



A Division of the New York Legal Assistance Group

LegalHealth
Professional Partnership to Promote Well Being[®]

This is general information, not legal advice. Patients should consult an attorney for specific guidance.

Exceptions to Language Requirements for Naturalization

As part of the Naturalization Process, applicants are required to take an English and civics test, unless they qualify for an exemption or waiver.

English Language Exceptions

- Applicants qualify for an exemption from the English Language Requirement, but *may take the Civics Test in their native language* if they are:
 - Age 50 or older at the time of filing for naturalization **and** have lived as a lawful permanent resident (green card holder) in the United States for 20 years; or
 - Age 55 or older at the time of filing for naturalization **and** have lived as a lawful permanent resident in the United States for 15 years.

Applicants taking the civics test in the native language:

- Should bring someone fluent in English and native language to interpret during the Naturalization Interview.
- If an applicant is 65 or older **and** has been a lawful permanent resident for at least 20 years at the time of filing for naturalization, s/he will be given special considerations regarding the civics requirement, such as an abbreviated list of questions.

Medical Disability Exemptions to English and Civics Requirements

- Applicants may be eligible for an exemption to the English and civics naturalization requirements if they have a physical or developmental disability or a medically supported mental impairment, such as depression, dementia, or Alzheimer's. Advanced age or illiteracy alone do not qualify as mental impairments.
- Patients of the hospital who may qualify for a medical disability exemption should be referred to the LegalHealth clinic for assistance with their naturalization application and Form N-648, Medical Certification for Disability Exemptions which must be completed by a licensed physician or clinical psychologist.

Applicants who do not qualify for an exemption should visit <https://my.uscis.gov/findaclass> to locate a convenient ESL class.

More questions? Refer patients for an appointment with a LegalHealth attorney

www.legalhealth.org

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