

Instructions

What Is the Purpose of This Form?

This form is intended for applicants for U.S. citizenship who seek an exception to the English and civics testing requirements for naturalization "because of physical or developmental disability or mental impairment."

What Are the Naturalization Testing Requirements?

An applicant for naturalization is generally required to demonstrate:

Knowledge of the English language including an ability to read, write, and speak words in ordinary usage; and knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, principles, and form of government of the United States.

To implement these requirements, USCIS administers tests of each applicant's ability to read, write, and speak English words in ordinary usage and to answer basic questions about the government and history of the United States (civics). However, the law allows an exception to the English and civics testing required for naturalization in the case of an applicant who is unable to comply "because of physical or developmental disability or mental impairment."

Who Should Use This Form?

Applicants for naturalization must submit Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions, along with a completed Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, if they are seeking an exception from the English and civics requirements. Form N-648 is intended for applicants with medical condition(s) that are long-term (lasting 12 months or longer) and so severely debilitating that they are incapable of meeting the English or civics requirements for naturalization. USCIS will evaluate the completed Form N-648 to determine whether the applicant qualifies for an exception from those requirements.

Who Is Not Eligible?

An applicant for naturalization who **is capable** of learning or demonstrating the required knowledge and understanding of basic English and civics, as explained above, is **not eligible** for an exception from the English and civics requirements and **should not submit** this form.

An applicant's difficulty in fulfilling these requirements, such as illiteracy in his or her native language, is not sufficient **by itself** to support a finding of eligibility for the exception.

Additionally, an applicant who **can** meet the English and civics requirements with accommodations should **not** submit this form. Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, USCIS makes reasonable modifications or accommodations to enable applicants with disabilities or impairment(s) to participate in the English and civics testing requirements for naturalization.

Reasonable modifications or accommodations may include but are not limited to: sign language interpreters, extended time for testing, or off-site testing. Applicants who believe that they will need a reasonable modification or accommodation to take the tests should refer to Part 3.I of the Step-by-Step Instructions in the General Instructions of Form N-400.

Who Is Authorized to Complete This Form?

All parts of this form (except for the "Applicant Attestation" in Part I) must be completed by a currently licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or clinical psychologist (a "medical professional"). The medical professional must have professional expertise in diagnosing and evaluating an applicant for a physical or developmental disability or impairment that makes the applicant incapable of meeting the English or civics requirements for naturalization.

An employee under the direct supervision of the certifying medical professional may, if necessary, fill in the form with information directly provided or verified by the certifying medical professional. However, the certifying medical professional who signs the form under penalty of perjury remains responsible for the accuracy of its contents.

What Qualifications Must a Certifying Medical Professional Have?

The licensed medical professional certifying this form must have training and experience in the field of the applicant's claimed disability or impairments. A medical professional who is **not** a specialist in the field of the claimed disability or impairments may complete this form only if his or her training, experience, or other qualifications enable him or her to make the disability or impairment assessment.

Because only severe and lasting disabilities are eligible for the exception to the naturalization testing requirements, the medical professional who makes the certification should normally be "the treating physician"; that is, the medical professional who has been regularly treating the applicant for the claimed disability or impairment. If the certifying medical professional is **not** the applicant's regular treating physician, the reason for the substitution should be explained in item 4 of Part II, as well as information regarding the future plan of treatment for the applicant.

What Is Required for a Complete Medical Certification?

The medical professional completing this form must provide an accurate assessment of the applicant's disability or impairment so that USCIS can determine whether the applicant qualifies for an exception from the English and civics requirements for naturalization. The medical professional must provide **all** of the following:

1. A certification of the duration of the claimed disability or impairment and whether it is the direct result of the applicant's illegal use of drugs (**Items 7 and 8**);
2. A clinical diagnosis and description of the applicant's claimed disability or impairment, a list of medically accepted techniques used to reach the diagnosis, and any applicable DSM-IV-TR code for each mental impairment (**Item 9**);
3. A detailed explanation of the nexus (connection) between the impairment and the applicant's capacity to learn and demonstrate the required knowledge and understanding of English and civics. This explanation must include a description of how the claimed disability or impairment resulted from an anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormality (**Item 10**); and
4. A certified opinion as to whether the applicant is unable, even with reasonable accommodations or modifications, to learn and/or demonstrate the required knowledge of English or civics because of the documented medical condition(s) (**Items 11 and 12**).

If the medical professional does not provide all required information, USCIS may deem Form N-648 insufficient.

In order to facilitate the adjudication of Form N-648, the medical professional may also submit copies of relevant medical diagnostic reports or records to further substantiate the claim of medical disability indicated on the form. However, note that a supplemental report is not acceptable as a substitute for any of the responses required in Part II of this form.

Examples of Insufficient and Sufficient Responses:

The following examples illustrate acceptable and unacceptable responses regarding diagnosis and nexus (**Items 9 and 10**).

The actual medical certification must address the condition of the individual applicant who has been examined.

Example 1:

Insufficient Answer:

Item 9 (Diagnosis): "The patient is a 42-year-old female who suffers from Angelman syndrome, which is a complex genetic disorder that affects the nervous system."

Item 10 (Nexus): "The patient is unable to learn a new language and U.S. history and civics."

(**Comment:** The doctor failed to articulate how the impairment is related to the applicant's ability to learn or demonstrate knowledge of English or civics.)

Sufficient Answer:

Item 9 (Diagnosis): "The patient is a 42-year-old female who suffers from Angelman syndrome, which is a complex genetic disorder that affects the nervous system, typically with developmental delay or mental retardation, severe speech impairment, seizures, small head size (microcephaly), and problems with movement and balance (ataxia). The resulting delayed mental development was first noticed in this patient at the age of eight months, and she suffered from severe learning disability since childhood."

