



Hot Topics In Naturalization

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Today's Hot Topics

- ❖ **Ongoing Issues with Long Absences in post(ish) COVID world**
- ❖ **The N-648 Form Adjudication Trends**
- ❖ **Review of the New! N-400 Form**
- ❖ **The 2024 N-400 Fee Changes**
- ❖ **Ongoing Policy: Auto Extension of I-551**
- ❖ **Naturalization Adjudication Trends**



Ongoing Issues with Long Absences

Continuous Presence and Filing after a Break in Residence

- Still dealing with long absences and extended travel
- 12 USCIS-PM D.3(C)(1)



Impact of Absence from the United States During Statutory Period on Naturalization Eligibility

Duration of Absence	Must Applicant Overcome Presumption of a Break in the Continuity of Residence?	Eligible to Naturalize?
6 months or less	No ^[26]	Yes
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	Yes	Yes
1 year or more (without USCIS approval via N-470 process)	Not eligible to apply	No

Filing Under Specific Provisions After Break in Continuous Residence

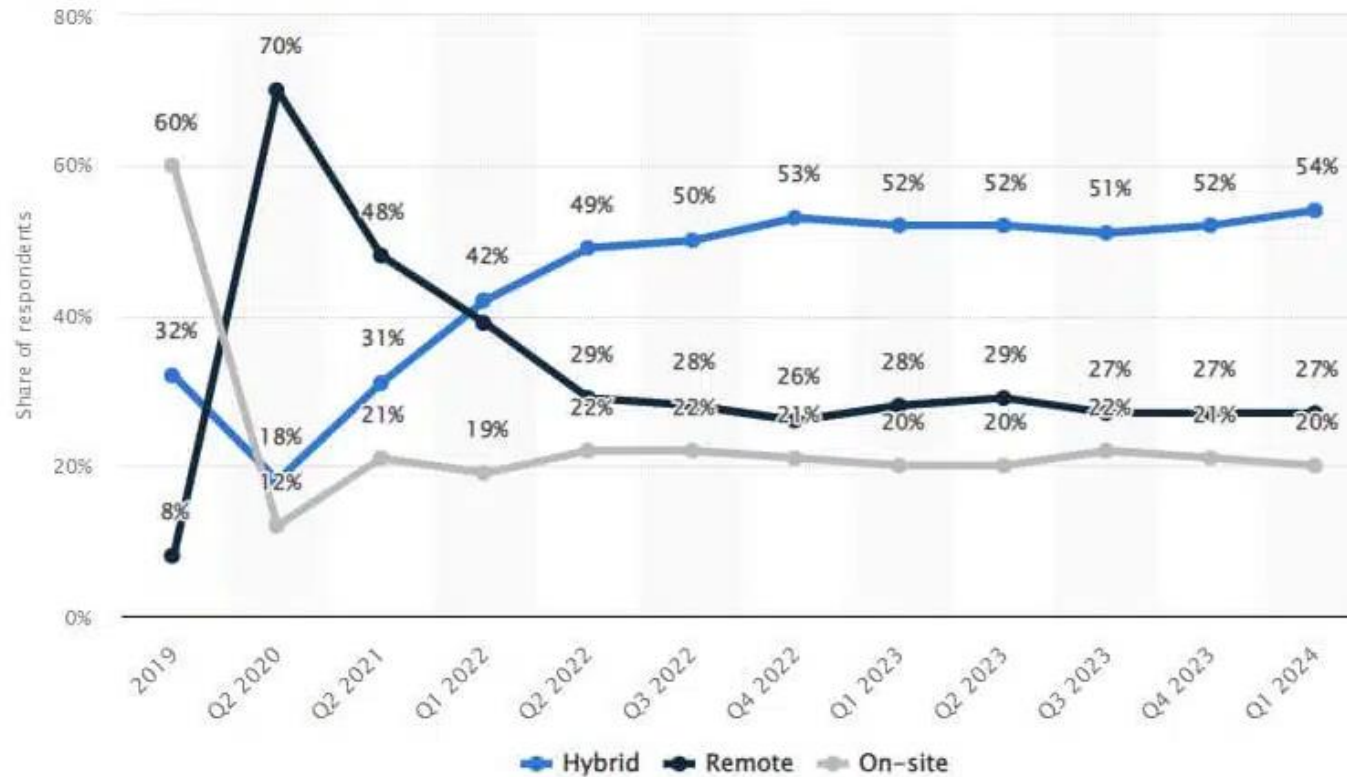
Provision	Absence During Statutory Period	May Apply After...
INA 316 5-year statutory period	More than 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 years and 6 months, or 4 years and 1 day (but must overcome presumption of break in continuity of residence)^[27]
INA 319 3-year statutory period	More than 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 years and 6 months, or 2 years and 1 day (but must overcome presumption of break in continuity of residence)

