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Acquiring U.S. Citizenship General Eligibility Requirements for Naturalization

Why Naturalize? As a foreign national, acquiring U.S. citizenship through naturalization offers a number of advantages.

- ✓ You are entitled to a wider array of *federal and state public benefits*.
- ✓ You can *reside in another country* without having to worry about maintaining your permanent residence status.
- ✓ You are *protected from deportation* in the event you commit an offense that would otherwise make you deportable.
- ✓ You can *sponsor your siblings* for permanent residence.
- ✓ You can transmit *U.S. citizenship to your child(ren) born abroad*.
- ✓ And, you are entitled to *more generous tax breaks for estate-planning purposes*.

What are the Requirements?

- Continuous Residence* in the U.S. for at least five years as a lawful permanent resident (three years if you are married to a U.S. citizen).
- Physical presence* in the U.S. for at least two and a half years as a lawful permanent resident (one and a half years if you are married to a U.S. citizen).
- Knowledge of *English and U.S. history and civics*.
- Good moral character*.

Document Checklist for Naturalization

Identity Documents

- A copy of the *front and back* of your Permanent Resident Card. If you have lost the card, please let us know.
- A complete copy of your current passport, *including all blank pages*.
- Two identical color passport photographs (2" x 2"). If your religion requires you to wear a head cover, the photo must show your face.
- Have you changed your name since you obtained permanent residence? If so, we will need the legal documents with your new name.

Evidence of Good Moral Character

- IRS tax return *transcripts* (Form 1722) or copies of your tax returns for the last 5 years (or for the last 3 years if you are applying on the basis of marriage to a U.S. citizen).
 - If you have ever failed to file tax returns after becoming a legal resident, copies of correspondences with the IRS.
- Have you ever been **arrested, charged or convicted** of an offense? Speeding tickets do **not** count.
 - *If arrested or detained but not charged*, please provide statement by the law enforcement agency, confirming no charges were filed.
 - *If charged*, please provide complete arrest records, conviction order or dismissal records.
 - *If convicted*, please provide sentencing records and records showing that you have completed your criminal sentence(s).

Maintenance of Permanent Residence

- List of all international travel since obtaining permanent residence, including dates of departure from and return to the U.S. and countries visited. Please see our table on the last page of this document.
- Proof of working for U.S. Government or U.S. company abroad if seeking an exception to the continuous residence requirement and physical presence requirement.

Proof of Ongoing Marriage to U.S. Citizen (if you are applying for naturalization on this basis):

- Evidence of your spouse’s U.S. citizenship (one of the following is sufficient).
 - Birth certificate
 - Naturalization certificate
 - Certificate of Citizenship
 - U.S. passport biographic page
 - Form FS-240, Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States of America

- A copy of your marriage certificate.

- Proof of termination of all prior marriages of your spouse (divorce decree(s), annulment(s), or death certificate(s)).

- Bank accounts, birth certificates of children, tax receipts, etc., to show that you and your spouse are still married and living together.

U.S. Military Service (if applicable).

- A completed original Form N-426, Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service.

Proof of Disability (if you are seeking to waive the citizenship test).

- Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, completed by a licensed medical doctor.

International Travel Chart

Date of Departure from the United States	Date of Return to the United States	Countries Visited