encouraged, but not required, to

who has been granted permanent

may file to preserve “continuous

submit the N-648 at the time of

resident status in the United States

residence” status.

filing the N-400 to ensure timely

and has (or is waiting for) a

adjudication of both applications.

Permanent Resident Card.

**N-565, “Application for**

**Replacement Naturalization/**

**Naturalization** – Naturalization is **Permanent Resident Card** –

**Citizenship Document”** – If

the process by which immigrants

The Permanent Resident Card is a

you lose your Certificate of

apply to become U.S. citizens.

USCIS document that identifies a

Naturalization, or your Certificate

person as a Permanent Resident.

of Citizenship, you may file an

# Naturalization Eligibility

## The Permanent Resident Card

N-565 to get a replacement.

**Worksheet** – This is a worksheet

may be identified as Form I-551.

USCIS advises naturalized citizens in the back of this *Guide* that you The Permanent Resident Card to also obtain a United States

may use as a tool to determine

used to be known as the Alien

passport as evidence of their U.S. whether you are eligible for

Registration Card and/or “Green

citizenship.

naturalization. Do not send this

Card.”

worksheet to USCIS at any time;

**N-600, “Application for**

it is for your use only.

**Physical Presence** – Physical

**Certificate of Citizenship”** –

presence in the United States is an

Qualified U.S. residents born

**Oath Ceremony** – To become a

important eligibility requirement.

outside the United States to U.S.

naturalized citizen of the United



Most naturalization applicants  
citizen parents, or parents who  
States, you must attend an oath  
must spend a specified amount of  
became citizens, may file a Form  
ceremony where you take the Oath time in the United States in order  
N-600 to get a Certificate of  
of Allegiance to the United States. to meet the physical presence  
Citizenship.

requirement for naturalization.

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Except in a few cases, time spent

Information Officers (IIOs). IIOs

outside of the United States, even are available to answer questions

brief trips to Canada and Mexico, you have about naturalization.

does not count toward your

Remember to use InfoPass to

“physical presence.”

make an appointment to talk to an

IIO. Visit our website at

**Port-of-Entry** – The Port-of-

**www.uscis.gov** for instructions on

Entry is the place where you

how to use InfoPass.

legally entered the country as a

Permanent Resident.

**USCIS Lockbox Facility** – There

are four Lockbox Facilities in

**Selective Service** – The Selective the United States that handle the

Service System is the Federal

receipting of applications for

agency responsible for providing

immigration services and benefits.

manpower to the U.S. Armed

Forces in an emergency. Male

**U.S. National (but not U.S.**

applicants generally are required

**Citizen)** – A person who, because

to have registered with the

of his or her birth in American

Selective Service before applying Samoa or on Swains Island,

for naturalization. See pages

owes permanent allegiance to

28-29 for information on who

the United States, and who may

is required to register, how to

naturalize based on residence

register, and what to do if you

in an outlying possession of the

were required to register but did

United States.

not, or call the Selective Service

System at **1-847-688-6888** for

**United States Passport** – A U.S.

more information.

passport is an official document

that identifies you as a U.S.

**Service Center** – USCIS Service citizen. All naturalized citizens

Centers handle and adjudicate

are encouraged to get a passport

most applications for immigration as soon as possible after they are

services and benefits. There are

naturalized.

four USCIS Service Centers in the

United States.

**USCIS Forms Line** – The

USCIS Forms Line distributes

all forms for immigration and

naturalization. You can call the

Forms Line at **1-800-870-3676**

to have any USCIS forms sent to

you, including the “Application

for Naturalization” (Form N-400).

**USCIS Information Counter** –

USCIS offices have information

counters staffed by USCIS

employees called Immigration

A Guide to Naturalization

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# Department of Homeland Security

**M-477**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

# Document Checklist

**All applicants must send the following 3 items with their N-400 application:** 1. A photocopy of both sides of your Permanent Resident Card (formerly known as the Alien Registration Card or “Green Card”).

