



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Naturalization Through Military Service: Fact Sheet

Special provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorize U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to expedite the application and naturalization process for current members of the U.S. armed forces and recently discharged servicemembers. Generally, qualifying military service includes service with one of the following: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and National Guard. In addition, spouses of members of the U.S. armed forces who are or will be deployed may be eligible for expedited naturalization. Other provisions of the law also allow certain spouses to complete the naturalization process abroad.

Qualifications

A member of the U.S. armed forces must meet the requirements and qualifications to become a citizen of the United States. He or she must demonstrate:

- Good moral character,
- Knowledge of the English language,
- Knowledge of U.S. government and history (civics), and
- Attachment to the United States by taking an Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. Constitution.

Qualified members of the U.S. armed forces are exempt from other naturalization requirements, including residence and physical presence in the United States. These exceptions are listed in Sections 328 and 329 of the INA.

All aspects of the naturalization process, including applications, interviews and ceremonies are available overseas to members of the U.S. armed forces and certain “command-sponsored” spouses.

A person who obtains U.S. citizenship through his or her military service and separates from the military under “other than honorable conditions” before completing five years of honorable service may have his or her citizenship revoked.

Service in Peacetime

Section 328 of the INA applies to all members of the U.S. armed forces and those already discharged from service. An individual may qualify for naturalization if he or she has:

- Served honorably in the U.S. armed forces for at least one year,
- Obtained lawful permanent resident status, and
- Filed an application while still in the service or within six months of separation.

Service during Periods of Hostilities

Under special provisions in Section 329 of the INA, the President signed an executive order on July 3, 2002, authorizing all noncitizens who have served honorably in the U.S. armed forces on or after Sept. 11, 2001, to immediately file for citizenship. This order also covers veterans of certain designated past wars and conflicts. The authorization will remain in effect until a date designated by a future presidential executive order.

Naturalization at Basic Training

USCIS established the Naturalization at Basic Training Initiative in August 2009 with the Army to give noncitizen enlistees the opportunity to naturalize when they graduate from basic training. Under this initiative, USCIS conducts all naturalization processing including the capture of biometrics, the naturalization interview and administration of the *Oath of Allegiance* on the military installation. Since 2009 USCIS has expanded the initiative to the Navy, Air Force, and finally to the Marine Corps in 2013, giving enlistees of these branches equal opportunity to (in most cases) leave basic training as U.S. citizens.

How to Apply

Every military installation has a designated point-of-contact, generally in the personnel division or the Judge Advocate General's Office, to assist members of the military prepare and file their naturalization application packet. That packet includes:

- Application for Naturalization, USCIS [Form N-400](#) (Members of the military are not charged a fee to file the Form N-400.)
- Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service, [USCIS Form N-426](#) (The military must certify this form before sending it to USCIS. Individuals separated from the military may submit an uncertified Form N-426 with their DD Form 214.)

Once the packet is complete, send it to the specialized military naturalization unit at the USCIS Nebraska Service Center for expedited processing.

Customer Service to Assist the Military

USCIS customer service specialists are available to respond to inquiries from military members and their families Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Central Time, except federal holidays. Military families may contact USCIS by:

- Calling the military toll-free telephone help line -- 1-877-CIS-4MIL (1-877-247-4645), or
- Sending an e-mail to the military customer service specialists at: militaryinfo.nsc@dhs.gov.

Posthumous Benefits

Section 329A of the INA provides for grants of posthumous citizenship to certain members of the U.S. armed forces. A member of the U.S. armed forces who served honorably during a designated period of hostility and died as a result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by that service (including death in combat) may be eligible to receive posthumous citizenship, as long as the next-of-kin applies for posthumous citizenship within two years of the service member's death. Other provisions of the law extend immigration benefits to the service member's surviving spouse, children and parents.

