

A Tutorial of the Revised Form N-400, Application for Naturalization

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Hello, and thanks for watching our tutorial of the revised Application for Naturalization, Form N-400.

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Today's presentation will cover the following elements of the Revised Application for Naturalization:

First, we'll provide a background on Form N-400 and explain why the form has been revised.

We'll then talk about the enhancements that have been made to Form N-400.

We'll cover the implementation of the revised Form, and answer a few of the most frequently asked questions.

And we'll conclude the presentation by providing you with a list of appropriate resources.

Let's get started.

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Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as (INA).

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services uses the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400, and the naturalization interview to determine whether an applicant is eligible for U.S. citizenship.

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In 2012, USCIS launched a forms improvement initiative to highlight our ongoing effort to:

- Enhance our forms,
- Provide the most efficient means for collecting and processing required data, and
- Make the forms easier for customers to submit.

USCIS published the revised N-400 in the Federal Register for a 60-day and 30-day public comment period to allow for stakeholder feedback.

This revised N-400 is the most comprehensive revision to the naturalization application in years.

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Although USCIS has issued a revised version of the N-400, it is important to note that:

- The naturalization eligibility requirements have not changed; and
- The filing fee remains the same.

For additional information on the naturalization process, please reference "A Guide to Naturalization, Form M-476" which can be found online at www.uscis.gov/natzguide.

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Let's talk about the enhancements made to the Form. You'll notice that USCIS has improved the N-400 Instructions which now highlight and clearly label:

- General Eligibility Requirements;
- Naturalization Testing Exemptions; and
- Certain sections that are not to be completed until the time of the interview.

The Instructions now include a new section with specific information for members of the Armed Forces, as well as information explaining the requirements for early filing.

The Required Evidence section has been expanded to list all of the documents required to be submitted with Form N-400, as well as documents that must be brought to the interview.

You can find this on the bottom of page nine of the instructions.

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The form also employs a more efficient and well-organized format to help:

- Simplify the application,
- Facilitate data capture using 2D barcode technology, which leads to more accurate data capture, and
- Reduce the N-400 rejection rate at intake.

For example, in the past, applicants have submitted incomplete entries when asked to provide their USCIS Alien Registration Number. The revised format, shown on the right, guides the applicant to enter the exact number of characters required for the data requested which will lead to more accurate data capture in our USCIS systems.

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As seen here in the highlighted portion, Part 1 of the N-400 helps applicants determine whether or not they are eligible to file under a specific section of law, found under Section 319(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

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As seen here on question 12, found under Part two of the form, USCIS has clarified the requirements necessary for an applicant to qualify for an exemption from English language testing. This is based on age and time as a permanent resident prior to filing.

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Part five of the form has been added in order to ask questions about an applicant's parents.

These questions concerning the citizenship of an applicant's parents have been added to help applicants determine whether they may already be U.S. citizens prior to filing the form. We hope this will help to reduce the number of applicants who file in error.

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Additional questions found on the revised form are based on legal requirements involving applicant eligibility related to national security and good moral character.

These questions stem from the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 and the Child Soldier Accountability Act of 2008.

The additional questions are important for USCIS to make a complete and informed determination of an applicant's naturalization eligibility.

USCIS has worked diligently to utilize plain language in drafting these questions and in defining less commonly used terms to simplify the statutory requirement as much as possible.

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Let's walk through these new questions.

Questions 14 and 15, found under Part 11 of the Form and located on page 14, were added in response to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. USCIS has clarified questions involving an applicant's conduct, such as the religious persecution and injuring of others. These questions serve to show good moral character.

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The revised form has also expanded the number of questions related to an applicant's participation and membership in various groups and organizations, as seen here.

Examples of questions in response to the Child Soldier Accountability Act of 2008 are related to the abuse of children and/ or any person under the age of 15, as you can see here in questions 20 and 21.

