

Law Grants Automatic Citizenship to Some Children Born Abroad

Most U.S. citizens acquire citizenship by being born in the U.S., or through a process called naturalization. However, there are certain people born abroad who can acquire citizenship automatically.

The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 grants automatic citizenship to the biological and adopted children of parents who are U.S. citizens.

How to Get Automatic Citizenship

The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 generally benefits children who were born outside the United States, are under 18 years of age and have at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen.

To qualify for automatic U.S. citizenship, a child must:

- Meet the definition of “child” under immigration law.
- Be under 18 years of age.
- Have at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen by birth or through [naturalization](#).
- Reside in the United States under the legal and physical custody of the parent who is a U.S. citizen.
- Be a lawful permanent resident.

If the child is legally adopted, he or she must meet all adoption requirements under immigration law.

“Because citizenship law has changed over the years, if the person is now over 18 years of age, USCIS looks to the relevant law that was in effect before the child turned 18 to decide if the person acquired U.S. citizenship,” said Mariana Gitomer, an officer with the [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS).

How to Prove You Are a Citizen

A qualified child does not need to file an application to establish U.S. citizenship, but the child will need a certificate of citizenship, which can be obtained by filing form [N-600](#). This will ensure that all the requirements for citizenship have been met.

Once the form has been filed, an immigration officer will determine if an interview is necessary. If so, the applicant must meet with an officer and bring:

- All original documents of the copies submitted when filing form N-600.
- Any additional documents that will establish if the child qualifies for citizenship.
- Certified translation of documents not originally in English.

How to Get More Information

These are the general requirements, but some unique situations may require additional steps. For more information contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 or visit www.uscis.gov.

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