



**EL CIVICS  
CONFERENCE  
2020-21**

# **Naturalization: Becoming a U.S. Citizen**

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# NATURALIZATION: BECOMING A U.S. CITIZEN

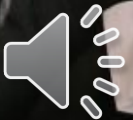




# Objectives

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- Rights and Responsibilities of U.S. Citizenship
- Naturalization Eligibility Requirements
- The Naturalization Process





# Rights and Responsibilities

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- Vote
- U.S. Passport
- Run for elected office
- Work for the U.S. Government
- Serve on a jury
- Upgrade family petitions



# Statutory Period

- In general, the statutory period is the five-year (or three-year) period preceding the date of application and up to the Oath of Allegiance.

**2012**

JANUARY							FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					26	27	28	29			

**2017**

JANUARY							FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					26	27	28				



# General Requirements

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a U.S. lawful permanent resident
- Meet continuous residence and physical presence requirements
- Live in the USCIS district where they apply
- Have good moral character
- Basic understanding of English
- Knowledge of U.S. history and government
- Attachment to the U.S. Constitution



# Time as a permanent resident

Naturalization applicants must be a lawful permanent resident for...

- 3 years, if married to a U.S. citizen\*
- 5 years, for all other lawful permanent residents
- Some exceptions apply for military service members and veterans and some children born abroad to U.S. citizen parents





## 3-3-3 Requirement

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If applying for naturalization based on marriage to U.S. citizen, at time of filing...

- Applicant must have 3 years as a lawful permanent resident;
- Applicant must be married to same U.S. citizen for 3 years; and
- U.S. citizen spouse must be a citizen for 3 years.





# Continuous Residence

Applicants must have continuous residence in the U.S. for a required period of time.



If outside the U.S. on 1 trip...	Continuous residence
Up to 6 months	Has met this requirement
6 months to 1 year	Must provide additional evidence
More than 1 year	Has <b>not</b> met this requirement



# Physical Presence

- “Physical presence” is the time applicant has been physically present in the U.S.
- Physical presence is cumulative, and trips one day or more outside U.S. count against “physical presence.”
- Applicants must spend HALF of statutory period physically in U.S. (Must have 18 or 30 months total)



# Jurisdiction

- Applicants must live in the state or USCIS district where they apply for naturalization for at least three months.





# Good Moral Character

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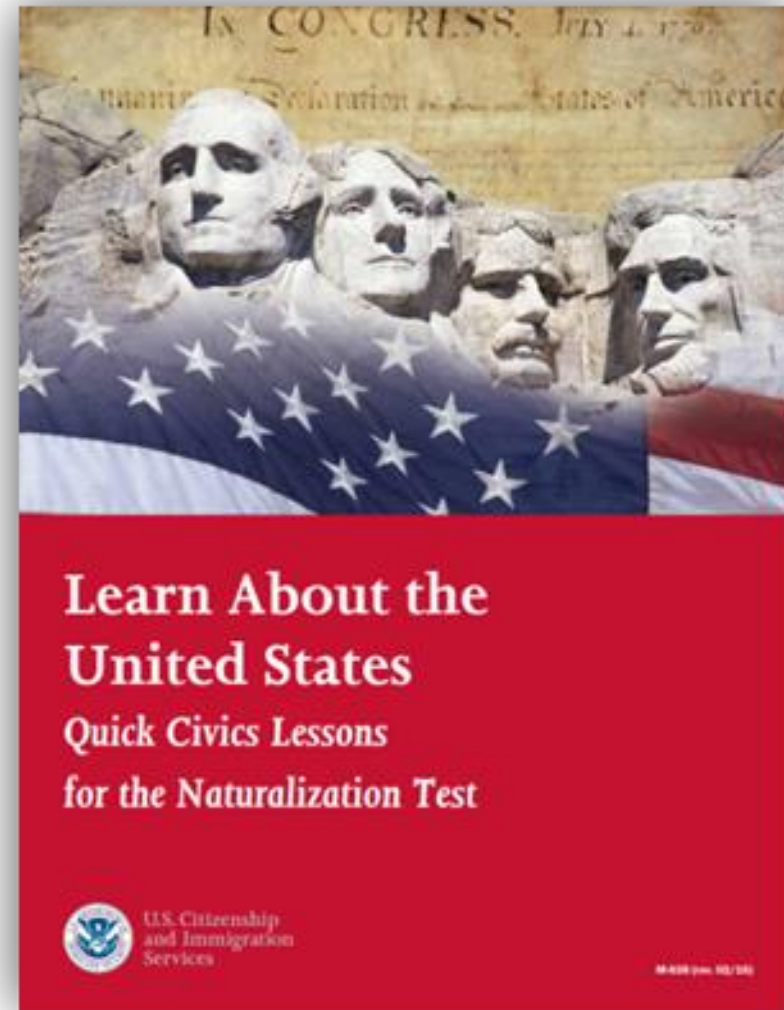
- Applicants must show good moral character during statutory period and up to the Oath of Allegiance.
- Committing certain crimes during statutory period shows a lack of good moral character.
- Committing certain crimes outside the statutory period can be a permanent bar.





