

U.S. Citizenship through Naturalization: General Requirements

- The applicant must have been a lawful permanent resident for 5 years. The spouse of a U.S. citizen, if still married to and living with the spouse, may apply after 3 years of permanent residency.
- The permanent resident must have physically resided in the U.S. for 30 of the last 60 months immediately prior to the filing of the petition. For spouses of U.S. citizens, the requirement is 18 of the last 36 months. Certain exceptions exist for active U.S. military and individuals employed by United States employers engaged in trade abroad.
- Good Moral Character. The applicant must demonstrate good moral character during the 5 years prior to the petition (3 years for spouses of U.S. citizens).
- The permanent resident must be at least 18 years old at the time of application. The applicant must demonstrate an understanding of the English language, through a test for the ability to read, write, and speak in English. This requirement is waived for certain individuals with developmental disabilities, and for applicants who are either:
 - 50 years old and lawful permanent residents for 20 years; or
 - 55 years old and lawful permanent residents for 15 years.
- Civics test. The applicant will be tested on basic knowledge of U.S. history and government. The applicant must demonstrate allegiance to the U.S., and that during the required period of residence, he or she has been loyal to the principles of the Constitution of the U.S.

Citizenship at Birth

Citizenship is acquired when one is born within the U.S. and certain territories of the U.S. Some children born outside the U.S. may acquire citizenship at birth because one or both parents are U.S. citizens.

Citizenship through Naturalization of Parents

Some children under 18 years old acquire citizenship when the parents naturalize.