



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

# How to Become a Canadian Citizen



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Canada 



# How to Become a Canadian Citizen

This brochure

- explains who can become a Canadian citizen and who cannot;
- tells you how to apply to become a Canadian citizen; and
- answers some of the questions you may have.

## Who can become a Canadian citizen

### To become a Canadian citizen

You must be a permanent resident of Canada **and** 18 years of age or older

Children under 18 years of age and persons adopted by Canadians can also become citizens, but they do not have to meet the same requirements as adults (see “**Applying for children**” and “**Citizenship for persons adopted outside Canada**”).

You must have lived in Canada for at least three years

You must have lived in Canada for at least three years (1,095 days) in the four years immediately before you apply for citizenship. For example, if you applied for citizenship on June 1, 2012, we would count back to June 1, 2008. Each day you lived in Canada **AFTER** you became a permanent resident counts as one day of residence. Each day you lived in Canada **BEFORE** you became a permanent resident counts as half a day of residence.

To find out when you can apply for citizenship, use the online Residence Calculator, available on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) website at **[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)**, or contact the **CIC Call Centre** (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).

## You must know English or French

Canada has two official languages—English and French. To become a citizen, you must show that you have adequate knowledge of one of these languages. If you are between 18 and 54, you will have to send **proof of your ability to *speak and listen* in English or French** with your citizenship application. Some examples of this proof can be:

- Results of a CIC-approved third-party test; **or**
- Transcripts or diploma from secondary or post-secondary education in English or French, in Canada or abroad; **or**
- Evidence of achieving the **Canadian Language Benchmark** level 4 or higher in certain government-funded language training programs.

## You must demonstrate knowledge of Canada

You must understand the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, such as voting in elections, obeying the law and helping others in the community. You must also demonstrate knowledge of Canada's government, history, symbols and geography. If you are applying as an adult and are not yet 55 years of age, you will need to pass the citizenship test, which could be a written test or an interview with a citizenship judge. When we begin to process your application, we will send you an acknowledgment letter and a copy of the citizenship study guide *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*. This guide will help you prepare for your citizenship written test and/or interview. The guide is also available on our official website and can be consulted any time ([www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/index.asp)).





## Applying for children

Parents or persons who have custody may apply for citizenship on behalf of minor children (under 18 years of age). One parent, including an adoptive parent, must already be a Canadian citizen or must be applying to become a citizen at the same time. If a child has a Canadian legal guardian but no Canadian parent (natural or adoptive), the child is not eligible for citizenship. To become citizens, minor children need to be permanent residents but do not need to have lived in Canada for three years. Minor children do not have to write the citizenship test or meet the language requirement.

## Citizenship for persons adopted outside Canada

Foreign-born persons adopted by a Canadian citizen on or after January 1, 1947, may be eligible for citizenship without having to either become permanent residents or live in Canada. For information on the citizenship process for adopted persons, please contact us (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).

# Who cannot become a Canadian citizen

In general, you cannot become a Canadian citizen if:

- you are in prison, on parole or on probation (serving a sentence);
- in the past four years, you were in prison, on parole or on probation for more than one year;
- you were convicted of an indictable offence (a crime) under any Act of Parliament or an offence under the *Citizenship Act*, in the three years preceding your application;
- you are currently charged with an indictable offence (a crime) under any Act of Parliament or an offence under the *Citizenship Act*;
- you are under a removal order (instructed by Canadian officials to leave Canada);
- you are under investigation for, are charged with, or have been convicted of a war crime or a crime against humanity; or
- your Canadian citizenship has been taken away (revoked) in the past five years.

The items listed above are prohibitions—factors that could prevent you from becoming a Canadian citizen. The application form contains questions on these prohibitions, and you must answer them truthfully when you apply for citizenship. If you think you may not qualify because you have been charged with a crime or you have a criminal record, or if you need more information on this subject, contact us (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).



# How to apply to become a Canadian citizen

To apply to become a Canadian citizen, follow the six steps below.

## 1. Make sure you have the appropriate application form

To apply to become a Canadian citizen, you must complete the appropriate application form and follow the instructions in the relevant guide.

If you are an adult (18 years of age or older), you must complete the “**Application for Canadian Citizenship—Adults**” form. If you are applying for your children (under 18 years of age), you must complete the “**Application for Canadian Citizenship—Minors**” form. A separate form must be completed for each child.

