



Fact Sheet

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FOR DISABILITY EXCEPTIONS, FORM N-648, ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXEMPTIONS, AND ACCOMMODATIONS

WHAT IS A MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FOR DISABILITY EXCEPTIONS, FORM N-648?

- A Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, Form N-648, is used to seek an exemption from the English language requirements, civics, or both due to a physical or developmental disability or mental impairment.
- Form N-648 should be submitted as an attachment to the Application for Naturalization, Form N-400; however, USCIS may accept a Form N-648 submitted after the applicant files the naturalization application.
- Requesting an exception to the English or civics requirements or both is different from requesting an accommodation for the naturalization test or interview. An accommodation simply modifies the manner in which an applicant meets the educational requirements; it does not exempt the applicant from the English or civics requirements. An applicant may request both a medical disability exception and a reasonable accommodation where both are needed. An N-648 is not needed to request an accommodation.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

- USCIS has revised Form N-648 and removed the following questions from the form: dates of diagnosis and when the disability or impairment began; description of severity of each disability or impairment; effects on the applicant's daily life; and an explanation of the doctor-patient relationship.
- USCIS may accept a Form N-648 submitted after the naturalization application is filed.
- Telehealth medical examinations are permitted for Form N-648.
- The form revision also allows the medical professional the option to attest to the need for an oath waiver, thereby eliminating the need for separate medical documentation.

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FORM N-648?

- Form N-648 should be completed by an authorized medical professional, which may be a medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or a clinical psychologist.
- The form should be completed no more than 180 days before the applicant files the naturalization application.

- An applicant may request an oath waiver either through the submission of Form N-648, or a written request and evaluation from an authorized medical professional.
- The certifying medical professional must, at a minimum:
 - › Conduct an examination of the applicant;
 - › Identify and describe each physical or developmental disability or mental impairment that impacts the ability to learn English or civics on Form N-648;
 - › Explain how each physical or developmental disability or mental impairment prevents the applicant from learning or demonstrating knowledge of English, civics or both;
 - › Attest that the physical or developmental disability or mental impairment has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months; and
 - › Attest that the cause of the physical or developmental disability or mental impairment is not related to the illegal use of drugs.
- The certifying medical professional must answer all questions and items fully and accurately. Failure to provide all information requested on the form may result in USCIS determining that the form is insufficient.
- USCIS may accept a Form N-648 certified by an authorized medical professional who completed the applicant’s medical examination through a telehealth examination.
- Interpreters providing interpretation services telephonically or for telehealth medical examinations do not have to complete the interpreter certification on Form N-648. Instead, the medical professional must complete the interpreter certification on the respective part of the form.
- Confirm that all required signatures (applicant, authorized medical professional, and interpreter) and dates are complete before the Form N-648 is submitted. A legal guardian, surrogate, or designated representative may also sign for the applicant who is unable to undergo any part of the naturalization examination because of a physical or developmental disability or mental impairment.
- If the medical professional indicated on the Form N-648 that the applicant is unable to understand or communicate the understanding of the Oath of Allegiance, USCIS follows the process established for legal guardians, surrogates, or designated representatives. See Part J, Oath of Allegiance, Chapter 3, Oath of Allegiance Modifications and Waivers, C. Waiver of the Oath [[12 USCIS-PM J.3\(C\)](#)].

WHO QUALIFIES FOR AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXEMPTION WITHOUT AN N-648?

- Applicants are exempt from the English language requirement, if they are:
 - › Age 50 or over at the time of filing for naturalization and have lived as a permanent resident (Green Card holder) in the United States for 20 years (commonly referred to as the “50/20” exception); **or**
 - › Age 55 or over at the time of filing for naturalization and have lived as a permanent resident in the United States for 15 years (commonly referred to as the “55/15” exception).

- Even if an applicant qualifies for the “50/20” or “55/15” English language exceptions, the applicant must take the civics test.
 - › The applicant will be permitted to take the civics test in the applicant’s preferred language.
 - › If the applicant takes the test in their preferred language (other than English), the applicant must bring an interpreter with them to the interview.
 - › The interpreter must be fluent in both English and the applicant’s preferred language.
- If the applicant is age 65 or older and has been a permanent resident for at least 20 years at the time of filing for naturalization, the applicant is exempt from the English language requirement and will be given special consideration (20 questions to study) regarding the civics requirement.

The applicant is:	<u>AND</u> 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

WHAT IS A DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION?

- An accommodation is a change in a USCIS practice or procedure that allows a qualified individual with a disability to participate in our programs and activities and access our benefits.
- A disability accommodation can be made for any phase of the naturalization process.
- Examples of accommodations include, but are not limited to:
 - › Those unable to use their hands may be permitted to take a test orally rather than in writing;
 - › Those who are deaf or hard of hearing may be provided with a sign language interpreter for a USCIS-sponsored event;
 - › Those unable to speak may be allowed to respond to questions in an agreed-upon nonverbal manner; and
 - › Those unable to travel to a designated USCIS location for an interview due to a disabling condition may be interviewed at their home or a medical facility.
 - › See Policy Manual Volume 12, Part C Accommodations for more information, www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-12-part-c
- To request a disability accommodation, an applicant can:
 - › Go to uscis.gov/accommodations to make a request online; or
 - › Call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 (TTY 1-800-767-1833) for help in English or Spanish.
- If you need a sign language interpreter, make your request as soon as you receive your appointment notice. If we have advance notice of an accommodation request, USCIS can be better prepared, and it is less likely we will need to reschedule your appointment. For information about disability accommodations visit uscis.gov/accommodationsinfo.