

U.S. Citizenship and the Naturalization Process

Becoming a U.S. citizen is a very important decision. Permanent residents have most of the rights of U.S. citizens. However, there are many important reasons to consider U.S. citizenship. When you become a citizen, you will receive all the rights of citizenship. You also accept all of the responsibilities of being an American. As a citizen you can:

- **Vote.** Only citizens can vote in federal elections. Most states also restrict the right to vote, in most elections, to U.S. citizens.
- **Serve on a jury.** Only U.S. citizens can serve on a federal jury. Most states also restrict jury service to U.S. citizens. Serving on a jury is an important responsibility for U.S. citizens.
- **Travel with a U.S. passport.** A U.S. passport enables you to get assistance from the U.S. government when overseas, if necessary.
- **Bring family members to the United States.** U.S. citizens generally get priority when petitioning to bring family members permanently to this country.
- **Obtain citizenship for children under 18 years of age.** In most cases, a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen is automatically a U.S. citizen.
- **Apply for federal jobs.** Certain jobs with government agencies require U.S. citizenship.
- **Become an elected official.** Only citizens can run for federal office (U.S. Senate or House of Representatives) and for most state and local offices.
- **Keep your residency.** A U.S. citizen's right to remain in the United States cannot be taken away.
- **Become eligible for federal grants and scholarships.** Many financial aid grants, including college scholarships and funds given by the government for specific purposes, are available only to U.S. citizens.
- **Obtain government benefits.** Some government benefits are available only to U.S. citizens.

Before you apply for naturalization, you must meet a few requirements. Depending on your situation, there are different requirements that may apply to you. However, generally, an applicant for naturalization must:

- Be at least 18 years old at the time of filing [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#).
- Be a permanent resident (have a "Green Card") for at least 5 years.
- Have lived within the state or USCIS district with jurisdiction over your place of residence for at least 3 months prior to the date of filing [Form N-400](#).
- Have continuous residence in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing [Form N-400](#).
- Be physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing [Form N-400](#).
- Be able to read, write, and speak basic English.
- Have a basic understanding of U.S. history and government (civics).
- Be a person of good moral character.
- Demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the [U.S. Constitution](#).

SAMPLE WEB PAGE CONTENT

The links below will help you find information from USCIS about naturalization and the application process. For a list of available USCIS naturalization resources in Spanish, please see [Recursos para la naturalización](#).

[Learn About Naturalization](#)

Understand the process of becoming a U.S. citizen.

[Apply for Citizenship](#)

Identify the steps needed to apply for citizenship.

[Study for the Test](#)

Prepare for the naturalization interview and test.

[Understand Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Learn about important citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Finding Help in Your Community

- **English and Citizenship Classes**

- [Find an English and/or Citizenship Class](#)

- Search America's Literacy Directory to find an English and/or citizenship class in your area.

- **Legal Assistance**

- [Find Legal Advice](#)

- Learn about immigration attorneys and accredited representatives of a recognized organization.

- [Find Legal Representation](#)

- Find recognized and accredited programs and free legal service providers.

There are a number of local organizations that offer citizenship classes and assistance with the naturalization process. See the [NALEO Educational Fund's directory of Citizenship Centers](#) or [CitizenshipWorks](#) to find service providers close to you.

Local USCIS Contact Information

[Insert local [USCIS office](#) information here.]

In order to visit USCIS or speak with an Immigration Information Officer, you must have an appointment scheduled by USCIS, or you must schedule an [INFOPASS](#) appointment, on the [USCIS](#) website.

You can also call USCIS toll-free at 1-800-375-5283 for automated information and live assistance concerning immigration services and benefits. Please see the USCIS [website](#) for additional details.