The Disability Waiver Process

The disability waiver process can be complicated. Use this chart to get a general idea of how to proceed when working with a naturalization applicant who needs to apply for a waiver.

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network is proud to support those seeking citizenship. Get more resources in our Citizenship Toolkit at cliniclegal.org/citizenship.

Applicant sees a medical professional. Medical professional determines that the disability prevents the applicant from meeting the naturalization testing requirements, even with reasonable accommodations, and completes Form N-648.

Applicant reviews the N-648 with a legal representative. Legal representative checks for accuracy and completeness.

Applicant submits the N-648 with Form N-400. Applicant can also request accommodations in Part 2, #10 on the N-400.

Applicant attends the naturalization interview with a USCIS officer. Officer approves the N-648.

Applicant returns to the medical professional and obtains a third N-648 and/or additional information.

Applicant passes the test. Applicant may reapply for naturalization and begin the process again. (Go to START)

Applicant is given an opportunity to take the English and civics test.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

Officer decides that the N-648 is not sufficient.

Officer waives the English and/or civics test and completes the naturalization interview in the applicant’s native language with an interpreter, if needed.

If the applicant meets all the other requirements, the N-400 is APPROVED. He/she is scheduled to take the oath of allegiance.

The appeal is DENIED.

The citizenship application is DENIED. The applicant receives a denial letter, explaining why the N-648 was not sufficient.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

Applicant passes the test.

Applicant may appeal the denial by filing Form N-336.

Applicant is given a third opportunity to take the test.

Applicant may reapply for naturalization and begin the process again. (Go to START)

Applicant attends the appeal interview.

Officer approves the N-648.

Officer decides that the third N-648 is not sufficient.

Applicant attends second interview.

Officer gives applicant Form N-14 and schedules a second interview.

With form N-14, the applicant returns to the medical professional, who completes a second N-648 with additional information.

Applicant attends second interview.

Officer approves the N-648.

Officer decides that the second N-648 is not sufficient.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

Applicant passes the test.

Applicant may reapply for naturalization and begin the process again. (Go to START)

Applicant is given a second opportunity to take the test.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

The appeal is DENIED.

Applicant passes the test.

Officer decides that the second N-648 is not sufficient.

Officer waives the English and/or civics test and completes the naturalization interview in the applicant’s native language with an interpreter, if needed.

Applicant is given a second opportunity to take the test.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

The appeal is DENIED.

Applicant passes the test.

Applicant returns to the medical professional and obtains a third N-648 and/or additional information.

Applicant may appeal the N-648.

Applicant is given a second opportunity to take the test.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

The appeal is DENIED.

Applicant passes the test.

The citizenship application is DENIED. The applicant receives a denial letter, explaining why the N-648 was not sufficient.

Applicant returns to the medical professional and obtains a third N-648 and/or additional information.

Applicant may reapply for naturalization and begin the process again. (Go to START)

Applicant attends the appeal interview.

Officer approves the N-648.

Officer decides that the third N-648 is not sufficient.

Applicant is given a third opportunity to take the test.

Applicant fails or declines to take the test.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who qualifies as a medical professional?

The Form N-648 must be completed by a licensed medical doctor (M.D.), clinical psychologist (Ph.D.), or doctor of osteopathy (D.O.). The form should be completed by the doctor who regularly treats the applicant for the disability or impairment, or who has experience diagnosing his/her type of disability.

Who qualifies as a legal representative?

The two common categories of individuals who are authorized to provide legal advice and legal services on immigration matters are: (1) attorneys and (2) accredited representatives of a non-profit religious, charitable, or social service organization established in the United States and recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA).

An unauthorized representative – whether seeking to cheat the applicant or to help out of kindness – could jeopardize the applicant’s future immigration status. Applicants should seek only qualified help and ask to see credentials. Visit cliniclegal.org/affiliates/directory to find a qualified representative in your area.

What is on the citizenship test?

Unless eligible for an exemption or waiver, citizenship applicants must demonstrate: 1) an ability to read, write, and speak basic English; and 2) a knowledge of U.S. history and civics. For the English speaking test, the applicant must be able to answer questions about his/her citizenship application (N-400) and follow instructions during the interview. The applicant will be given sentences to read and write in English and up to 10 questions about U.S. history and civics. To learn more about the citizenship test and to download a free study guide prepared by CLINIC, visit cliniclegal.org/citizenshiptest.

How do I get more resources?

For more resources about citizenship, visit cliniclegal.org/citizenship for our Citizenship Toolkit.

Glossary of Forms

N-648: Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions

N-400: Application for Naturalization

N-14: Request for Additional Information, Documents or Forms

N-336: Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings

This resource was provided by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., the largest network of charitable legal immigration programs in the United States. For more resources, visit cliniclegal.org.