Item 10 (Nexus): "The most common cause of Angelman syndrome is a small deletion (missing piece) of the UBE3A gene in the maternally inherited chromosome 15, either through gene mutation or chromosomal change, causing the person to have no active copies of the gene in the brain. Because of the chromosomal change and the loss of gene function in this patient's brain, she is incapable of learning, remembering, or demonstrating knowledge of English or civics."

(**Comment:** The doctor adequately described the effect of the Angelman syndrome on the patient's cognitive functions and provided a definitive opinion explaining why as a result of it the patient is unable to learn and demonstrate knowledge of English or civics.)

Example 2:

Insufficient Response:

Item 9 (Diagnosis): "The patient has Down's Syndrome."

Item 10 (Nexus): "The patient should be exempted from the English language and U.S. civics requirements for citizenship due to his medical condition."

(Comment: The doctor failed to explain how the applicant's condition prevents him from learning or demonstrating knowledge of English or civics.)

Sufficient Response:

Item 9 (Diagnosis): "The patient has Down's Syndrome, which is a genetic condition that causes delays in physical and intellectual development. While many individuals with mild to moderate forms of Down Syndrome are capable of daily tasks and working in the community, this patient suffers from a particularly severe form. It was diagnosed *in utero* through a Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS). He has an IQ of 50."

Item 10 (Nexus): "The patient's condition is a global, lifelong impairment that severely affects cognition, language, and motor skills. Because of this impairment, his memory is deficient, he cannot learn new skills, and he is not capable of reasoning but only of performing simple daily activities. The patient's severe mental disability makes him incapable of learning a new language (even basic words) and demonstrating the required knowledge of U.S. history and government."

(Comment: The doctor adequately addressed the nexus (connection) between the condition and how it affects the applicant's functioning and ability to learn to demonstrate knowledge of English or civics.)

What Are the Penalties for Making False Representations?

Both the applicant and the medical professional are required to attest to the contents of this form **under penalty of perjury**. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1546, provides that:

Whoever knowingly makes under oath, or as permitted under penalty of perjury under Section 1746 of Title 28, United States Code, knowingly subscribes as true, any false statement with respect to a material fact in any application, affidavit, or other document required by the immigration laws or regulations prescribed thereunder, or knowingly presents any such application, affidavit, or other document containing any such false statement, shall be fined in accordance with this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

If either the applicant or the medical professional includes in this form any information that the party knows to be false, that person may be liable for criminal prosecution under U.S. laws. In addition to the criminal penalties under Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 274C of the Immigration and Nationality Act and 8 U.S.C. 1324c provides for civil penalties.

General Instructions

Step 1. Fill Out Form N-648

All parts of this form (except for the "Applicant Attestation"), must be completed by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, or clinical psychologist.

Part I of this form must be signed by the applicant or the applicant's authorized representative.

All questions must be answered fully and accurately. If an item is not applicable, indicate it with "N/A." If the answer is none, write "None."

USCIS recommends that the certifying medical professional complete and print the fillable electronic Form N-648 provided on the USCIS website ("Immigration Forms" link, www.uscis.gov). Note that if you need additional space to complete the answer to any item, the information fields in the fillable electronic form will expand to accommodate the additional information.

If the application is prepared manually, print or type legibly in black ink. If additional space is needed to complete the answer to any item, the certifying medical professional may attach an additional sheet of paper indicating the item number to which the attachment refers.

Note that each additional page or supplementary attachment to the completed form, including medical report(s), must include the name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) of the applicant and the complete name and signature of the medical professional.

After the medical professional has completed the form electronically or manually, he or she must provide it to the applicant.

Step 2. The Applicant Submits the Completed Form N-648 to USCIS

When and Where Should This Form Be Submitted?

All applicants seeking an exception from the testing requirements for naturalization should submit to USCIS a completed Form N-648 as an attachment to the applicant's Form N-400 at the same time Form N-400 is filed with USCIS.

USCIS recognizes that there may be exceptional circumstances that do not make it possible for the completed Form N-648 to be attached to Form N-400 when it is filed with USCIS. In such cases, the completed Form N-648 must be submitted to USCIS at the time of the applicant's naturalization interview. Note that while USCIS will accept delayed submissions, such claims may delay the adjudication of the naturalization application.

Privacy Act Notice

Authority for the collection of the information requested on this form is contained in 8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(15), 1183A, 1184(a), and 1258. USCIS will use the information principally to support an individual's application for naturalization. Submission of the information is voluntary. However, failure to provide the necessary information may result in the denial of a request for a waiver of the English language and U.S. history and civics requirement in the applicant's naturalization application. USCIS may also, as a matter of routine use, disclose the information contained on this form to other Federal, State, local, and foreign law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

USCIS Forms and Information

To order USCIS forms, call our toll-free number at **1-800-870-3676**. You can also get USCIS forms and information on immigration laws, regulations, and procedures by telephoning our National Customer Service Center at **1-800-375-5283** or visiting our Internet website at **www.uscis.gov**.

As an alternative to waiting in line for assistance at your local USCIS office, you can now schedule an appointment through our Internet-based system, **InfoPass**. To access the system, visit our website. Use the **InfoPass** appointment scheduler and follow the screen prompts to set up your appointment. **InfoPass** generates an electronic appointment notice that appears on the screen.

Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 120 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Management Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 3rd Floor, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529-2210. OMB No. 1615-0060. **Do not mail your application to this address.**