



January 26, 2022

PA-2022-05

Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Photographs and Signatures for Applications for Certificates of Citizenship

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is updating policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to specify that persons submitting an Application for Certificate of Citizenship ([Form N-600](#)) will generally now have their photographs taken at a biometrics appointment instead of submitting paper photographs and handwritten signatures, as applicable.

Background

Currently, Form N-600 applicants (children of U.S. citizens) are required to submit paper photographs with their application. However, electronic processing and improved technology now allow for digital submission of biometrics, including photographs for applicants of all ages, which enhances USCIS' ability to provide consistent identifying features on Certificates of Citizenship. Instead of requiring paper photographs, USCIS now schedules Form N-600 applicants to appear at an Application Support Center (ASC) to submit photographs and a signature.¹

This guidance, contained in Volume 12 of the Policy Manual, is effective March 28, 2022 and applies prospectively to any Form N-600 filed on or after that date. The guidance contained in the Policy Manual is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance on the topic.

Policy Highlights

- Explains that Form N-600 applicants generally do not need to submit paper photographs, since USCIS can, in most cases, collect the applicant's photograph and signature at an ASC appointment at no additional cost.
- Clarifies that the information collected in connection with a Form N-600 is not submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for background checks.

¹ Paper photographs may still be required for applicants residing outside of the United States. Children under age 5 do not submit a fingerprint. Parents or legal guardians may sign for a child under age 14. See [8 CFR 103.2\(a\)\(2\)](#).

- Explains that USCIS may consider a Form N-600 abandoned where the applicant fails to appear for an ASC appointment, unless USCIS receives a timely change of address or rescheduling request as required by regulation.²

Citation

Volume 12: Citizenship and Naturalization, Part H, Children of U.S. Citizens, Chapter 4, Automatic Acquisition of Citizenship after Birth (INA 320) [[12 USCIS-PM H.4](#)].

² See [8 CFR 103.2\(b\)\(13\)\(ii\)](#). See Volume 1, General Policies and Procedures, Part C, Biometrics Collection and Security Checks, Chapter 2, Biometrics Collection [[1 USCIS-PM C.2\(A\)](#)]. USCIS does not deny an application for abandonment if USCIS has evidence that the applicant is a member of the U.S. armed forces who is permanently or temporarily abroad and unable to provide paper photographs or appear to submit a photograph and signature for reasons related to the applicant's service.