If you have lost the card, submit a photocopy of the receipt of your Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card; **and**

**2.**

2 identical color photographs, with your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) written lightly in pencil on the back of each photo. For details about the photo requirements, see **Part 5** of Form M-476, A Guide to Naturalization, and the Form N-400, Application for Naturalization instructions. If your religion requires you to wear a head covering, your facial features must still be exposed in the photo for purposes of identification; **and**

**3.** A check or money order for the application fee and the biometrics services fee for fingerprinting, as stated in the M-479, Current Naturalization Fees, enclosure in the *Guide*. (Applicants 75 years of age or older are exempted from fingerprinting and the biometrics services fee). Write your A-Number on the back of the check or money order.

**Send copies of the following documents, unless we ask for an original.**

**If an attorney or accredited representative is acting on your behalf, send:** A completed original Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative.

**If your current legal name is different from the name on your Permanent Resident Card, send:** The document(s) that legally changed your name (marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court document).

**If you are applying for naturalization on the basis of marriage to a U.S. citizen, send the following 4 items:** **1.** Evidence that your spouse has been a U.S. citizen for the last 3 years: **a.** Birth certificate (if your spouse never lost citizenship since birth); **or b.** Certificate of Naturalization; **or**

**c.** Certificate of Citizenship; **or**

**d.** The inside of the front cover and signature page of your spouse's current U.S. passport; **or e.** Form FS-240, Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States of America; **and 2.** Your current marriage certificate; **and**

**3.** Proof of termination of all prior marriages of your spouse (divorce decree(s), annulment(s), or death certificate(s)); **and 4.** Documents referring to you and your spouse:

**a.** Tax returns, bank accounts, leases, mortgages, or birth certificates of children; **or b.** Internal Revenue Service (IRS)-certified copies of the income tax forms that you both filed for the past 3 years; **or c.** An IRS tax return transcript for the last 3 years.

**If you were married before, send:**

Proof that **all** earlier marriages ended (divorce decree(s), annulment(s), or death certificates(s)).

**If you are currently in the U.S. military service and are seeking citizenship based on that service, send:** A completed original Form N-426, Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service.

**If you have taken any trip outside the United States that lasted 6 months or more since becoming a Lawful Permanent Resident, send evidence that you (and your family) continued to live, work**

**and/or keep ties to the United States, such as:** An IRS tax return “transcript” or an IRS-certified tax return listing tax information for the last 5 years (or for the last 3 years if you are applying on the basis of marriage to a U.S. citizen).

Rent or mortgage payments and pay stubs.

Form M-477 (Rev. 02/10/2011 N)

**If you have a dependent spouse or child(ren) who do not live with you, send:** Any court or government order to provide financial support; **and**

Evidence of your financial support (including evidence that you have complied with any court or government order), such as: **a.** Cancelled checks;

**b.** Money and receipts;

**c.** A court or agency printout of child support payments;

**d.** Evidence of wage garnishments;

**e.** A letter from the parent or guardian who cares for your child(ren).

**If you have ever been arrested or detained by any law enforcement officer for any reason, and no charges were filed, send:** An original official statement by the arresting agency or applicant court confirming that no charges were filed.

**If you have ever been arrested or detained by any law enforcement officer for any reason, and charges were filed, send:** An original or court-certified copy of the complete arrest record and disposition for each incident (dismissal order, conviction record **or** acquittal order).

**If you have ever been convicted or placed in an alternative sentencing program or rehabilitative program (such as a drug treatment or community service program), send:**

An original or court-certified copy of the sentencing record for each incident; **and** Evidence that you completed your sentence:

**a.** An original or certified copy of your probation or parole record; **or b.** Evidence that you completed an alternative sentencing program or rehabilitative program.

**If you have ever had any arrest or conviction vacated, set aside, sealed, expunged or otherwise removed from your record, send:** An original or court-certified copy of the court order vacating, setting aside, sealing, expunging or otherwise removing the arrest or conviction, **or** an original statement from the court that no record exists of your arrest or conviction.

