

I Am a U.S. Citizen

How Do I... Get Proof of My U.S. Citizenship?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

M-560 (August 2008)

A4 Customer Guide

If you were born in the United States, you do not need to apply to USCIS for any evidence of citizenship. Your birth certificate issued where you were born is proof of your citizenship.¹

If you were born outside the United States, but one or both of your parents were U.S. citizens when you were born, you may still be a U.S. citizen. This is called citizenship through derivation. There are usually additional specific requirements, and sometimes citizenship can be through a combination of a parent and grandparent.

What documents are usually accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship?

The most common documents that establish U.S. citizenship are:

- **Birth Certificate**, issued by a U.S. State (if the person was born in the United States), or by the U.S. Department of State (if the person was born abroad to U.S. citizen parents who registered the child's birth and U.S. citizenship with the U.S. Embassy or consulate);
- **U.S. Passport**, issued by the U.S. Department of State;
- **Certificate of Citizenship**, issued to a person born outside the United States who derived or acquired U.S. citizenship through a U.S. citizen parent; or
- **Naturalization Certificate**, issued to a person who became a U.S. citizen after 18 years of age through the naturalization process.

I was born in the United States. Where can I get a copy of my birth certificate?

Check with the Department of Health (Vital Records) in the U.S. State in which you were born. For more information, visit the National Center for Health Statistics web page at www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm.

¹An exception to this rule exists regarding children born in the United States to foreign diplomats.

I am a U.S. citizen. My child will be born abroad or recently was born abroad. How do I register his or her birth and U.S. citizenship?

Please contact the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Embassy or consulate in the country where your child will be born for more information about eligibility requirements and how to register your child's U.S. citizenship.

I was born overseas. My birth and U.S. citizenship were registered with the U.S. Embassy or consulate. I need a copy of the evidence of my citizenship. Whom should I contact?

Contact the U.S. Department of State. For more information, please see their website at www.state.gov.

I was born overseas. I believe I was a U.S. citizen at birth because one or both my parents were U.S. citizens when I was born. But my birth and citizenship were not registered with the U.S. Embassy when I was born. Can I apply to have my citizenship recognized?

Whether or not someone born outside the United States to a U.S. citizen parent is a U.S. citizen depends on the law in effect when the person was born. These laws have changed over the years, but usually require a combination of the parent being a U.S. citizen when the child was born, and the parent having lived in the United States or its possessions for a specific period of time. Derivative citizenship can be quite complex and may require careful legal analysis.

I was born overseas. One of my parents was a U.S. citizen but never lived in the United States. One of my grandparents was also a U.S. citizen. Could I have derived U.S. citizenship?

If your parent was a U.S. citizen when you were born but had not lived in the United States for the required amount of time before your birth, but one of your grandparents was also a U.S. citizen and had already met the residence requirements, then you may still

have derived U.S. citizenship. The provisions of immigration law that govern derivative citizenship are quite precise and circumstances in individual cases can be complex. For specific information on how the law applies, please check our website or the U.S. Department of State website at www.state.gov, or call USCIS Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283**.

I was born overseas. After I was born, my parent(s) became naturalized U.S. citizens. Could I have derived U.S. citizenship?

If **one** of your parents naturalized after February 27, 2001, and you were a permanent resident and under 18 years old at the time, then you may have automatically acquired U.S. citizenship. Before that date, you may have automatically acquired U.S. citizenship if you were a permanent resident and under 18 years old when **both** parents naturalized, or if you had only **one** parent when that parent naturalized.

However, if your parent(s) naturalized after you were 18, then you will need to apply for naturalization on your own after you have been a permanent resident for at least 5 years.

How do I apply to have my citizenship recognized?

You have two options:

- You can apply to the U.S. Department of State for a U.S. passport. A passport is evidence of citizenship and also serves as a travel document if you need to travel. For information about applying for a U.S. passport, see the U.S. Department of State website at www.state.gov.
- If you are already in the United States, you also have the option of applying to USCIS using **Form N-600**, *Application for Certificate of Citizenship*. However, you may find applying for a passport to be more convenient because it also serves as a travel document and could be a faster process.

How do I replace a lost, stolen, or destroyed Naturalization Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship?

To apply to replace your Naturalization Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship issued by USCIS or by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, file a **Form N-565**, *Application for Replacement Naturalization Citizenship Document*. The N-565 application is available on our website.

Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Application for Certificate of Citizenship	N-600
Application for Replacement Naturalization Citizenship Document	N-565

USCIS

- **On the Internet at: www.uscis.gov**

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- **Customer Service: 1-800-375-5283**
- Hearing Impaired TDD Customer Service: 1-800-767-1833

Other U.S. Government Services—Click or Call

General Information	www.usagov.gov	1-800-333-4636
New Immigrants	www.welcometoUSA.gov	
U.S. Dept. of State	www.state.gov	1-202-647-6575
National Center for Health Statistics	www.cdc.gov	1-800-311-3435
	www.cdc.gov/nchs/birth.htm	

Disclaimer: This guide provides basic information to help you become generally familiar with our rules and procedures. For more information, or the law and regulations, please visit our website. Immigration law can be complex, and it is impossible to describe every aspect of every process. You may wish to be represented by a licensed attorney or by a nonprofit agency accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals.



I Am a Permanent Resident

How Do I... Renew or Replace My Permanent Resident Card?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

M-562 (August 2008)

B2 Customer Guide

A Permanent Resident Card (USCIS Form I-551) is proof of your permanent resident status in the United States. It also serves as a valid identification document and proof that you are eligible to live and work in the United States. Although some Permanent Resident Cards, commonly known as "Green Cards," contain no expiration date, most are valid for 10 years. If you have been granted conditional permanent resident status, the card is valid for 2 years.

It is important to keep your card up-to-date. Without a valid card, it may be difficult for you to prove that you are a permanent resident, and this could also affect your ability to travel or to prove your eligibility to work in the United States.

When do I need to *renew* my Permanent Resident Card?

You should renew your Permanent Resident Card if you were issued a card valid for 10 years that has either expired or will expire within the next 6 months.

If your Permanent Resident Card is valid for only 2 years, you are a conditional resident. You will need to file a petition to remove the conditions of your residence before the card expires. You may file this petition up to 6 months before the card expires. If your petition is approved, you will be sent a new Permanent Resident Card valid for 10 years. You do not need to file Form I-90. This is discussed below.

If your card does not have any expiration date on the front, then you have a very old version. Most old versions are no longer valid. Even if your card does not have an expiration date on it, we recommend you apply to renew it.

When do I need to *replace* my Permanent Resident Card?

Apply to replace your Permanent Resident Card if any information on your card needs to be changed, or if your card has been lost, stolen, or damaged.

Also, if you became a permanent resident before you turned 14 years old, you are required to replace your card when you become 14 years old.

What application do I file to *replace or renew* my Permanent Resident Card?

To apply to renew or replace your card, use **Form I-90**, *Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card*. The Form I-90 is available on our website at www.uscis.gov.

How do I file the I-90 to *renew or replace* my Permanent Resident Card?

Please refer to our website under Immigration Forms, I-90, for specific filing instructions, and then complete the form. You can also e-file your I-90 on our website at www.uscis.gov.

How do I *remove conditions* on my 2-year conditional Permanent Resident Card?

Do not use Form I-90 if you are a conditional resident and your status is expiring. If you are a permanent resident who was granted conditional permanent resident status, you are required to file a petition to remove those conditions within 90 days of your card expiring.

If your conditional status was based on a marriage, file **Form I-751**, *Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence*.

If your conditional status was based on being an investor or entrepreneur, file **Form I-829**, *Petition by Entrepreneur to Remove Conditions on Permanent Resident Status*.

If you do not file the petition to remove the conditions before your card expires, you may lose your permanent resident status. Form I-751 and Form I-829 are available on our website at www.uscis.gov. Instructions for the forms will give you more details. For additional questions, please contact Customer Service at **1-800-375-5283**.

Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card	I-90
Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence	I-751
Petition by Entrepreneur to Remove Conditions on Permanent Resident Status	I-829

