

Thinking About Applying for Naturalization?

Use This List to Help You Get Ready!

Are you eligible to apply for naturalization?



Before you apply for naturalization, you must meet a few requirements. Depending on your situation, there are different requirements that may apply to you. However, generally, an applicant for naturalization must:

- Be 18 years old or older at the time of filing Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.
- Be a lawful permanent resident (have a “green card”).
- Demonstrate continuous permanent residence in the United States for at least 5 years. (In some cases, this may be 3 years if you are married to a U.S. citizen.)
- Show that you have been physically present in the United States for 30 months. (In some cases, this may be 18 months if you are married to a U.S. citizen.)
- Show that you have lived for at least 3 months in the state or USCIS district where you claim residence.

Before applying for naturalization please keep in mind that if you have a parent that was a U.S. citizen, either by birth or naturalization, before you turned 18 years old, you may have a claim to citizenship. The form to file a claim to U.S. citizenship is Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship.

These are general guidelines that do not apply to every applicant. For more information on these requirements, please visit www.uscis.gov/citizenship. Information on each of these requirements is also available in *A Guide to Naturalization*, available at www.uscis.gov/natzguide.

Can you speak, read, and write basic English and do you have an understanding of U.S. history and government (civics)?



During your interview, a USCIS Officer will test your ability to read, write, and speak English and your knowledge of civics. Many times the reason applicants fail the naturalization test is that they cannot answer the interview questions in English. To find

English and/or citizenship classes where you live, visit www.literacydirectory.org or contact your local community college or adult education program. You should be prepared for the English portion of your naturalization test when you submit your application. At your naturalization interview, you will also be tested on your knowledge of U.S. history and government (civics). Information on the test and study materials are available at www.uscis.gov/citizenshiptest.

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Do you support the principles and ideals of the U.S. Constitution and are you willing to swear an oath to the United States?



You must be willing to support and defend the United States and its Constitution. You declare your “attachment” or loyalty to the United States and the Constitution when you take the Oath of Allegiance at your naturalization ceremony. You become a U.S. citizen after you take the Oath of Allegiance.

Have you ever been married, divorced, widowed, or had your name legally changed?



If yes, bring a copy of your marriage certificate, your divorce or annulment decree, or the death certificate of your former spouse. If you changed your name through a court, bring a copy of the court decree that legally changed your name. Also, if your current spouse was married before, bring evidence of the termination of your spouse’s prior marriage(s). Failing to show proof of your current marital status or legal name may delay your case.

Have you EVER been arrested, detained, or cited by the police or any other law enforcement officer?



If yes, bring documents that show the court disposition of the case to your interview. These documents show the final outcome of the case and are required for **all** arrests and detentions, including expunged records and plea bargains. If you were put on probation, bring evidence that you completed your probation. Failing to provide original or certified copies of court disposition documents could delay your case. Please note that uncertified photocopies are not acceptable.

Have you traveled outside the United States since becoming a permanent resident?



If yes, you need to show all foreign travel from the date you became a permanent resident. Even if you have not traveled outside the United States since becoming a permanent resident, you should bring **all** of your valid and expired passports and any travel documents issued by USCIS to your naturalization interview. If you do not bring your passport(s) and other documents to your interview, your case could be delayed.

Are you a man between the ages of 18 and 26?



If you are a man between the ages of 18 and 26, you must register for the Selective Service and provide proof of your registration to USCIS. If you are 26 or older but under the age of 31, you must provide proof that you registered with the Selective Service when you were required to do so. If you were required to register and did not, you must bring to your interview both a written statement explaining why you did not register and a letter from the Selective Service System indicating your status. For more information about Selective Service registration or how to get proof that you registered, visit www.sss.gov or call 1-888-655-1825.

Have you reported your income on your income tax forms?



Your tax returns are very important proof that you are eligible for naturalization. On the day of your interview, bring certified tax returns for the last 5 years (3 years if you are married to a U.S. citizen). Certified tax transcripts may be ordered by using Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 4506-T available at www.irs.gov or calling 1-800-829-1040.

Did you submit photos with your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization?



If not, bring 2 identical passport style photos to your naturalization interview. Before your interview, write your alien number (located on your “green card”) lightly in pencil on the back of each photo, and put the photos in a secure envelope.

Did you submit photocopies of your Permanent Resident Card with your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization?



If you are a lawful permanent resident, you must submit photocopies (front and back) of your Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card. You will also need to bring your Permanent Resident Card and a state-issued identification such as a driver’s license to your interview with USCIS. If you have lost your Permanent Resident Card, attach a copy of any other entry document or a photocopy of a receipt showing that you have filed the Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card.

Are you eligible for a disability waiver or age-based exemption?



You may not need to take the English and civics portions of the naturalization test if you have a medical disability that prevents you from demonstrating knowledge of English or civics. To apply for this exemption, your doctor must complete Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions. The best time to submit this form is with your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization. You are allowed to bring Form N-648 to your interview, but this may delay your case. For information on how to fill out Form N-648, your doctor should visit www.uscis.gov/forms.

Some people who apply for naturalization may not have to meet the English requirement because of their age and the length of time they have lived in the United States as a permanent resident. Find out if you qualify for an age exemption from the English language requirement at www.uscis.gov/citizenship.

Did you sign the application and pay the correct fee?



You should review your Form N-400, Application for Naturalization before mailing it to USCIS. Make sure to sign the application in **pen**, send the correct fee, and fill out the check correctly. You should check that the monetary amounts in each section of the check match. Also, we suggest that you keep a photocopy of your application for your records and mail the application via regular, certified, registered, or overnight mail.

This fact sheet attempts to simplify the naturalization eligibility requirements and list of documents that can be asked for during the naturalization interview. This fact sheet references the most commonly used documents, but is not an all-inclusive list. A USCIS Officer may ask for additional information and documents that are not included in this fact sheet. For additional information on applying for naturalization, please refer to Form N-400, available at www.uscis.gov/n-400, and *A Guide to Naturalization*, available at www.uscis.gov/natzguide. If you have a specific question about your case, you may wish to consult with a licensed attorney or accredited community organization.



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

National Customer Service Center
1-800-375-5283 or 1-800-767-1833 (hearing impaired)

www.uscis.gov