



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

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BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN

By becoming a U.S. citizen you can vote, transmit citizenship to your children born abroad, obtain federal employment and certain state jobs, sponsor immediate family members to be lawful permanent residents, travel without obtaining reentry permits, hold public office, and serve on juries.

To become a U.S. citizen, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be a lawful U.S. resident (This usually means having a green card.);
- Reside continuously in the U.S. for at least 5 years immediately before filing an application for naturalization (Only 3 years if your spouse is a U.S. citizen and you have lived with your spouse for the 3 years.);
- Be physically present in the U.S. for at least half of your continuous residence (2½ or 1½ years);
- Be a resident of the state where you plan to file the naturalization application for at least 3 months prior to submitting the application;
- Reside continuously in the U.S. from the date you file a naturalization petition until you are sworn in as a U.S. citizen;
- Demonstrate an ability to speak and write ordinary English and a basic knowledge and understanding of U.S. history, civics, and government;
- Have a good moral character and show an attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and
- Be at least 18 years old (a child under 18 may acquire citizenship if one of the parents is already a U.S. citizen).

To naturalize and become a citizen, you must submit the following:

- A completed N-400 form (or N-600 form for a minor child of a U.S. citizen);
- A \$595 filing fee to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (\$600 for N-600); plus
- A \$85 fingerprinting fee to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. You do not have to submit fingerprints with your application. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will take your fingerprints at the local USCIS Application Support Center after you have filed your application. No fingerprint fee is required with an N-600 form.

Then, the USCIS will contact you about when and where:

- Your fingerprints will be taken;
- You will be interviewed and take the history, civics, and government exam; and
- You will take the oath of citizenship if you pass.

This information is a brief overview of the naturalization requirements and procedure and it answers some basic questions about obtaining citizenship. This overview is not a substitute for legal advice. Although filing an application to petition for naturalization is relatively simple, you should consult an attorney for resolving any specific questions you may have about naturalization. For more information or an appointment, contact AALDEF at (212) 966-5932 or (800) 966-5946.

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