

Thinking About Applying for Naturalization?

Use This List to Help You Get Ready!

Are you eligible to apply for naturalization?



Different requirements may apply to you based on your situation. Generally, an applicant for naturalization must:

- Be 18 years old or older when they file 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.);
- 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.); and
- Have lived for at least 3 months in the state or USCIS district where you claim residence.

If you have a parent that was a U.S. citizen, either by birth or naturalization, before you turned 18 years old, you may already 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, please visit uscis.gov/citizenship.

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



A USCIS officer will test your ability to read, write, and speak English and your knowledge of civics. Applicants often fail the naturalization test because they cannot

answer questions in English. To find English or citizenship classes, contact your local community college or adult education program. You should be prepared for the English portion of your naturalization test when you apply. At your naturalization interview, you will also be tested on your knowledge of U.S. history and government (civics). Information and study materials are available at uscis.gov/citizenship.

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.

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 to your interview. If you changed your name through a court, bring a copy of that court decree. Also, if your current spouse was married before, bring evidence of the termination of their prior marriage(s). Failing to provide this evidence 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. Documents that show the final outcome of the case are required for all arrests and detentions, including expunged records and plea bargains. If you were put on probation, bring evidence that you completed it. Failing to provide this evidence could delay your case. 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 during the last five years. Even if you have not traveled outside the United States as a permanent resident, you should bring all your valid and expired passports and any travel documents issued by USCIS to your naturalization interview. If you do not bring these documents, 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 you did. If you are 26 or older but under 31, you must provide proof that you registered when you were required to do so. If you were required to register and did not, you must bring both a written statement explaining why you did not and a letter from the Selective Service System indicating your status to your interview. For more information about Selective Service or to get proof of registration, visit www.sss.gov or call 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 Form 4506-T available at www.irs.gov or calling 800-829-1040.

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 must bring your Permanent Resident Card and a state-issued identification such as a driver's license to your interview. If you have lost your Permanent Resident Card, attach a copy of another 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. You should submit this with your Form N-400. If you do not, you can submit it at your interview, but this may delay your case. For information on Form N-648, your doctor should visit 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. Check if you qualify at uscis.gov/citizenship.

Did you sign the application and pay the correct fee?



Visit uscis.gov/n-400 to file online. You should review your Form N-400 before submitting it. If you live outside the U.S., you must provide 2 passport-style photos with your N-400. Make sure to sign the application and pay the correct fee. You should keep a copy of your application.

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 all-inclusive. A USCIS officer may ask for other information and documents. For additional information, see Form N-400 at uscis.gov/n-400. If you have a question about your case, you can consult with a licensed attorney or accredited community organization.



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