You must download and print the application form and guide from the CIC website at **[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)**.

## 2. Read the application guide

Read the instructions in the application guide carefully; they will help you complete the citizenship application form.

Application processing fees are **not** refundable, so make sure you are eligible to become a citizen before you apply. See question 3 at the end of this publication.

### 3. Complete the application form

The application form contains instructions.

**Read the instructions carefully. Complete the form, pay the fees, provide the required photographs and attach photocopies of the documents listed in the document checklist.**

The instruction guide will tell you how to complete the form and what documents you need to include. You will have to show the original documents at the time of your test and/or interview and at the ceremony.

If your documents are not in English or French, you must provide the originals, the translations and an affidavit from the person who translated each document. Translations by family members are not acceptable.

Remember to:

- sign and date the form;
- include the receipt of payment (online receipt or IMM 5401 form);
- include your application form;
- include your photographs;
- include photocopies of all your documents; and
- provide the original translations of your documents, if applicable.

If you are applying for more than one person, you can submit all the forms and documents in the same envelope and they will be processed together. For example, family members who want their applications to be processed at the same time must send all applications in the same envelope. If they are sent in different envelopes, they will be processed separately. You may also provide one payment receipt for the entire family.



## 4. Mail the application form and documents

After you have completed the application form, mail it to:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Case Processing Centre  
P.O. Box 7000  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 6V6

Your application will be returned to you if:

- it is signed more than three months before we receive it;
- it is post-dated (dated into the future); or
- it is incomplete, missing information or missing the required documents listed in the document checklist.



## 5. Get ready for the test or interview

Once we begin processing your application, we will send you a copy of *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*, the citizenship study guide. The study guide is also available on CIC's website at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca), where you can:

- download it as a PDF, eBook or mobile app;
- listen to the audio; or
- order a printed copy.

Start studying as soon as possible to prepare for your citizenship test or possible subsequent interview. If you meet the basic requirements for citizenship and you are between the ages of 18 and 54, we will send you a “Notice to Appear to Write a Citizenship Test” or a “Notice to Appear—Hearing with a Citizenship Judge” informing you of the location, date and time of your test or interview.

When you come for the written test or interview, you must bring the originals (personal identification, immigration documents, etc.) of the photocopies you submitted with your application and all your passports or travel documents relevant to the four years preceding your application. The citizenship test and/or subsequent interview with the citizenship judge will assess your knowledge of Canada and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.





## 6. Take the oath of citizenship at a citizenship ceremony

If you meet all the requirements to become a Canadian citizen, we will send you a “Notice to Appear to Take the Oath of Citizenship” informing you as to when and where your citizenship ceremony will take place.

At the ceremony, new citizens are formally welcomed into the Canadian family and they formally accept the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship. The citizenship ceremony is legally and symbolically important.

**All citizenship candidates 14 years and older must be seen by officials repeating the oath of citizenship as it is the final requirement to become a Canadian citizen.** When taking the oath of citizenship, you may choose to either swear or affirm. Swearing is for people who would like to refer to their religious beliefs while taking the oath. If you want to swear the oath of citizenship on the holy book of your choice, please bring it with you to the ceremony.

You must bring all original immigration documents in your possession to the citizenship ceremony. If you have a permanent resident card, you must bring it. If you became a permanent resident before June 28, 2002, you must bring your immigration Record of Landing (IMM 1000). If you have both of these documents, bring both of them to the ceremony.

Once you have taken the oath at a citizenship ceremony, you will be a Canadian citizen. You will also receive your citizenship certificate. **It is neither a travel document nor an identity document. Any Canadian citizen wanting to travel outside Canada must obtain a Canadian passport.**

# Questions

## 1. What should I do if I move after I apply for citizenship?

You should notify CIC right away. You can change your address online at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) or you can contact the CIC Call Centre (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication). When you change your address, you will have to provide both your **old** and **new** addresses.

## 2. How much does it cost to apply for Canadian citizenship?

The fee for adults is C\$400, which includes a C\$300 processing fee and a C\$100 right of citizenship fee. For children under 18, only a processing fee of C\$100 applies.

## 3. What if my application is turned down? Will I get my money back?

If you do not meet all the requirements to become a Canadian citizen, we will send you a letter explaining the decision and what you can do next.