**NOTE:** If you have been arrested or convicted of a crime, you may send any countervailing evidence or evidence in your favor concerning the circumstances of your arrest and/or conviction that you would like U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to consider.

**If you have ever failed to file an income tax return since you became a Lawful Permanent**



**Resident, send:** All correspondence with the IRS regarding your failure to file.

**If you have any Federal, state or local taxes that are overdue, send:**

A signed agreement from the IRS or state or local tax office showing that you have filed a tax return and arranged to pay the taxes you owe; **and**

Documentation from the IRS or state or local tax office showing the current status of your repayment program.

**NOTE:** You may obtain copies of tax documents and tax information by contacting your local IRS offices, using the Blue Pages of your telephone directory, or through its Web site at **[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)**.

**If you are applying for a disability exception to the testing requirement, send:** An original Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, completed less than 6 months ago by a licensed medical or osteopathic doctor or licensed clinical psychologist.

**If you did not register with the Selective Service and you (1) are male, (2) are 26 years old or older, and (3) lived in the United States in a status other than as a lawful nonimmigrant between the ages of 18 and 26, send:** A "Status Information Letter" from the Selective Service (Call **1-847-688-6888** for more information).

# Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**M-479**

# Current Naturalization Fees

The fee for filing your naturalization application is:\* **\$595.00**

The biometric services fee for having your fingerprints taken is:\*\* **\$ 85.00**

**Total:**

**\$680.00**

You must send the **\$680.00** fee with your application. Pay the fee with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank payable to the **Department of Homeland Security**. Do not use the initials DHS or USDHS. **Do Not Send Cash.**

Residents of Guam should make the fee payable to the “Treasurer, Guam,” and residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands should make the fee payable to the “Commissioner of Finance of the Virgin Islands.”

If required, USCIS may also take your photograph and signature as part of the biometric services.

Remember that your application fee is not refundable even if you withdraw your application or if your case is denied.

\* If you are applying for naturalization based on your own service in the Armed Forces of the United States, no filing fee is required.

\*\* If you are 75 years or older, or if you are filing on the basis of your service in the Armed Forces of the United States, or if you are filing from abroad, **do not** send the biometric services fee for fingerprinting with your application.

Form M-479 (Rev. 11/23/10)N

**Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**Instructions**

# **Department of Homeland Security**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

**M-480**

**Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

# Instructions

## What Is the Purpose of This Worksheet?

The attached “Eligibility Worksheet” will help you decide if you are eligible to apply for naturalization. **Do not send the completed worksheet to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).**

## Who Should Complete This Worksheet?

If you are 18 years of age or older and are thinking about applying for naturalization based on your years as a Permanent Resident, you should complete this worksheet.

## Who Should Not Use This Worksheet?

You **should not** use this worksheet to decide your eligibility to apply if you are: Under 18 years of age and want to apply for naturalization based on your parents’ or adopted parents’

- citizenship (see Questions 25 and 26 on pages 13-15 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for information on how to obtain citizenship).

A Permanent Resident whose spouse was a U.S. citizen who died while on active duty in the U.S.

- Armed Forces (see pages 18 and 19 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for information on your naturalization requirements).

Applying for naturalization based on active duty service in the U.S. Armed Forces (see pages 18 and 19 in *A*

- *Guide to Naturalization* for information on your naturalization requirements).

A spouse of a U.S. citizen who is (a) a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, (b) an employee or contractor of

- the U.S. Government, (c) an employee of an American institution of research, (d) an employee of an American owned firm, (e) an employee of a public international organization, or (f) a clergy member (see pages 20 and 21 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for more information).

## Directions for the Eligibility Worksheet:

1. Answer the questions on the worksheet by checking “True” or “Not True.” If you answer “Not True” to certain questions, you may be asked to answer additional questions on pages 3 and 4. Most applicants will **not** need to answer the questions on pages 3 and 4.

2. If you have completed the worksheet and believe you are eligible for naturalization, please call the USCIS

Forms Line (1-800-870-3676) to request an application (Form N-400), or download the form from the Internet at **www.uscis.gov**.