Statistics (through Fiscal Year 2015)

- Since Oct. 1, 2001, USCIS has naturalized 109,321 members of the military, with 11,069 of those service members becoming citizens during USCIS naturalization ceremonies in 34 foreign countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Australia, Bahrain, China (Hong Kong), Cuba (Guantanamo), Djibouti, El Salvador, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Korea, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Mexico, the Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.
- Since the beginning of fiscal year 2008, USCIS has naturalized 2,650 military spouses during ceremonies in the following 33 countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Chile, China (Hong Kong), Cuba, El Salvador, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Mexico, Moldova, Norway, Oman, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.
- Since the beginning of fiscal year 2009, USCIS has presented 106 children of members of the military with citizenship certificates during ceremonies in Italy, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

MILITARY STATISTICS BY YEAR AND LOCATION (through Fiscal Year 2015)

Naturalized Service Members

YEAR	TOTAL	USA	ABROAD
FY-02	2,434	2,434	0
FY-03	4,659	4,659	0
FY-04	6,327	6,327	0
FY-05	7,136	6,106	1,030
FY-06	8,538	6,643	1,895
FY-07	5,895	4,541	1,354
FY-08	7,865	6,356	1,509
FY-09	10,505	8,850	1,655

YEAR	TOTAL	USA	ABROAD
FY-10	11,146	9,735	1,411
FY-11	10,333	9,415	918
FY-12	8,693	8,184	509
FY-13	8,758	8,414	344
FY-14	9,239	8,970	269
FY-15	7,709	7,534	175
TOTAL	109,321	98,252	11,069

Military Children Naturalized Abroad

Location of Ceremony	TOTAL	FY-09	FY-10	FY-11	FY-12	FY-13	FY-14	FY-15
Italy	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Germany	29	4	7	3	4	0	2	9
Japan	31	5	6	7	0	4	3	6
South Korea	25	3	4	7	4	5	1	1
United Kingdom	18	0	1	17	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	106	12	18	34	9	9	8	16

Military Spouses Naturalized Abroad

Location of Ceremony	TOTAL	FY-08	FY-09	FY-10	FY-11	FY-12	FY-13	FY-14	FY-15
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Afghanistan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Australia	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Bahrain	9	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	2
Bulgaria	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chile	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
China (Hong Kong)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cuba	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
El Salvador	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Germany	964	10	173	154	155	146	135	86	105
Greece	11	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0
Hungary	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
India	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Italy	246	4	51	45	35	21	28	31	31
Jamaica	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Japan	675	5	73	144	61	133	83	68	108
Kuwait	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Mexico	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Moldova	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Norway	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Oman	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Panama	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Philippines	5	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	1
Poland	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Portugal	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Singapore	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
South Korea	464	11	58	63	62	87	61	62	60
Spain	63	0	3	23	8	14	8	5	2

Tanzania	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Thailand	5	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1
Turkey	12	0	0	3	2	3	3	1	0
United Arab Emirates	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
United Kingdom	164	0	21	28	25	20	28	25	17
TOTAL	2,650	30	380	473	368	430	358	279	332

Service Members Naturalized Abroad

Location of Ceremony	TOTAL	FY-08	FY-09	FY-10	FY-11	FY-12	FY-13	FY-14	FY-15
Afghanistan	1017	105	183	208	288	99	100	30	4
Albania	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Bahrain	20	0	0	2	2	2	6	8	0
China (Hong Kong)	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Cuba (Guantanamo)	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0
Djibouti	6	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0
El Salvador	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Germany	764	135	137	152	131	87	51	41	30
Greece	12	0	1	2	8	0	0	1	0
Haiti	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Honduras	5	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0
Iceland	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iraq	1839	644	678	427	88	2	0	0	0
Italy	150	13	26	26	37	12	10	14	12
Jamaica	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Japan	1553	349	282	288	224	183	117	55	55
Jordan	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Kenya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kosovo	34	0	0	29	1	2	0	2	0
Kuwait	399	110	167	58	4	45	5	6	4
Kyrgyzstan	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Libya	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mexico	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Philippines	7	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0
Qatar	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
South Korea	904	149	171	198	107	64	48	104	63
Spain	28	0	1	9	10	3	2	2	1
Thailand	9	0	0	1	7	1	0	0	0
Turkey	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
U.A.E.	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
United Kingdom	9	1	1	0	4	1	0	2	0
TOTAL	6790	1509	1655	1411	918	509	344	269	175

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