

If You Pay for Immigration Assistance

If you are paying someone to help you with your immigration matter, know that you have the right to demand a written contract (in English and in your primary language) identifying all costs to be paid and services to be performed. The contract should include the name, address, and phone number of the person or business providing the immigration assistance to you. Also, you have the right to demand the return of any original documents that belong to you, including passports, green cards, and birth certificates. Additionally it is recommended that you ask for a copy of everything the lawyer is sending to USCIS on your behalf.

Be aware that there are immigration service providers, such as individuals who call themselves “notarios” or “experts”, who charge fees for services that they may not be qualified to provide. In some cases, these non-lawyers are practicing law illegally. It is common for such persons to file false or inaccurate applications with the USCIS on your behalf, and the consequences for you may be severe – you may even end up in removal (deportation) proceedings. To avoid these problems, if you need an immigration attorney call the NYC Bar Association Hotline at (212) 626-7373. If you already have an attorney, you can make sure that he or she is licensed to practice law in New York State by calling the NYC Bar Association Hotline, or by looking up the attorney’s name at:

<http://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/attorney/AttorneySearch>.



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Where to Get FREE Help with Your Naturalization Process

We have centers that offer free assistance with naturalization cases and other immigration related cases. For the closest center in your area, see the list below. Contact us for an appointment.

CUNY Immigration Centers*

Please call for an appointment

City College Immigration Center

(212) 650-6620
North Academic Center, Room 1-206
138th Street and Convent Avenue, New York, NY 10031

City Tech Immigration Center**

(718) 260-5597
Department of Law and Paralegal Studies, Room N-622
300 Jay Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

College of Staten Island, El Centro, and Project Hospitality Immigration Center**

(718) 273-6737
The Help Center, 514 Bay Street, Staten Island, NY 10301

CUNY Express Immigration Center

(212) 568-4692
560 West 181st Street, New York, NY 10033

Flushing Immigration Center

(718) 640-9223
39-07 Prince Street, 2nd Floor, Flushing, NY 11354

Hostos Community College Immigration Center

(718) 518-4395
427 Walton Avenue, T-501, Bronx, NY 10451

LaGuardia Community College Immigration Center**

(718) 482-5139
International Students Office, Room M-166
31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101

Medgar Evers Immigration Center

(718) 270-6292
1150 Carroll Street, Room 226, Brooklyn, NY 11225

York College Immigration Center

(718) 262-2983
Welcome Center Atrium
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11451

*All Services are FREE

**Part-time centers

For more information, please visit our website:

www.cuny.edu/citizenshipnow

HOW TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN



CUNY
CITIZENSHIP NOW!

FREE Immigration Services for the People of New York
www.cuny.edu/citizenshipnow

NATURALIZATION

Requirements

If you are a permanent resident, you can become a U.S. citizen through the process called naturalization, if you meet the following requirements:

- You have resided in the United States as a permanent resident continuously for five years. (You can qualify after only three years of permanent residence if you have been married to and living with a U.S. citizen for the three years);
- You have been physically present in the United States for at least half of the five (or three) years;
- You have resided for at least three months in the state in which the naturalization application will be filed;
- You are a person of good moral character;
- You have a basic knowledge of U.S. government and history (with exceptions for some disabled permanent residents);
- You are able to read, write, and speak basic English (with exceptions for some older and long-time permanent residents, and for some disabled permanent residents);
- You are at least 18 years old and legally competent to take an oath of allegiance to the United States;
- You express your allegiance to the United States.



Attention

You should see an immigration attorney or legal expert before filing an application if ANY of the following apply to you:

- You have ever been arrested.
- You have ever lied to an immigration officer, consular official, or government official.
- You have ever failed to support your dependents or to pay alimony.
- You are a male who lived in the United States at any time between your 18th and 26th birthdays and failed to register with the Selective Service.
- You married solely to obtain permanent residence.
- Since becoming a lawful permanent resident you have been absent from the United States for long periods of time, especially periods over one year.
- Since becoming a lawful permanent resident you have ever failed to file an income tax return.
- One of your parents became a U.S. citizen before you turned 18. You may already be a U.S. citizen.

Application Checklist

Check this list before mailing your application:

- You answered all appropriate boxes of the Form N-400 and signed part 11. You can obtain this form at www.uscis.gov or by calling 1-800-870-3676.
- You included a copy of the front and back of your Permanent Resident Card (“green card”). If you lost the card and you have applied for a replacement filing Form I-90, submit a photocopy of your Form I-90 and receipt. If you have a stamp in your passport indicating your “A” number from your “green card”, include a copy of that as well. If you have none of these items, you may still apply for naturalization as long as you know your “A” number.
- You included two passport style photos. With a pencil you lightly printed your name and “A” number on the back of both photos.
- You included a check or money order for \$675* (which includes the application fee of \$595 and the fingerprint fee of \$80). You made the check or money

order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” and wrote your “A” number on the front of the check or money order.

Speak with an immigration attorney or legal expert to find out about any additional documents that may be required with your application.

Mail the application by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested to the appropriate address. Individuals in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania, among others, should mail their application to:

USCIS
P.O. Box 660060
Dallas, TX 75266

Other individuals and those not sending their application through the U.S. Postal Service can find the appropriate address by visiting www.uscis.gov or calling 1-800-375-5283.

The Naturalization Process

1. Mailing the Application

Remember to keep a copy of everything you send to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), your postal receipts, and the receipts for the money order, if you sent one.

2. Biometrics Appointment

After mailing your application, USCIS will send you a receipt notice and notification advising you to appear for fingerprinting and photographs. After this biometrics appointment, you will receive a notice for an interview with a USCIS officer.

3. The USCIS Interview

At this interview you will be expected to prove your eligibility for naturalization and you will be tested on your basic knowledge of English and United States civics. If you fail the English exam or the civics exam at the interview, the USCIS officer, on that same day, will give you a date for a second interview.

4. Notification

After the interview, you will receive either an invitation to your swearing in ceremony, at which you will become a citizen of the United States, or a letter stating the reason for the denial of your citizenship request.

* All fees listed as of March 2010. For updated fees, visit www.uscis.gov/forms.