



## Fact Sheet

# NATURALIZATION FOR LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS AGE 50 AND OVER

## WHY NATURALIZE AND BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?

Obtaining U.S. citizenship through naturalization offers many benefits and important responsibilities. For example, only U.S. citizens can vote in federal elections and serve on a jury. As a U.S. citizen, you can get priority for sponsoring certain family members to come to the United States. You can also apply for certain federal jobs and become eligible for certain federal benefits, grants, and scholarships. Finally, if your children are under 18 years of age and are lawful permanent residents when you naturalize, they may automatically acquire citizenship. What are the general requirements for naturalization to Become a U.S. Citizen?

## WHAT ARE THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NATURALIZATION TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?

To be eligible for naturalization based on being a lawful permanent resident for at least 5 years, you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age when you submit Form N-400, Application for Naturalization ([www.uscis.gov/n-400](http://www.uscis.gov/n-400));
- Show you have been a lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States for at least 5 years;
- Demonstrate [continuous residence](#) in the United States for at least 5 years immediately before the date you file Form N-400 and up to the time of naturalization;
- Show you have been [physically present](#) in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately before the date you file Form N-400;
- Show you have lived for at least 3 months in a state or USCIS district having jurisdiction over your place of residence;
- Show that you are a person of good moral character;
- Be able to read, write, and speak basic English;
- Have knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, and of the principles and form of government of the United States (also known as civics);
- Demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the U.S. Constitution; and
- Take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States.

## WHAT ARE THE EXEMPTIONS FROM THE ENGLISH TEST?

Certain applicants because of their age and time as a lawful permanent resident may have the naturalization interview in their native language. These applicants do not have to take the English tests for naturalization and may take the civics test in the language of their choice. Additionally, an applicant receives special consideration in the civics test if, at the time of filing the application, the applicant is 65 years of age or older and has been a lawful permanent resident for 20 years or more. These applicants are administered a specially designated test.

The applicant is:	AND has been a U.S. lawful permanent resident for:	Then the English language component (speaking, understanding, reading, writing) is:	The applicant must take a civics test; however, it is administered in a language of their choice.
Age 50 or over	20 years or more	Exempt	Civics test
Age 55 or over	15 years or more	Exempt	Civics test
Age 65 or over	20 years or more	Exempt	Specially designated civics test

You may also be eligible for an exception to the English and civics naturalization requirements if you are unable to comply with these requirements because of a physical or developmental disability or a mental impairment. To request this exception, submit Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions ([www.uscis.gov/n-648](http://www.uscis.gov/n-648)). Only a licensed medical or osteopathic doctor, or licensed clinical psychologist can complete this form.

If you meet the requirements for an exception or exemption, you can complete the interview and test requirement (if applicable) in your native language. You must bring an interpreter with you to your interview. Your interpreter must be fluent in both English and your native language.

## DID YOU KNOW?

If you legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), you were required to meet a basic citizenship skills requirement to become a lawful permanent resident. If you passed the English and civics test when you legalized, you will only be tested on any portion of the test that you did not satisfy under IRCA. You must still demonstrate the ability to speak English at the time of the naturalization interview, unless you meet one of the age and time as lawful permanent resident exemptions from the English language test or qualify for a medical exception, as explained above.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT TO APPLY FOR NATURALIZATION TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?

Apply for U.S. citizenship by submitting Form N-400, Application for Naturalization ([www.uscis.gov/n-400](http://www.uscis.gov/n-400)). You can file this form online. There are exceptions and modifications to the naturalization requirements that are available to those who qualify. USCIS also provides accommodations for individuals with disabilities. For more information on exceptions, modifications and accommodations see our Exceptions and Accommodations webpage ([www.uscis.gov/citizenship/exceptions-and-accommodations](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/exceptions-and-accommodations)).

You can use the USCIS Naturalization Eligibility Tool to quickly determine whether you may be eligible to apply for naturalization ([www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/learn-about-citizenship/naturalization-eligibility](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/learn-about-citizenship/naturalization-eligibility)).

**Fees:** There is a fee for Form N-400. However, if you cannot afford the naturalization fee, then you may be eligible for a fee waiver ([www.uscis.gov/i-912](http://www.uscis.gov/i-912)) or fee reduction ([www.uscis.gov/i-942](http://www.uscis.gov/i-942)).

- If you are eligible for a fee waiver, you pay no fee for the N-400. Fee waivers are available to individuals who can demonstrate that they qualify based on:
  - You, your spouse, or the head of household living with you, are currently receiving a means-tested benefit;
  - Your household income is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines at the time you file. Check the current Federal Poverty Guidelines for this year at Form I-912P, HHS Poverty Guidelines for Fee Waiver Requests ([www.uscis.gov/i-912p](http://www.uscis.gov/i-912p)); or
  - You are currently experiencing financial hardship that prevents you from paying the filing fee, including unexpected medical bills or emergencies.
- If you are eligible for a fee reduction, you pay 50% of the N-400 fee. Fee reductions are available to individuals with a documented annual household income greater than 150% but not more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines at the time you file.

## WHO CAN HELP ME APPLY FOR NATURALIZATION TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN?

Many community organizations and social service providers offer citizenship classes and assistance with the naturalization process. Classes are often held in the evenings and on weekends. In many cases, these programs provide additional support and referral services as well. If you need help with an immigration issue, you can use the services of a licensed immigration attorney or accredited representative of a Department of Justice recognized organization.

- You can learn more by visiting the “Find Help in Your Community” and “Free Naturalization Information Sessions” webpages at [www.uscis.gov/citizenship/apply-for-citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/apply-for-citizenship).
- USCIS also has resources to help you prepare for the English language and civics test. Visit [www.uscis.gov/citizenship/find-study-materials-and-resources](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/find-study-materials-and-resources) to find study materials and more.
- You may wish to consult a legal services provider to help you apply for naturalization. Visit [www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/find-legal-services](http://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/find-legal-services) for more information.