



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

OVERVIEW NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND CITIZENSHIP ACQUISITION



FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE
CITIZENSHIP BRANCH

March 25, 2021

HISTORIC LEGISLATIVE ACTS



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

Evolution of Naturalization Requirements Prior to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952

Act	Statutory Provisions
Naturalization Act of 1790	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Established uniform rule of naturalization and oath of allegianceEstablished two year residency requirement for naturalizationRequired good moral character of all applicants
Naturalization Act of 1798	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Permitted deportation of foreign nationals considered dangerousIncreased residency requirements from 2 years to 14 years
Naturalization Act of 1802	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduced residency requirement from 14 years to 5 years
Naturalization Act of 1891	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Rendered polygamists, persons suffering from contagious disease and persons convicted of a "misdemeanor involving moral turpitude" ineligible for naturalization.
Naturalization Act of 1906	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Standardized naturalization proceduresRequired knowledge of English language for citizenshipEstablished the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
The Alien Registration Act of 1940	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Required the registration and fingerprinting of all aliens in the United States over the age of 14 years

NATURALIZATION PROVISIONS UNDER IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- INA 316 – Most common section of INA under which people naturalize
- INA 319(a) and INA 319(b) – Spouse of U.S. citizens
- INA 328 AND INA 329 – U.S. armed forces

MILITARY NATURALIZATION

328 AND 329



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- USCIS has established a practical and informative military naturalization program with DOD
- No fee required and applicant may file on-line or via the Lockbox
- Despite COVID-19 diminished capacity, remains a prioritized population in USCIS field offices
- USCIS has begun limited remote video interviews overseas at DOD facilities with DOD support
- Will administer oath of allegiance abroad in coming months for qualified applicants

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS INA 316



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a lawful permanent resident (LPR)
- Have resided in the U.S. for at least 5 years after being lawfully admitted for permanent residence
- Have been physically present in the U.S. for at least 30 months

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS INA 316



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- Be a person of good moral character
- Be able to speak, write, read and understand the English language
- Have knowledge of U.S. government and history
- Be willing and able to take the oath of allegiance to the U.S.

FORM N-400 PROCESS APPLICATION FOR NATURALIZATION



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- File online via myUSCIS account or file paper application via the lockbox
- Applicant may obtain Form N-400 at www.uscis.gov
- Generally, National Benefits Center (NBC) schedules biometrics appointment at Application Support Center (ASC)
- NBC completes pre-processing and forwards to field office of jurisdiction

FORM N-400 FIELD OFFICE INTERVIEW



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- All naturalization applicants are required to appear for an interview
- An officer places the applicant under oath to tell the truth
 - Administers (English and civics) educational tests (if applicable)
 - Reviews the Form N-400 application
- Officer may approve, deny or continue case at the completion of the interview

FORM N-400 CONTINUATION REASONS



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- All naturalization applicants are issued Form N-652, Notice of Naturalization Interview Results
- Results may include:
 - You will have another opportunity to be tested on the English and/or civics requirements
 - Follow instructions on Form N-14 (Request for Evidence)
 - USCIS will send you a written decision about your application

NATURALIZATION OATH CEREMONY



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- All approved applicants must attend a ceremony to take an oath of allegiance to the U.S.
- Only designated officials and eligible courts may administer the oath
- After the ceremony, the applicant is issued their Certificate of Naturalization
- Applicants seeking legal name change through naturalization must take the oath of allegiance in a judicial ceremony at an eligible court with jurisdiction over their place of residence

CEREMONIES & COVID-19 PANDEMIC



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- USCIS offices were temporarily closed to the public from March 18 until June 3, 2020 in order to limit potential COVID-19 exposure risk to employees and applicants
- Eligible naturalization candidates were and remain a top priority to schedule for oath ceremonies
- USCIS offices established innovative plans to resume in person services following necessary safety protocols

INNOVATIVE CEREMONY FORMATS



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- “Drive-Thru” administrative oath ceremonies at USCIS offices
- “Drive-In” ceremonies in large parking lots at public venues such as colleges, sports arenas or drive-in movie theatres
- Outdoor spaces including national parks and national monuments

EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS U.S.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- “Drive-Thru” ceremonies at Cabrillo National Monument, CA
- “Drive-Thru” ceremony at Principal Park in Des Moines, IA
- “Drive-In” ceremony at community college parking lot in Albany, NY
- Historic Admiral Twin Drive-In Theater in Tulsa, OK
- USCIS office parking structure “Drive-Thru” ceremonies in Detroit, MI

