Naturalization for Spouses of U.S. Citizens

In general, you may qualify for naturalization under Section 319(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) if you

- Have been a permanent resident (green card holder) for at least 3 years
- Have been living in marital union with the same U.S. citizen spouse during such time
- Meet all other eligibility requirements under this section

In certain cases, spouses of U.S. citizens employed abroad may qualify for naturalization regardless of their time as permanent residents. These spouses may qualify under Section 319(b) of the INA.

For information relating to spouses of military members, see our Members of the Military and Their Families page. Also for information about becoming a permanent resident or petitioning for family members, please visit our Green Card or Family webpages.

General Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for naturalization pursuant to section 319(a) of the INA, an applicant must:

- Be 18 or older
- Be a permanent resident (green card holder) for at least 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing Form N-400, Application for Naturalization
- Have been living in marital union with the U.S. citizen spouse, who has been a U.S. citizen during all of such period, during the 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application and up until examination on the application
- Have lived within the state, or USCIS district with jurisdiction over the applicant’s place of residence, for at least 3 months prior to the date of filing the application
- Have continuous residence in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for at least 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application
- Reside continuously within the United States from the date of application for naturalization until the time of naturalization
- Be physically present in the United States for at least 18 months out of the 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application
• Be able to read, write, and speak English and have knowledge and an understanding of U.S. history and government (also known as civics)

• Be a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States during all relevant periods under the law

Spouses of U.S. Citizens Employed Abroad

Generally, the spouse of a U.S. citizen who is employed by the U.S. government, including the military, or other qualifying employer, whose spouse is stationed abroad in such employment for at least 1 year, may be eligible for naturalization under Section 319(b) of the INA.

In general, a spouse of a U.S. citizen employed abroad must be present in the United States pursuant to a lawful admission for permanent residence at the time of examination on the naturalization application and at the time of naturalization, and meet of all of the requirements listed above except that:

• No specific period as a permanent resident (green card holder) is required (but the spouse must be a permanent resident)

• No specific period of continuous residence or physical presence in the United States is required

• No specific period of marital union is required; however, the spouses must be living in marital union.

Note: You must also establish that you will depart abroad immediately after naturalization and that you intend to reside in the United States immediately upon the termination of your spouse’s employment abroad.

For More Information…

• On naturalization requirements, see the A Guide to Naturalization, Chapter 4, Who is Eligible for Naturalization?.

• Regarding exceptions and modifications to the naturalization requirements, visit the Exceptions and Accommodations.

• On how to apply for naturalization, visit the How Do I Apply for U.S. Citizenship page. Also see the A Guide to Naturalization page and read the form instructions before applying.