

[Naturalization Information](#) (Eligibility and Procedures)

A citizen of the United States is a native-born, foreign-born, or naturalized person who owes allegiance to the United States and who is entitled to its protection. In addition to the naturalization process, the United States recognizes the U.S. citizenship of individuals according to two fundamental principles: jus soli, or right of birthplace, and jus sanguinis, or right of blood.

The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees citizenship at birth to almost all individuals born in the United States or in U.S. jurisdictions, according to the principle of jus soli. Certain individuals born in the United States, such as children of foreign heads of state or children of foreign diplomats, do not obtain U.S. citizenship under jus soli.

Certain individuals born outside of the United States are born citizens because of their parents, according to the principle of jus sanguinis (which holds that the country of citizenship of a child is the same as that of his / her parents). The U.S. Congress is responsible for enacting laws that determine how citizenship is conveyed by a U.S. citizen parent or parents according to the principle of jus sanguinis. These laws are contained in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Information on who is a citizen or national at birth can be found in the following sections of the INA: § [301](#), § [302](#), § [303](#), § [304](#), § [305](#), § [306](#), § [307](#), § [308](#), and § [309](#).

Definition of [country of citizenship](#).

For information on restoration of citizenship see § [324](#) and § [327](#).
For information on posthumous citizenship, see § [329A](#).

The procedure for applying for proof of citizenship is contained in [8 CFR 341](#).

The U.S. Department of State's web pages on [Citizenship and Nationality](#) provides guidance on some citizenship issues including information on dual nationality, documentary evidence required to establish a citizenship claim, and renunciation of U.S. citizenship.

Children and Citizenship

Each year, many people adopt children from outside the U.S. For information, see our [Inter-Country adoptions](#) page and the [State Department's International Adoption](#) page. (More information for U.S. citizens abroad is on the State Department's [website](#).)

The INA provides information on children and citizenship (including for those [adopted abroad](#)) in § [320](#) and § [322](#).

In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Child Citizenship Act, which impacts the INA. The following titles will link you to information about this Act and to other relevant documents.

[Child Citizenship Act Program Update, January 2004](#)

[Information for Parents of Foreign-Born Children Residing Abroad, January 2004](#)

[Information for Adoptive Parents of Foreign-Born Orphans Residing in the U.S., January 2004](#)

[Information for Parents of Foreign-Born Biological Children Residing in the U.S., January 2004](#)

Persons who became citizens under the previous § 320 or the repealed § 321 are still citizens even though the law that made them citizens is no longer in force. These individuals may apply for Certificates of Citizenship at any time.

The Immigration of Adopted and Prospective Adopted Children (Handbook M-249):