**3.** If you have completed the worksheet and you still have questions regarding your eligibility, you should read *A Guide to Naturalization*. You may also wish to get advice from an immigrant assistance organization or immigration attorney.

Form M-480 (Rev. 06/15/06)N

## **Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

### **Instructions**

## **Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**True**

# Not True

## You are not eligible to

1. I am at least 18 years old.

STOP

apply for naturalization.

**Exception:** You do not

need to be at least 18

2. I am a Permanent Resident

years old for military natu-

of the United States, and I have been issued a

ralization under section

Permanent Resident Card (formerly

329 of the INA.

called Alien Registration Card).

You are not eligible to

STOP

3. I have been a Permanent Resident for:

apply for naturalization.

five years

three to five

less than

or more\*

years\*

three years

You are not eligible to

STOP

apply for naturalization.

See Attachment A

on Page 3

**True**



# Not True

4. During the last five years, I have **not**

STOP

For exceptions, see

been out of the United States for 30

Attachment B on page 3.

months or more.

5. During the last five years (or the last three

STOP

For exceptions, see

years if I qualify under Attachment A),

Attachment C on page 3.

I have not taken a trip out of the

United States that lasted one year or more.

6. I have resided in the district or state in

STOP

You must wait until you

which I am applying for citizenship for

have lived in the state or

the last three months.

district for three months

to apply.

7. I can read, write and speak basic English.

STOP

For exceptions, see

Attachment D on page 4.

**8.** I know the fundamentals of U.S. history

STOP

For exceptions, see

and the form and principles of the U.S.

Attachment E on page 4.

government.

## **Go to Question 9.**

**\*Naturalization applicants may file their applications 90 days before they have satisfied the “continuous residence” requirement.**

Form M-480 (Rev. 03/31/06)N Page 1

**Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**True**

# Not True

**9.** I am a person of good moral character.

You are not eligible to

STOP

apply for naturalization.

**10.** One of the following is true:

**(a)** I am female, **or**

**(b)** I am a male registered with the Selective

You are not eligible to

STOP

apply for naturalization.

Service, **or**

**(c)** I am a male who did not enter the United States

under any status until after my 26th birthday, **or**

**or**

**(d)** I am a male who was in the United States

**(d)** I am a male who was in the United States

between the ages of 18 and 26 but who did

between the ages of 18 and 26 but who did

not register with the Selective Service, and

not register with the Selective Service, and I

I will send a "Status Information Letter" from

will send a "Status Information Letter" from

the Selective Service explaining why I did not

the Selective Service explaining why I did not

register with my application.

register with my application.

**(e)** I am a male who was in the United States

between the ages of 18 and 26 as a lawful

nonimmigrant.

**11.** I have never deserted from the U.S.

STOP

You are not eligible to

Armed Forces.

apply for naturalization.

**12.** I have never received an exemption or

STOP

You are not eligible to

discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces on

apply for naturalization.

the grounds that I am an alien.

**13.** I am willing to perform either military **or** civilian service for the United States if required

STOP

You are not eligible to apply for naturalization.

by law. (**NOTE:** If your religious teachings and beliefs prohibit you from performing military service, you must be willing to perform non-military service.)

**14.** I will support the Constitution of the

STOP

You are not eligible to United States.

apply for naturalization.

**15.** I understand and am willing to take an oath

STOP

You are not eligible to

of allegiance to the United States.

apply for naturalization.

**STOP HERE: You are probably eligible to apply for naturalization. Please call the Forms Line (1-800-870-3676) for an “Application for Naturalization” (Form N-400) and be sure to read *A Guide to Naturalization*.**

**Attachment A - Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**I have been a Permanent Resident for three to five years**

**True**

# Not True

I am married to, and living with, a U.S.

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

citizen.

for naturalization.

I have been married to that U.S. citizen

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

for at least the past three years.

for naturalization.

My spouse has been a U.S. citizen

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

for at least the past three years.

for naturalization.

During the past three years, I have **not** been

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

out of the country for 18 months or more.

for naturalization.