Impact of Remote Work

Throughout 2015–2023, the percentage of people working remotely around the world quadrupled, from 7% to 28%



Share of workers working onsite versus hybrid or remote in the United States from 2019 to first quarter 2024



Source: Statista

The N-648 Form : Trends

Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions

- ❖ The form serves in cases where a foreign national is applying for U.S. citizenship and needs to request an exception to the English and civics testing requirements for naturalization because of physical or developmental disability or mental impairment.
- ❖ Good news! It has been simplified
- ❖ The Office of Management and Budget approved the new edition of Form N-648 on August 19, 2022. As of November 21, 2022, USCIS will only accept the 08/19/22 edition.
- ❖ <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-12-part-e-chapter-3>



The N-648 Form: Trends

Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions

- ❖ Clarifies minimum information needed on the Form N-648 for sufficiency.
- ❖ Eliminates content related to questions that have been removed from the Form N-648 including: dates of diagnosis and when the disability or impairment began; description of/severity of each disability or impairment; effects on the applicant's daily life; and doctor/patient relationship.
- ❖ Provides that USCIS may accept a Form N-648 submitted after the naturalization application is filed.
- ❖ Provides guidance regarding telehealth medical examinations for Form N-648.
- ❖ Updates requirements for oath waiver requests to allow submission of either Form N-648 or a written request from an authorized medical professional

NEW N-400 Form

- Released April 1, 2024, mandatory as of June 3, 2024
- Changed information on children: living and under 18 years old
- Gender changes : allows an "X" marker for "other gender identity"
- Request Social Security notification
- Simplified the form (from 20 to 14 pages)
- Simplified questions – adios to the Nazi question!



New N-400 Form

- No date calculations
- Clarifies that a name change requires a judicial ceremony and thus may delay adjudication
- Removes the requirement to list ALL group memberships
- Removes questions about habitual drunkard and whether or not an applicant has been confined to a mental institute
- Overall impressions?



N400 Reduced Fee

<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1055?form=n-400>

N-400, Application for Naturalization

[Visit the N-400 page for more information.](#)

Filing Category	Paper Filing Fee	Online Filing Fee
General Filing	\$760	\$710
If your documented annual household income is not more than 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and you submit supporting documentation with your application.	\$380	N/A
If you meet the requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act sections 328 or 329 with respect to military service.	\$0	\$0

Certain applicants may be eligible for a Fee Waiver. See [Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver](#), Instructions.

You cannot file online if you are requesting a fee waiver or a reduced fee; you must file a paper Form N-400.

N400 Reduced Fee

For the 48 Contiguous States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: [^](#)

Household Size	Fee Waiver (Form I-912) 150% of HHS Poverty Guidelines*	Reduced Fee for Form N-400 400% of HHS Poverty Guidelines*
1	\$22,590	\$60,240
2	\$30,660	\$81,760
3	\$38,730	\$103,280
4	\$46,800	\$124,800
5	\$54,870	\$146,320
6	\$62,940	\$167,840
7	\$71,010	\$189,360
8	\$79,080	\$210,880

USCIS Fact Sheet on Fee Waivers

Was issued in 2/2023

Clarifies fee waiver process generally:

- 1) You or spouse receive a means-tested benefit
 - 2) Household income at are below 150% FPG
 - 3) Currently experiencing financial hardship
- <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/fact-sheets/FactSheetI-912RequestforFeeWaiverForFormN-400.pdf>
 - Reduced Fee form: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-942>



Natz and the Military

- **FREE is a good price!**
- **Shortened GMC period : 1 year during a period of hostility**
 - INA § 329
 - <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-12-part-i-chapter-3>



Ongoing Policy: Auto Extension of I-551

- Effective Sept. 26, 2022, USCIS began automatically extending Green Cards to 24 months for lawful permanent residents who file Form I-90.
- Applies to current and expired Green Cards.
- Increases the previous 12-month automatic extension.
- Can schedule INFOPASS for ADIT stamp if no physical green card. **MUST** have a valid passport.