# Knowledge of English and Civics

- Applicants must...
- understand, speak, read, and write basic English
- have knowledge of U.S. history and government



# English Exemptions

At the time of filing the N-400...

Is At least:	Time as Permanent Resident:	Does not take:	Civics:
50 years old	20	Reading, Writing, and Speaking English	In their native language
55 years old	15	Reading, Writing, and Speaking English	In their native language
65 years old	20	Reading, Writing, and Speaking English	Simplified test in their native language



# Disability Exception

- Request for Disability Exception (Form N-648)
- Applicants who have a medical condition that impairs their ability to learn or demonstrate their knowledge can request an exception to the English and/or civics tests.
- Their doctor must complete Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions.
- Only medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, or clinical psychologists licensed in the U.S. and its territories can complete this form.



OMB No. 1615-0060; Expires 03/31/2019

**Form N-648, Medical Certification for  
Disability Exceptions**

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**"INTERPRETER'S CERTIFICATION"** must be certified by a  
before certifying this form, the medical professional must  
-648 for additional information which is also located in the

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**Completing and Certifying This Form**

Questions or items must be answered fully and accurately.  
Responses should utilize common terminology, without

# Attachment to the Constitution

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- Applicants must show that they are:
- Attached to the principles of the Constitution, and
- Favorably disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States.







# Filing for Naturalization

## Application for Naturalization (Form N-400)

- Form N-400 and instructions available at [uscis.gov/forms](https://uscis.gov/forms).
- Filing fee and address to send application can be found on website.
- File online with a myUSCIS account (if paying fee).



# The Interview

An Immigration Services Officer will:

- Place the applicant under oath
- Give the reading and writing tests
- Give the civics test
- Assess ability to speak and understand English
- Review the Form N-400 to determine eligibility and make updates



# The Oath Ceremony

- If the Form N-400 is approved, the applicant is scheduled for an oath ceremony.
- After taking the Oath of Allegiance, the applicant becomes a U.S. citizen.
- Certificate of Naturalization is issued as proof of citizenship.



# Citizenship Resource Center

- Educational tools and information to prepare for citizenship:
- Practice tests
- Study materials
- Vocabulary words
- Videos
- Audio learning
- Find an English or civics class
- Materials for teachers too!



## Citizenship Resource Center

The Citizenship Resource Center has a collection of helpful resources and free study materials for a variety of users including:

- **Immigrants who are interested in becoming U.S. citizens.** Lawful permanent residents (LPRs) will find information about the naturalization process, eligibility requirements, and study materials to prepare for the naturalization interview and test.
- **Educators who play a critical role in preparing learners.** Educators including teachers, volunteers, and program administrators will find several resources for the classroom. Educators can also search for free USCIS training seminars designed to enhance the skills needed to teach U.S. history, civics, and the naturalization process to immigrant students.
- **Organizations that are interested in supporting immigrants in becoming citizens and assisting them to assimilate into American civic society.** Whether an organization is just beginning to help immigrants on their journey towards citizenship or is an experienced service provider, they will find resources to help enhance their overall efforts and programs.

The Citizenship Resource Center is managed by the Office of Citizenship. Learn more about the [Office of Citizenship](#) and its mission.

[www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship)



# Self-Help Tools and Resources



- Check your case status
- Change your address
- Check processing times
- Make an InfoPass appointment
- “How Do I” fact sheets
- Download forms
- Online filing (for some forms)
- Explore My Options
- Create an account on myUSCIS
- Ask Emma

Or call the Contact Center: 1-800-375-5283

# THE WRONG HELP CAN HURT

BEWARE OF IMMIGRATION SCAMS



## Avoid Scams

- Visit the USCIS Avoid Scams webpage to learn more about:
- Form filing tips;
- Common immigration scams;
- How to report immigration scams; and
- How to find legal services and help.

[www.uscis.gov/scams-fraud-and-misconduct/avoid-scams](https://www.uscis.gov/scams-fraud-and-misconduct/avoid-scams)



# Helpful Tips and Reminders

- Should have at least 6 months validity on green card
- If you cannot file online, be sure to submit the correct version of the form and mail certified/registered
- Fill out a practice N-400 before submitting the original and keep a copy for yourself to study
- Only submit copies of supporting documentation and bring originals to the interview
- No name changes allowed
- Give yourself extra time to look for parking and clear security
- Bring all passport/re-entry permits to the interview
- If you qualify for an interpreter, have one available on the phone



# Helpful Tips and Reminders

- Traveling after submitting application
- Visit our website or call Contact Center for general information
- Make an appointment before visiting a local USCIS office by calling the Contact Center; field offices only accepting specific types cases for in-person infopass appointments
- Make sure to update all address changes within 10 days of moving on our website
- If you are feeling sick, request a reschedule
- Follow instructions carefully on appointment notices
- Wear a face covering and bring your own black/blue pen
- Do not bring family/friends to interview or the oath ceremony







www.casas.org



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# Thank you for attending!

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# About this presentation

- Date of last revision: November 18, 2020. This presentation is current only as of the date of last revision.
- Date of legal review: November 18, 2020.
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