

Naturalization Information for Military Personnel



ELIGIBILITY AND THE PROCESS



If you are a current or former member of the U.S. armed forces and are interested in becoming a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible to apply for naturalization under special provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Generally, service in the U.S. Armed Forces means service in one of the following branches:

- Army
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard
- Air and Army National Guard
- Navy
- Air Force
- Space Force

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has a streamlined process specifically for U.S. military personnel who file under the military naturalization provisions.

This flyer provides you with some basic information about the laws that govern naturalization for military personnel and the process that you should follow to begin your journey to citizenship.

DO YOU QUALIFY?

There are general requirements and qualifications that you must meet in order to become a U.S. citizen. These requirements include:

- Demonstrating that you have good moral character;
- Demonstrating knowledge of the English language;
- Demonstrating knowledge of U.S. government and history (“civics”);
- Demonstrating attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution;
- Demonstrating a favorable disposition toward the good order and happiness of the United States; and
- Taking the Oath of Allegiance.

Because you are a member of the military, certain naturalization requirements may not apply to you, including the required periods of residence and physical presence in the United States. These exceptions are outlined in sections 328 and 329 of the INA.

If you meet all of the requirements in either section 328 or 329, you may apply for naturalization under either section. You will not have to pay any fees for your naturalization application.

COULD YOU ALREADY BE A CITIZEN?

If either of your parents were citizens by birth or naturalization before you turned 18 years old, you may already be a citizen. For more information, please refer to the Instructions for Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, on www.uscis.gov/n-600.

NATURALIZATION UNDER SECTION 328 OF THE INA

This section applies to members who served at any time in the U.S. Armed Forces. You may qualify if:

- You have served honorably, in active duty or reserve service, for a year or more, and if separated, you have never been separated except under honorable conditions.
- You are a lawful permanent resident.

If you separated from service more than six months before applying, you are also required to meet certain residence and physical presence requirements in the United States.

NATURALIZATION UNDER SECTION 329 OF THE INA (SERVICE DURING HOSTILITIES)

This section applies to current or former service members who served in an active-duty status or in the Selected Reserve of the Ready Reserve during designated periods of conflict. The following dates are designated periods of conflict:

- April 6, 1917-Nov. 11, 1918
- Feb. 28, 1961-Oct. 15, 1978
- Sept. 1, 1939-Dec. 31, 1946
- Aug. 2, 1990-April 11, 1991
- June 25, 1950-July 1, 1955
- Sept. 11, 2001-present

The current period of designation remains in effect until the president issues an executive order ending the designation.

You may qualify for naturalization under INA 329 if:

- You served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces during a designated period of conflict, and if separated, you were separated under honorable conditions.
- After enlistment, you were lawfully admitted as a permanent resident of the United States, OR at the time of enlistment, reenlistment, extension of enlistment, or induction, you were physically present in the United States or a qualifying area.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

IF YOU QUALIFY...

Many military installations have a designated USCIS liaison to help you with the application process and certify your Form N-426, Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service. Ask your chain of command or legal services office for the contact information for this person.

You or your liaison will mail your completed application and all required materials to:

USCIS
P.O. Box 4446
Chicago, IL 60680-4446

You may also complete your application by creating an online account and filing your Form N-400 online. For more information about filing your application online, visit www.uscis.gov/n-400.



FORMS YOU WILL NEED TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT

- N-400, Application for Naturalization
- N-426, Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service. (If you are currently serving, the military must certify this form before you send it to USCIS. If you are separated from the military, you may submit an uncertified Form N-426, but you must also submit your DD Form 214, NGB Form 22, or other official discharge document.)

ONCE YOU FILE

USCIS will review your application and conduct required security checks. These checks require that USCIS obtain your fingerprints, which can be done in one of several ways.

- USCIS will use fingerprints, if they are available, from previous immigration applications.
- You can visit a USCIS Application Support Center. You do not need an appointment, but you must present a current, valid military identification card. This is the fastest way to comply with the fingerprint requirement if you are in the United States. To find a USCIS application support center, visit: www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office.
- If stationed outside the United States, you may submit two properly completed FD-258 fingerprint cards taken by the military police, Department of Homeland Security officials, or U.S. Embassy or Consulate officials.
- If you are overseas or unable to report for fingerprinting, USCIS will request and use your enlistment fingerprints, if they are available.

After reviewing your application, USCIS will send it to a USCIS field office for an interview. You can request an interview at a specific office in a cover letter attached to your application. The field office will schedule you for an interview to review your eligibility for naturalization and test your knowledge of English and civics. If you are found eligible for naturalization, USCIS will inform you of the date you can take the *Oath of Allegiance* and become a U.S. citizen.

OVERSEAS PROCESSING

If you are currently serving overseas, you may be interviewed and naturalized abroad at certain military installations. You may request overseas processing at any time in the naturalization process. Please see www.uscis.gov/military for specific instructions.

FORMER SERVICE MEMBERS RESIDING ABROAD

If you are a former service member currently residing outside the United States who is not a lawful permanent resident and who served and was honorably discharged from the military during a designated period of conflict, you may qualify for naturalization pursuant to INA 329.

POSTHUMOUS BENEFITS

Section 329A of the INA allows for the granting of posthumous citizenship to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who died as a result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by honorable service in the Armed Forces during a designated period of conflict.

In addition, surviving family members seeking immigration benefits may be eligible for special immigration benefits. Please visit www.uscis.gov/military/family-based-survivor-benefits for more information.

SPOUSES OF MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

Expedited Naturalization

If you are married to a service member who is a U.S. citizen and your citizen spouse is or will be deployed abroad for one year or more, you may be eligible for expedited naturalization in the United States.

Naturalization Abroad

Certain spouses or children of service members residing outside the United States with that service member as authorized by official orders may be eligible to naturalize abroad.

For more information, please visit www.uscis.gov/military/citizenship-for-military-family-members.

USCIS RESOURCES

For more information, please visit www.uscis.gov/military. You can download forms by clicking on “Forms.”

USCIS MILITARY HELP LINE



You or your family may also contact the toll-free military help line, 877-CIS-4MIL (877-247-4645, TTY 800-877-8339). Our representatives are available to answer calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. (Eastern), except federal holidays. Your local military installation’s legal assistance office may also provide naturalization information.

USCIS CONTACT INFORMATION

Please visit www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office to find your local USCIS office.