

# How to Acquire US Citizenship

- USA is a melting pot and land of opportunity where millions of people across the globe aspire to settle in USA. Every year close to 1 million people apply to attain US Citizenship. As per the reports released in 2017, United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) has granted a total of 7, 52,800 US Citizenships in the year 2016.
- The top three countries of origin for naturalization are -- 1, 03,550 people from Mexican origin, 46,100 from Indian origin, and 41,285 from Philippines origin attained Citizenships in 2016.
- US Citizenship can be acquired in three ways:
  1. Citizenship by Birth
  2. Derivation or Acquisition of Citizenship
  3. Citizenship through Naturalization

## **1. Citizenship By Birth:**

- To become a citizen by birth, you must have been born in the United States or some of the US administered territories like Puerto Rico, Guam, The Northern Mariana Islands (born after 1986), and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## **2. Derivation or Acquisition of US Citizenship (Child born outside of USA)**

- Both Parents are married and both are US Citizens at the time of child's birth where at least one parent has been living / lived in US.
- Both Parents are married and only one parent is US Citizen at the time of child's birth where the US Citizen Parent had been physically lived in US for at least 5 years prior to child's birth. Out of these five years stay for the US Citizen Parent in USA, two years stay should be after his/her 14th birthday.

Special Circumstances - If the US Citizen Parent is in any of the three below conditions, the residence condition stated for US Citizen Parent can be exempted.

- Serving in the U.S. armed forces;
- Employed with the U.S. government

- Employed with certain international organizations.
- Both Parents are not married to each other at the time of child's birth –
  - Mother is US Citizen and father is not – Mother has been living / lived in US for at least 1 year continuously prior to child's birth.
  - Father is US Citizen and mother is not – Father has agreed in writing that
    - He is the father of the child
    - Agreed to support the child financially till the child is 18 years old
    - Lived in US for at least 5 years prior to child's birth. Out of these five years stay for the US Citizen Parent in USA, two years stay should be after his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### 3. Naturalization ([N-600](#))

- You have been a permanent resident for at least 5 years and
  - Be 18 or older at the time of filing
  - Have lived within the USA for at least 3 months prior to the date of filing the application.
  - Be physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application
  - Reside continuously within the United States from the date of application for naturalization up to the time of naturalization
  - Be able to read, write, and speak English and have knowledge and an understanding of U.S. history and government (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.
- Marrying a US Citizen
  - You have been a permanent resident for 3 years or more
  - Be 18 or older

- 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 for at least 3 months prior to 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 USA for at least 18 months out of these 3 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application.
- Be able to read, write, speak English and have knowledge and an understanding of US history and government (also known as civics).
- Be a person of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the USA, and well-disposed to the good order and happiness of the USA during all relevant periods under the law.

## Eligibility to Get a Green Card (I-485)

1. Family Based
2. Employment Based
3. Investment
4. Special Immigrants
5. Refugee or Asylum
6. Green Card Lottery
7. Green Card through Registry

### 1. Family Based Green Card

- If you are Spouse of a US Citizen or a Green Card holder
- If your parent(s) are US Citizen(s) or Green Card Holder(s) (The child must be unmarried if the parents are Green card holders)
- If your brother or sister is a US Citizen (at least 21 years of age)
- If you are fiancé of US Citizen (K1 non-immigrant)
- If you are child of fiancé of US Citizen (K2 non-immigrant)

### 2. Employment Based Green Card

### 3. Investment (EB-5) Green Card

Foreign entrepreneurs who invest in a commercial enterprise that will benefit the U.S. economy

- Invest \$500,000 and create at least 5 full-time U.S. jobs.
- Invest \$1,000,000 and create at least 10 full-time U.S. jobs.

#### **4. Green Card through Refugee or Asylum Status**

- US must have granted asylum status for that person at least 1 year ago
- US must have admitted as a refugee for that person at least 1 year ago

#### **5. Green card Lottery (DV Lottery)**

- The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (Green Card Lottery) makes available up to 55,000 Green Cards annually, to randomly selected entrants from eligible countries.
- The DV lottery is run once a year, usually in October, and selectees are randomly chosen by computer, who may then apply for diversity immigrant visa.
- To take part in the green card lottery, you must be a high school graduate or have two years of work experience within the past five years. This work experience must be in a job that requires at least two years of training or experience.

#### **6. Green Card through Registry**

- If you entered US prior to Jan 1, 1972 and are not ineligible for US Citizenship

For more information, please visit [www.prasadthotakura.com](http://www.prasadthotakura.com)

(Dr. Prasad Thotakura, an Indian American Community leader, over three decades of community service earned the reputation as a *'man with vision and mission'*, *'community leader with compassion and commitment'*, *'very sensible and ever accessible'*)