NEW PROCESSES TO INCREASE EFFICIENCIES IN NATURALIZATION



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- Completion of certain interview-related tasks during check-in, to allow interviewing officers to focus on interview and eligibility determinations
- Customized scheduled interview time lengths based on automated complexity assessments, instead of a single standard length of time
- Conduct video-facilitated interviews at field offices to allow for customers and interviewing officers, located in different physical spaces within a USCIS office, to communicate using video technology to improve health/safety during pandemic and explore workload balance opportunities

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP UNDER THE INA



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- Certain internationally adopted children who automatically acquire citizenship under the Child Citizenship Act (CCA) of 2000 will automatically receive a Certificate of Citizenship when they are admitted to the United States as an LPR
- Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, for claims under INA sections 301, 309, 320
- Form N-600K, Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate under Section 322
- File online via myUSCIS or paper forms available at www.uscis.gov (Only N-600 and N-600K applications)

AUTOMATIC ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP FOR CERTAIN ADOPTED CHILDREN (CCA)



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- Adopted children who entered on immigrant visas with full and final adoption abroad (IR-3 and IH-3)
- Since January 2004, the Buffalo Field Office processes these CCA cases for certain adopted children
- Buffalo mails certificates of citizenship to children under 14 years of age
- For older children, the field office administers oath of allegiance and issues certificate of citizenship

ADOPTED CHILDREN: IR-4 AND IH-4



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

An adopted child who is issued an IH-4 (Hague Convention country) or an IR-4 (non-convention country) immigrant visa generally will:

- Not automatically acquire U.S. citizenship upon admission to the U.S.
- USCIS will issue the adopted child a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) card, also referred to as a “green card”
- Additional action must be taken for the child to acquire citizenship
 - Usually requires finalizing the adoption, readoption or recognition of the adoption in the U.S. in the state where the child was residing
 - Once eligible, the parent should file Form N-600 to obtain evidence of U.S. citizenship

CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP FORM N-600 UNDER INA 320 & OTHER



- INA 320 Child Citizenship Act (CCA) effective February 27, 2001 (automatic acquisition of citizenship post-birth)
 - Applies to birth child of U.S. citizen, if not citizen at birth under INA 301 or 309 and adoptive child who meets requirement of INA 101(b)(1)(E),(F) or (G)
- May also file N-600 under INA 301 (automatic acquisition of citizenship at birth), INA 309 (same) or prior laws
- File online via myUSCIS or file paper application via the lockbox

DEFINITION OF CHILD



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- A child for the citizenship and naturalization provision is an unmarried person under 21 years of age who is:
 - The genetic, legitimated, or adopted son or daughter of a U.S. citizen; or
 - The son or daughter for a non-genetic gestational U.S. citizen mother who is recognized by the relevant jurisdiction as of the child's legal parent

CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP FORM N-600



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- File N-600 online via myUSCIS or file paper application via the lockbox
- NBC schedules biometrics appointment with ASC then assigns to field office of jurisdiction
- Field office conducts interview (if needed) and administers oath of allegiance for applicants 14 years of age or older
- Certificate of citizenship may be mailed (under 14) or issued at special citizenship ceremony

CERTIFICATE OF CITIZENSHIP INA 322 FORM N-600K PROCESS



- File N-600K online via myUSCIS or file paper application via the lockbox
- Child of U.S. citizen parent(s) regularly residing abroad
- Naturalization process under INA 322 (citizenship is not automatic)
- Applicant is U.S. citizen parent, grandparent or legal guardian
- Interview and oath of allegiance completed by the field office
- Certificate of citizenship issued at the field office

QUESTIONS AND THANK YOU



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



AUTHOR: Field Office Directorate, Citizenship Branch

- Date of last revision: March 15, 2021
- This presentation is current only as of the date of the last revision
- This presentation contains no sensitive personally identifiable information (PII)
- Any reference in documents or text, with the exception of case law, relate to fictitious individuals

DISCLAIMER



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

This training module is intended solely for information purposes. It is not intended to, does not, and can not be relied upon to create or confer any right(s) or benefit(s), substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any individual or other party in benefit application before, USCIS, in removal proceedings, in litigation with the United States, or in any other form or manner. This training module does not have the force of law, or of a DHS directive.

DISSEMINATION



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

- This presentation may not be reproduced or further disseminated without the express written consent of the USCIS Field Operations Directorate
- Please contact the Field Operation Directorate, Citizenship Branch for additional information