USCIS

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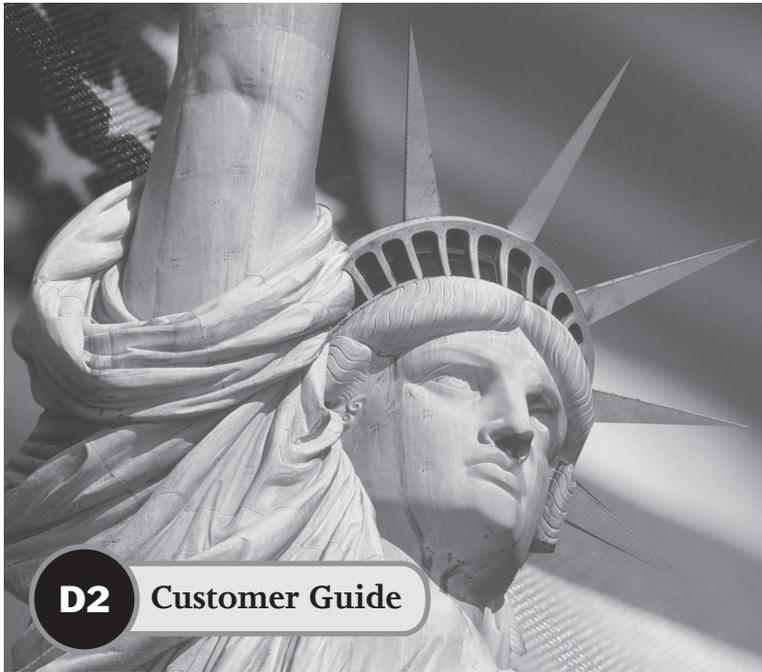
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Other U.S. Government Services—Click or Call

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New Immigrants	www.welcometoUSA.gov	
U.S. Dept. of State	www.state.gov	1-202-647-6575

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I Am a Refugee or Asylee

How Do I... Show My Employer That I Am Authorized to Work in the United States?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

M-576 (August 2008)

D2 Customer Guide

To legally hire any employee in the United States, an employer must be able to verify that the applicant is eligible to work in the United States. You must prove that you are eligible to work. Employers are required to complete a **Form I-9, *Employment Eligibility Verification***, to record verification that you showed the employer documents that prove you are authorized to work in the United States.

If you would like to see what an I-9 looks like, please visit our website at www.uscis.gov.

Refugee

If you entered the United States as a refugee, you are authorized employment as part of your refugee status. The inspector at the port of entry where you entered the country should have issued you a **Form I-94, *Arrival-Departure Record***, stamped to indicate "Employment Authorized." U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will issue you an employment authorization document (EAD) either at the port of entry or as soon as possible after your entry into the United States.

A refugee can apply for a Social Security card with the Form I-94 and an official government-issued identification document containing a photo (such as an unexpired foreign passport or driver's license). Once you have your Social Security card, you can use it to show your employer that you are eligible to be employed. You can also use an EAD issued to you by USCIS to prove your eligibility.

When you first apply for a job in the United States, your Form I-94 is proof of your work authorization, for up to 90 days. If you use your I-94 to prove eligibility, you are required to present to your employer other evidence of eligibility within 90 days.

Asylee

If you are an asylee, you are authorized employment as part of your asylee status. An EAD will be issued to you after the Asylum Office, an immigration judge, or the Board of Immigration Appeals grants you asylum.

You may also apply for a Social Security card with the asylum approval notice or the Form I-94 that USCIS issued to you showing

that you are an asylee, along with an official government-issued identification document containing a photo (such as an unexpired foreign passport or driver's license). Once you have your Social Security card, you can also use it to show your employer that you are eligible to be employed.

I am a refugee. How do I get an employment authorization document (EAD)?

As a refugee, you are entitled to work upon admission to the United States. An application for an EAD is prepared as part of your refugee travel packet that you bring with you to the United States. This application is taken at the port of entry and routed for expeditious processing so that an EAD is issued. The card will be delivered to you through the voluntary agency that is responsible for your refugee resettlement in the United States. You do not need to apply for an EAD.

I am an asylee. How do I get an EAD?

As an asylee, you do not necessarily need to have an EAD issued by USCIS to prove eligibility to work in the United States. If you have been granted asylum by USCIS, the Asylum Office will begin processing your EAD automatically, and you do not need to file an application for work authorization.

However, if you have been granted asylum by an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), you will receive post-order instructions on how to obtain an EAD from USCIS, either as a separate handout or in your BIA decision. As indicated in those instructions, you may make an appointment through the InfoPass program on the USCIS website to visit your local USCIS office to be processed for your EAD, which will be mailed to you promptly. You may also submit an application for an EAD by mail if you do not wish to do visit a USCIS office. You must take your Immigration Court order or the BIA decision to your appointment, or provide it with your EAD application, if you are filing an application by mail. If you already received an EAD after you were granted asylum by either USCIS or an immigration judge and you want to **renew** your EAD, you must apply on USCIS **Form I-765, *Application for Employment Authorization***.

Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Employment Eligibility Verification	I-9
Arrival-Departure Record	I-94
Application for Employment Authorization	I-765

USCIS

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