If an adult is not granted citizenship, we will refund the C\$100 right of citizenship fee. However, the C\$300 processing fee is non-refundable.

If a minor child is not granted citizenship, the C\$100 processing fee is non-refundable.





#### 4. Where can I find out the status of my citizenship application and the processing time?

For information about the status of your citizenship application or to find out how long it takes to become a Canadian citizen, visit the CIC website at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) or contact the CIC Call Centre (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).

#### 5. Who has to write the citizenship test?

Only people between the ages of 18 and 54 must take the citizenship test (written or oral, or both). If you are 55 or older, you do not have to take the test, although you will be scheduled to appear at the local office for a review of the original documents (personal identification, immigration documents, etc.) that you submitted with your application and your passports or the travel documents relevant to the four years preceding your application. You may also be scheduled to appear for an interview with a citizenship judge. Children who are under 18 years of age at the time of application do not have to take the citizenship test.

#### 6. Who has to take the oath of citizenship?

Applicants who are 14 and older must attend the citizenship ceremony to take the oath of citizenship, including applicants 55 or older. Children under the age of 14 are not required to take the oath of citizenship, although they are welcome to attend the ceremony.

## 7. I am still a citizen of another country. Will I lose that citizenship if I become a Canadian?

Under Canadian law, a Canadian is allowed to be a citizen of another country as well. Some countries, however, will not let you keep their citizenship if you become a Canadian citizen. The consulate or embassy of your other country of citizenship can let you know if this applies to you.

## 8. What happens if I miss the citizenship test, my interview or the ceremony?

During the processing of your application, you must attend a series of events in order to meet all the requirements to become a citizen. We will mail you notices informing you as to when and where to go for the citizenship test, interview (if applicable) and citizenship ceremony. All events take place in Canada. If you do not appear for any of these events, your file may be closed. You will then have to re-apply, pay the fees and go through the entire process again.

If you know in advance that you will be absent, please contact the CIC Call Centre (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).





## 9. Could I be a Canadian citizen and not know it?

If you are uncertain about whether you are a Canadian citizen, we encourage you to use our online self-assessment tool before applying for a proof of Canadian citizenship. To use the online tool, visit the CIC website at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca), and proceed to the “Apply for Citizenship” section.

In general, if you were born in Canada, you are a Canadian citizen. If you were born in Canada after February 14, 1977, **and** at the time of your birth, your parents were not Canadian citizens or permanent residents, **and** at least one parent had diplomatic status in Canada, you are not a citizen. If you were born in Canada before February 15, 1977, to a parent who was a foreign diplomat in Canada, contact CIC for more information on eligibility.

### **If you were born in another country**

In general, you are a Canadian citizen if you became a citizen through the naturalization process in Canada (i.e., you were a permanent resident [a landed immigrant] before you became a citizen).

In general, you are a Canadian citizen if you were born outside Canada and one of your parents was a Canadian citizen at the time of your birth, and that parent was either born in Canada or naturalized in Canada (“naturalized” means that the parent was a permanent resident [a landed immigrant] before becoming a citizen). You are the first generation born outside Canada.

You **may** be a Canadian citizen if you were born outside Canada between January 1, 1947, and April 16, 2009, inclusive, to a Canadian parent who was also born outside Canada to a Canadian parent (you are the second or subsequent generation born outside Canada). If you think this may apply to you and you need more information, please contact us (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).

If you were a British subject residing in Canada when the *Canadian Citizenship Act* came into force on January 1, 1947, or you were born outside Canada to a British subject parent who might have become a citizen on that date, contact us to find out how to confirm whether or not you are a citizen (see “**Contact Information**” at the end of this publication).





## Contact Information

You can obtain information on CIC's programs and services online at **[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)**. You can also visit the CIC Help Centre online at [www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre), which provides answers to commonly asked questions on a range of topics searchable by keyword or subject.

If you are in Canada, you can contact the CIC Call Centre at **1-888-242-2100** (toll free). The automated voice response system can provide you with answers to general questions 24 hours a day. You can also speak to an agent between **8:00 a.m.** and **4:00 p.m.**, your local time.

If you are hard of hearing and use a text telephone, you can access the TTY service at **1-888-576-8502** between **8:00 a.m.** and **4:00 p.m.**, your local time.

If you are outside Canada, contact the **Canadian embassy, high commission or consulate** responsible for your region.

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