

# Getting a Passport

Getting a passport is an important step after becoming a United States citizen, especially for those planning to travel to another country. Read here for information on applying for a U.S. passport and for tips to make the process easier.

## **REMEMBER:**

You cannot get a United States passport until you are a United States citizen. Lawful permanent residents cannot get U.S. passports. If you claim to be a U.S. citizen before you become a citizen, you become deportable.

## Applying for a Passport

If this is your first time applying for a passport, you will need to:

- Complete the form DS-11.
- Make an appointment at a local post office. You must apply for the passport in person.

When you go to your appointment, you will need to bring the following:

- Certificate of Citizenship.
- 2 passport-style photos.
- Completed application form.
- Payment for the application fee.

They will take your original documents and submit them. They will return your documents by mail, and your passport will be sent to you later.

For costs and wait times, check the United States Department of State website about obtaining a U.S. passport. It will help you choose the correct form, fill it out, and figure out the cost of the passport. They separate information between first time passport applications and passport renewals.

# Passport Application Tips

1. After you submit your materials, you should plan to wait 8 weeks for your passport to arrive. You can also apply for expedited processing if you have an emergency. [Click here](#) if you need your passport for an emergency.
2. First time passport applications MUST be done in person.
3. You will need to bring original documents when you apply. Don't rely on photo copies.
4. There are strict rules for children under the age of 16. Both parents must consent to their child getting a passport.

## Passports for Children

There are different rules for children getting their passport. Also, there are different rules for children under the age of 16 versus children who are 16 or 17 years old. The rules are different for children because the United States government wants to prevent children being taken out of the country by one parent without the other parent's consent.

### Children Under the Age of 16

Children who are 15 years or younger must have permission from both parents to get a U.S. passport for the first time. Typically, both parents go with their child to apply in person at an acceptance facility. It may seem extreme, but the government wants to ensure that one parent does not kidnap a child into a foreign country. However, there are reasons why it might not be possible for both parents to go. For example, one parent might have been deported or incarcerated. Alternatively, one parent might have sole custody due to domestic violence by the other parent.

If one or both parents cannot go with their child to apply for a U.S. passport, review the Children Under 16 page from the United States Department of State. Follow the instructions given in a chart under "Show Parental Consent". If you are going to rely on this chart, print out a copy and take it with you to your appointment. Note that depending on your situation, there may be additional forms for you to fill out.

You will also need to prove that your child is actually your child. Usually parents use their child's birth certificate. You can also use an adoption decree.

## **Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program**

The Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program helps parents who have had a bad divorce or have a bad relationship with the other parent. From [Travel.State.gov](https://travel.state.gov):

"Parents may enroll their U.S. citizen children under the age of 18 in the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program (CPIAP), one of the Department of State's most important tools for preventing international parental child abduction. If a passport application is submitted for a child who is enrolled in CPIAP, we attempt to alert the parent(s) to verify whether they approve passport issuance."

### **Children Aged 16 & 17**

Once a child turns 16 the rules change. The biggest change at ages 16 and 17 is that both parents do not have to provide consent. However, at least one parent must acknowledge that they know about the passport application. To show parental awareness (from [Travel.State.gov](https://travel.state.gov)):

- A parent or legal guardian appearing with you in person when you apply for your passport. The agent or employee accepting the application will ask your parent or legal guardian to sign Form DS-11.
- A signed, notarized statement consenting to issuance of a passport from at least one parent or legal guardian (should be accompanied by a photocopy of that parent or guardian's ID).

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Last updated on June 30, 2025.

Where can I find an acceptance facility?

You can find a list of acceptance facilities at: <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov>.

Do I need to make an appointment at the acceptance facility?

It depends on the acceptance facility. Contact your facility to confirm.

How long will it take me to renew a passport?

You should plan to wait about six to eight weeks after you submit your application. If you have an emergency, you can also apply for expedited processing. Learn more at [Travel.State.gov](https://travel.state.gov).

[Travel Papers](#) [Immigration](#)

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Table of Contents

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