



## Fact Sheet

# NATURALIZATION FOR LOW INCOME APPLICANTS

## 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?

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

- Be at least 18 years of age when you submit Form N-400, Application for Naturalization ([uscis.gov/n-400](https://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. (If you are a student and are financially dependent on your parents, you may apply for naturalization where you go to school or where your family lives.);
- 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 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 ([uscis.gov/n-400](https://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. We also provide accommodations for people with disabilities. For more information on exceptions, modifications, and accommodations, see our Exceptions and Accommodations webpage ([uscis.gov/citizenship/exceptions-and-accommodations](https://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 ([uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/learn-about-citizenship/naturalization-eligibility](https://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 ([uscis.gov/i-912](https://uscis.gov/i-912)) or fee reduction.

- If you are eligible for a fee waiver, you pay no fee for Form N-400. A fee waiver is available if you can show that:
  - You, your spouse, child, or parent (if you are under 21 or disabled) living with you are receiving a means-tested benefit;
  - Your household income is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines when you file. Check the current Federal Poverty Guidelines for this year at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>; or
  - You are experiencing extreme financial hardship, including from unexpected medical bills or emergencies, that prevents you from paying the filing fee.
- If you are eligible for a fee reduction, you pay about 50% of the Form N-400 fee for paper filing. A fee reduction is available if your documented annual household income is not more than 400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines when 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 help with the naturalization process. Classes are often 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 [uscis.gov/citizenship/apply-for-citizenship](https://uscis.gov/citizenship/apply-for-citizenship).
- We also have resources to help you prepare for the English language and civics test. Visit [uscis.gov/citizenship/find-study-materials-and-resources](https://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 [uscis.gov/avoid-scams/find-legal-services](https://uscis.gov/avoid-scams/find-legal-services) for more information.