You must disclose this information even if anyone, including a judge, law enforcement officer, or attorney, told you that it no longer constitutes a record or told you that you do not have to disclose the information.

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The revised form also contains expanded questions on **Good Moral Character** as it relates to an applicant's:

- Arrests;
- Removal proceedings; and
- Misrepresentations.

Highlighted here are a few examples of the expanded questions. These can be found starting on page 15 of Form N-400.

If any of these apply to you, you must answer "Yes" even if your records have been sealed, expunged, or otherwise cleared.

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Preparer, Applicant, and Interpreter statements have been added to the revised form to ensure that all parties, including the applicant, understand the form's information requests. This also ensures that the applicant's responses are provided and communicated as completely as possible.

For example, the Preparer's Statement, found at the bottom of page 18, clarifies the responsibility and role of the Preparer.

In addition, a request for the Preparer's email address has been added. Previously, there was no option to include this contact information.

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As seen here under Part 14, the applicant is asked to indicate that he or she understands the form's information requests as communicated by the Interpreter.

Please note that the statement of applicants who used an interpreter is to be signed only by the applicant who used an interpreter for this form.

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Part 14, the statement of applicants who used an interpreter, now requests the interpreter's contact information as well. This is another addition to the revised Form N-400 and can be found on page 19 of the form.

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As you can see here, question number 53 of Part 11 and also Part 16 of the form, which can be found on page 21, have been included to ensure that all applicants are made fully aware of the renunciation requirement and to record his or her consent prior to becoming a U.S. citizen.

If you answered "yes" to question 53, then you must affirm the information seen here before a USCIS officer. Any foreign title or nobility must be renounced.

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The revised form also contains other Expanded and Clarified Questions. These can be found in Part 11.

For example, as you see here, the dates of an applicant's membership in an organization, association, foundation, club, or similar group, either in the United States or any other location in the world, are now required on the revised N-400.

Also, questions regarding an applicant's service in the Armed Forces and his or her Selective Service Registration have been expanded to capture more in-depth information. These are questions 39 through 42 and question number 46 in part 11 of the revised N-400.

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The revised Form N-400 now contains 2D barcode technology. The 2D barcode technology greatly enhances our ability to quickly and accurately intake the application.

Data entered onto the form electronically, in PDF format, will become readable through a barcode found at the bottom of each page.

USCIS will scan the customized information and upload it directly to our systems resulting in improved data quality, efficiency in processing, and overall integrity of the naturalization program.

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Any damage to the barcode, such as staples and tears, may result in processing delays.

However, if there is no barcode or if the barcode is damaged, USCIS will still be able to process the revised Form N-400 without the benefit of the barcode enhancements.

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To take advantage of the 2D barcode improvements, applicants should access the revised form online at www.uscis.gov/n-400, fill it out electronically, print, sign and then mail it to the USCIS Lockbox along with supporting documentation and the correct fee.

Organizations that file multiple electronically completed applications should note that the 2D barcode on each application is customized to each individual application that is completed electronically.

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We encourage you to complete the revised form electronically.

However, applicants who are unable to fill out the revised N-400 electronically may instead print the form and fill it out by hand in black ink.

The applicant's signature, supporting documentation, and correct fee are still required. USCIS will accept both electronically entered and printed forms *and* handwritten forms, as long as the application is complete.

For more information on the recent 2D barcode forms technology, including the technical specifications for the N-400 2D barcode, please visit www.uscis.gov/forms/uscis-2d-barcode-requirements

The 2D barcode customer service enhancements, as well as the other additions to Form N-400, demonstrate USCIS' continued commitment to strengthen the security and integrity of the immigration system while providing effective customer-oriented immigration services.

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Let's discuss the implementation of the revised form.

The revised version of Form N-400 is now available on the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov/N-400.

Applicants may continue to use previous versions of Form N-400 for 90 days from the date the revised version was released.

Any previous version of Form N-400 submitted after the 90-day period will be rejected and sent back to the applicant.

The filing fee is the same.