**If you answered “True” to all four questions, go to Question 5 on page 1.**



# Attachment B

**I have been out of the country for 30 months or more**

I am:

**True**

# Not True

**(a)** A person who has served on board a vessel operated by or registered in the STOP

You are not eligible to apply United States, **or** for naturalization.

**(b)** An employee or an individual under contract to the U.S. Government, **or**

**(c)** A person who performs ministerial or priestly functions for a religious denomination or an interdenominational organization with a valid presence in the United States.

**If you answered “True,” see pages 20 and 21 in *A Guide to Naturalization* to get more information and go to Question 5 on page 1.**

# Attachment C

**I have been out of the country for one year or more**

Since becoming a Permanent Resident,

**True**

# **Not True**

I have not taken a trip out of the United

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

States that lasted for one year or more without an

for naturalization.

approved “Application to Preserve Residence

for Naturalization Purposes” (Form N-470).

**NOTE:** Only certain persons can use Form N-470.

See Pages 18-21 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for

more information.

**If you answered “True,” go to Question 6 on page 1.**

Form M-480 (Rev. 06/15/06)N Page 3

**Attachment A - Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**Attachment D - Naturalization Eligibility Worksheet**

**I have been a Permanent Resident for three to five years**

**True**

# **Not True**

## **I cannot read, write or speak basic English**

I am married to, and living with, a U.S.

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

citizen.

for naturalization.

## **True**

# Not True

I have been married to that U.S. citizen

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

I am over 50 years old and have lived in the

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

for at least the past three years.

for naturalization.

United States for at least 20 years since I be-

for naturalization.

came a Permanent Resident, **or**

My spouse has been a U.S. citizen

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

for at least the past three years.

for naturalization.

I am over 55 years old and have lived in the

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

United States for at least 15 years since I be-

for naturalization.

came a Permanent Resident, **or**

During the past three years, I have **not** been

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

out of the country for 18 months or more.

for naturalization.

I have a disability that prevents me from

fulfilling this requirement and will be filing a

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

for naturalization.

**If you answered “True” to all four questions, go to Question 5 on page 1.**

“Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions”

(Form N-648) completed and signed by a doctor with

# Attachment B

my application.

**NOTE:** Only certain people can use this exemption.

**I have been out of the country for 30 months or more**

See pages 26 and 27 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for  
more information.

I am:

**True**



# Not True

**(a)** A person who has served on board a vessel operated by or registered in the  
STOP

You are not eligible to apply  
United States, **or**  
for naturalization.

**If you answered “True” to one of these questions, go to Question 8 on page 1.**

**(b)** An employee or an individual under contract  
to the U.S. Government, **or**

**(c)** A person who performs ministerial or priestly  
functions for a religious denomination or an

# Attachment E

**interdenominational organization with a valid**

presence in the United States.

**If you answered “True,” see pages 20 and 21 in *A Guide to Naturalization* to get more I have a disability that prevents me from fulfilling the civics requirement information and go to Question 5 on page 1.**

# Attachment C

I have a disability that prevents me from fulfilling the **True**

## **Not True**

civics requirement, and I will be filing “Medical

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

Certification for Disability Exceptions” (Form N-648)

for naturalization.

**I have been out of the country for one year or more**

completed and signed by a doctor with my application.

Since becoming a Permanent Resident,

**True**

# Not True

I have not taken a trip out of the United

STOP

You are not eligible to apply

**NOTE:** Only certain people can use this exemption.

States that lasted for one year or more without an  
for naturalization.

See pages 26 and 27 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for  
approved “Application to Preserve Residence  
more information.

for Naturalization Purposes” (Form N-470).

**NOTE:** Only certain persons can use Form N-470.

See Pages 18-21 in *A Guide to Naturalization* for

**If you answered “True” to the question, go to Question 9 on page 2.**

more information.

**If you answered “True,” go to Question 6 on page 1.**

Form M-480 (Rev. 06/15/06)N Page 3

Form M-480 (Rev. 06/15/06)N Page 4

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