

5 things to consider before applying for US citizenship



We get citizenship for you and your loved ones



CAMBRIDGE
Immigration Law

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Hello!

I am excited to provide this workbook to help you on your US citizenship journey. I am eager to share the knowledge and experience that I have gained in 18 years of immigration practice. In my career as an immigration attorney, I have worked with individuals and families from countless countries, races, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, and family statuses. I strive to help them achieve their life goals and to provide an excellent client experience in our work together.

-Ellen

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How to use this workbook

At Cambridge Immigration Law, we have represented many types of individuals, couples and families. We know that every situation can be different. However, we know the questions that USCIS asks and the assumptions USCIS might make based on how you present your case. This workbook will help you prepare to address USCIS's possible concerns before USCIS has a chance to send you a denial or a request for evidence.

QUESTIONS?

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Were you eligible for your “green card” when it was approved?

When USCIS considers your citizenship application, it reviews your entire immigration file to confirm that you were eligible for your Lawful Permanent Residence status, or green card, at the time it was approved. For example, if you received your green card through marriage, was your divorce final before you married your US citizen spouse? If you received your green card through work, did you actually work for the employer once the green card was issued?

We review your entire immigration history to make sure that USCIS did not make any errors in approving prior applications, especially your “green card” status. If USCIS did make an error, you may choose to not apply for US citizenship because of the risk that you’ll not only lose your citizenship application, but your Lawful Permanent Resident Status will be in jeopardy.

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Have you ever purposefully or mistakenly given incorrect information to the US government?

US immigration laws harshly punish anyone who purposefully misrepresents information to US immigration officials. The punishment can even include attempting to take away your "green card" status if any part of your immigration journey included misrepresentation and even US citizenship.

IF YOU HAVE EVER MADE A MISTAKE—BY ACCIDENT OR ON PURPOSE—ON US IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS OR IN CONVERSATIONS WITH US IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS, DO NOT SUBMIT ANY APPLICATION OR ATTEND ANY INTERVIEW WITH THE US GOVERNMENT WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING WITH AN EXPERIENCED IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY.

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Have you had any interaction with law enforcement in the US or in other countries?

In almost all situations, you are required to disclose any and all issues relating to you and law enforcement. You must disclose any arrests, even if you were a minor (a child) or the proceedings were in juvenile court. You must disclose most citations, even if you were not arrested and even if you did not go to court. You must disclose all court dockets, even if the docket has been dismissed, sealed, expunged, pardoned, or otherwise cleared from your record. There are criminal issues that will make you ineligible for a green card. At the same time, there are many criminal issues that will not be a problem as long as you disclose, document, and explain them. If you don't disclose a criminal issue, it may become a "misrepresentation" problem when it would not have been a criminal problem if you had just disclosed it. It is a good idea to go through your history of speeding tickets because even though they are not relevant to your green card application, Our attorneys have sat in many interviews with USCIS officials asking detailed questions about speeding tickets. If you have ever had any contact with law enforcement, you must consult with an experienced immigration attorney before submitting any application to or attending any interview with the US government.

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Are you eligible for US citizenship?

The basic requirements for citizenship are that you have had your green card for the required time (3 years or 5 years), that you have lived in the US for that time, that you are a good person, and that you can pass English and Civics tests. Those requirements are deceptively simple. For example, have you spent many months, even adding up to years, outside the US in the past 3 or 5 years? Are you a good person who happens to use medical marijuana? Do you have a memory problem that makes it impossible for you to learn the civics materials?



How to prove "Good Moral Character"?

- *Honesty in N-400 Application*
- *Criminal Record*
- *Tax Returns*
- *Employment Records*
- *Community Involvement*
- *Personal References*

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*Should you apply as a 5-year *LPR or 3-year *LPR?*

You are only eligible to apply for 3-year citizenship if during that entire period you have been married to a US citizen and living with the US citizen for that entire 3-year period. If you've taken relationship separations during that 3-year period, you may not be eligible for the shorter citizenship eligibility. On the other hand, if you've been separated from your US citizen spouse because your job relocated you across the country, you are probably still eligible for 3-year citizenship. In some ways the 5-year citizenship is "easier" because you don't have to prove your real relationship with your US citizen spouse. However, if you had any "good moral character" issues in the past 4 and 5 years, you may want to push for the 3-year citizenship to take the "bad" issues out of the statutory consideration of your eligibility. Finally, you may only be eligible to file for 5-year citizenship, and if so, then that's the way to go.

**Legal Permanent Resident*

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Congratulations

YOU ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO ACHIEVING
YOUR IMMIGRATION GOALS!

We hope this workbook helped you understand some of the issues that often get in the way of getting approved for US citizenship.

We know it can be a stressful and time-consuming to work on immigration applications. Let us handle the work. You get your citizenship.

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