

N-600 Application for Certificate of Citizenship

If you acquired or derived citizenship through one of your parents and you want your certificate of citizenship, you would file Form N-600 with Immigration.

To determine whether or not you qualify for the N-600, first we will discuss the differences between acquired and derived citizenship. Then we will review the differences between Form N-600, the Application for Certificate of Citizenship, and the N-400, the Application for Naturalization.

What is Acquired Citizenship?

Almost everyone born in the United States is a United States citizen. The U.S. citizenship you get the day you are born is called acquired citizenship.

Additionally, children who are born abroad can acquire U.S. citizenship if they meet certain requirements and at least one of their parents is a U.S. citizen.

What is Derived Citizenship?

Unlike acquired citizenship, which you get at birth, you derive citizenship through your parents after you are born. You must meet a few requirements in order to derive citizenship from within the United States:

First, at least one of your parents must be a U.S. citizen. It can be either your biological parent or your adoptive parent, as long as the adoption took place before you turned 16 years old.

Unfortunately, this process is not available to step-children. If your step-parent is a United States citizen, you cannot derive citizenship through them unless they legally adopt you before you turn 16.

It does not matter if your biological or adoptive parent is a citizen through birth or through naturalization, all that matters is that they are a citizen before you turn 18.

Which brings us to condition number two: you must be under 18 years old when your parent becomes a U.S. citizen. You could be 7 months old or 17 years old, so long as you have not yet turned 18 at the moment that your mother or father becomes a citizen.

Finally, you must be living in the United States as a lawful permanent resident (LPR) and in the custody of your U.S.-citizen parent.

If all of these conditions are met before you turn 18, then you automatically become a citizen of the United States. At any time afterwards, you or your U.S.-citizen parent can file Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship, to obtain your proof of citizenship.

If you were born outside of the United States and think you may have derived citizenship from one of your parents, talk to an immigration attorney.

You do not have to be under 18 to submit your N-600 if you meet the derived citizenship requirements.

While these conditions require you to be younger than 18 in order to have automatically derived your citizenship, it does not mean that you must file an N-600 before you turn 18.

The N-600 is not an alternative to naturalization and should not be thought of as such. Simply put, it is a way for someone to obtain proof of their citizenship that has already been derived from a parent in accordance with the law, without the child needing to do anything to obtain it.

If you are a green card-holder (LPR) and neither of your parents were ever U.S. citizens, you would not have derived your citizenship and you will have to go through the naturalization process yourself in order to become a citizen.

Furthermore, if you file an N-600 and it is denied, you cannot file another one as USCIS has already determined that you have not derived citizenship.

Differences Between the N-400 and the N-600

Unlike the N-400, there is no continuous residence requirement when applying for a certificate of citizenship. If you are a U.S. citizen and you go through the immigration process to bring your family to the United States, any of your children who are under 18 will automatically become citizens the second they are admitted into the U.S. with their visas as lawful permanent residents.

Another difference from the naturalization process, is that when you derive your citizenship from a parent, you do not have to take a test. This means that in order to obtain a certificate of citizenship, there is no English language requirement nor will you be tested on U.S. history, geography, and civics.

One final significant difference between this process and naturalization is that there is no standard for good moral character when it comes to automatically deriving citizenship. When you submit Form N-600, you will not be assessed for good moral character.

How to Obtain your Certificate of Citizenship

To obtain your certificate of citizenship, you need to complete and submit Form N-600 to USCIS along with a cover letter. You also need to submit your supporting documents, including:

- A copy of your green card to show that you are a lawful permanent resident;
- Proof that your parent is your parent, such as a copy of your birth certificate; and
- Proof that your parent is a U.S. citizen, such as a copy of their certificate of naturalization or U.S. passport.

You will also need to submit two passport style photos of yourself. For a complete list of requirements which covers most scenarios, please visit the [N-600 page](#) at USCIS.gov.

Additionally, when you file Form N-600, you will need to pay a fee. Check [USCIS.gov](#) for the current cost to file Form N-600. You can get a fee waiver if your income is below 150% of the federal poverty level.

If you file an N-600 and USCIS approves it, you will be issued a Certificate of Citizenship as proof of your status as a U.S. citizen.

If you are over 14 years of age, you will be scheduled to appear at a USCIS office to take the Oath of Allegiance. If you are scheduled for an interview, the Oath of Allegiance ceremony may be conducted on that same day.

If you are under the age of 14, you may not be required to take the Oath of Allegiance.

Why Apply for the N-600?

Having a certificate of citizenship is the best proof of citizenship you can use. Also, a certificate of citizenship generally makes the process of getting a U.S. passport much easier.

If you have any questions about your N-600 application, please contact a competent immigration attorney. Learn more in our [How to Hire an Immigration Lawyer](#) article.

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[Citizenship Immigration](#)

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