

How Do I Get a Disability-Based Waiver?

Citizenship Application Help for People with Disabilities

What is the Disability-Based Waiver?

To become a citizen of the U.S., most applicants must show the USCIS that they speak, understand and write basic English. Applicants also must pass a test in U.S. government and history. If you have a disability that makes you unable to learn or remember new information like English and history, you can apply for a Disability Waiver. If the Waiver is granted, you won't be required to speak English or take the history tests and can still become U.S. citizen.

Who can get a Waiver?

The Waiver is very difficult to get. It's ONLY for people with disabilities that make them unable to learn or remember new information. It's NOT for people who just have a hard time learning English or memorizing the history questions.

What kind of disabilities qualify for the Waiver?

Some examples include:

- stroke
- Alzheimer's
- severe mental illnesses like depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and
- learning disabilities.

This is not a complete list.

How do I apply for a Waiver?

Ask your doctor to complete [USCIS Form N-648](#). (The form is available for download at www.uscis.gov.) On the form, the doctor explains what kind of disability you have and how it makes you unable to learn or remember new information. You can either submit this form with your application for citizenship, [USCIS Form N-400](#), or bring it to your interview. Seek help from a community organization or legal services office to prepare your application and accompany you to your citizenship interview.

◆ For help with your application, visit a lawyer in person or get advice from a lawyer by calling a legal hotline. If you're low-income and don't live in King County, call CLEAR at 1-888-201-1014. If you live in King County, call the King County Bar Association's Neighborhood Legal Clinics at (206) 267-7070 between 9:00 a.m. and noon, Monday – Thursday, to schedule a free half-hour of legal advice.

How does USCIS decide if I get a Waiver?

At your citizenship interview, the USCIS officer will review your doctor's Form N-648. If your doctor's statement should:

- describe your disability;
- explains clearly how it keeps you from learning; and
- contain all information required by USCIS.

If the statement does these things, the examiner should approve the waiver. Then you'll be allowed to have your interview in your native language and won't have to take the history test.

What happens if the hearing officer isn't satisfied with my doctor's statement?

S/he won't approve the waiver. S/he may ask you to get more information and return

for a second interview, or s/he may conduct the interview in English and ask you to take the history test.

USCIS didn't approve my Waiver. What should I do?

Get help from a community organization or legal services office. (See shaded box above for contact info.) They can review your application and determine if additional information could improve your application.

If I apply for a Waiver, do I have to take the Oath of Citizenship?

Yes. Every adult must understand and take the oath to become a citizen. If the USCIS officer finds that you don't understand that you're applying for citizenship, s/he won't approve your application. Then you cannot become a citizen.

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