ADIT Stamp Processing

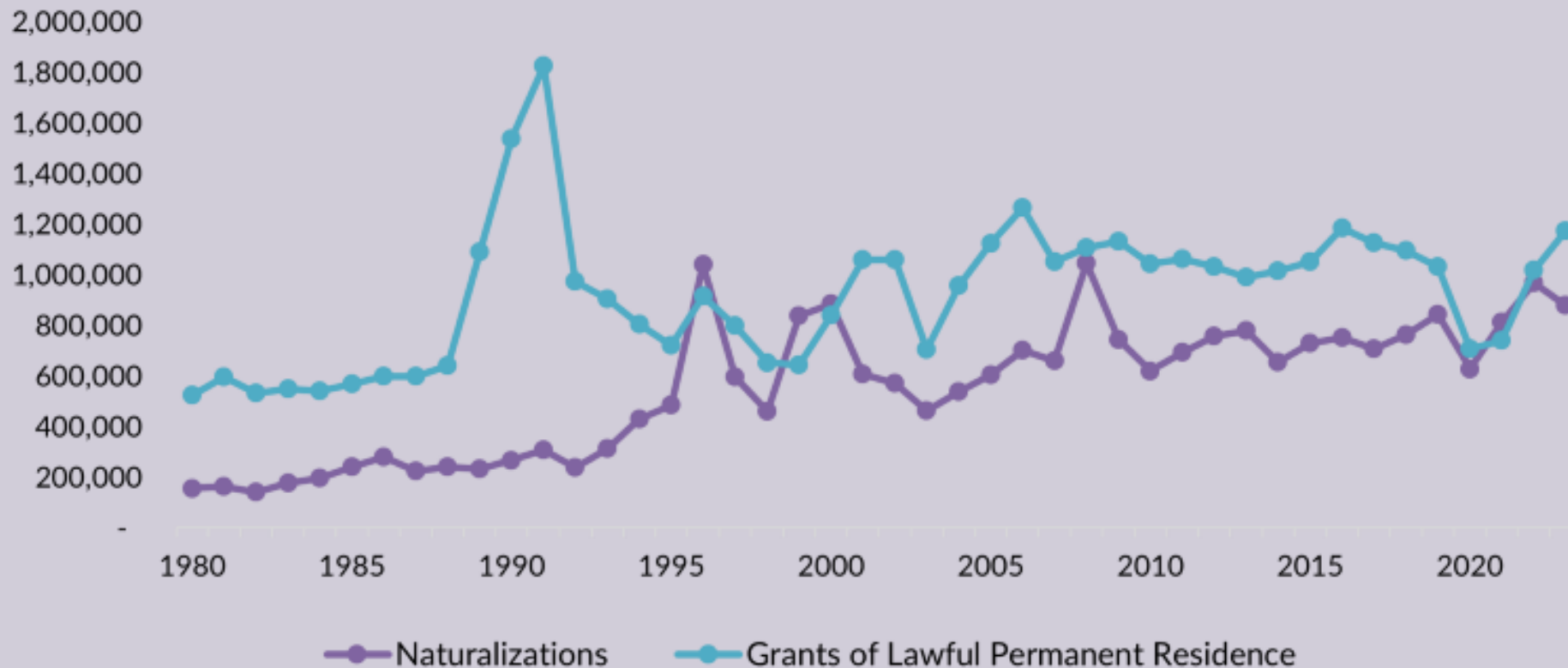
Seems to be processing relatively smoothly in most locations


<https://my.uscis.gov/en/appointment/v2>



Adjudication Trends

Figure 1. New Naturalizations and Grants of Lawful Permanent Residence, FY 1980-2023



Sources: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Homeland Security Statistics (OHSS), *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Washington, DC: DHS, OHSS, various years), available online; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), "Naturalization Statistics," updated May 9, 2024, available online; DHS, OHSS, "Legal Immigration and Adjustment of Status Report Fiscal Year 2023, Quarter 4," updated May 5, 2024, available online .

Adjudication Trends: USCIS Field Offices

Location	80% of Cases Completed
Atlanta, GA	8.5 Months
Chicago, IL	7 Months
Houston, TX	7.5 Months
Los Angeles, CA	7 Months
Miami, FL	9 Months
Phoenix, AZ	6.5 Months



Other Natz Trends

- Stacking I-751/N-400s
- Online Filings – pros/cons
- Oath Ceremonies



Questions & Comments

Thank you!!

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