



December 4, 2020

PA-2020-25

Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Properly Completed Medical Certification For Disability Exception (N-648)

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to reflect changes made in the new version of the Medical Certification for Disability Exception ([Form N-648](#)).

Background

In 1994, Congress enacted legislation providing an exception to the English and civics requirements for naturalization applicants who cannot meet the requirements because of a physical or developmental disability, or mental impairment.¹ The Form N-648 must be completed and certified by a medical professional and attest that the applicant's condition prevents the applicant from meeting the requirements.² The new edition of [Form N-648](#) was approved on July 23, 2020, and as of October 13, 2020, USCIS only accepts the 07/23/20 edition. This guidance, contained in Volume 12 of the Policy Manual, is effective immediately. The guidance contained in the Policy Manual is controlling and supersedes any related prior guidance on the topic.

Policy Highlights

- Provides that a properly completed Form N-648 includes dates of diagnosis and when the disability or impairment(s) began; description of severity of each disability or impairment; and description of how each relevant disability or impairment affects specific functions of the applicant's daily life.
- Specifies that Form N-648 should be completed by the certifying medical professional no more than 6 months prior to the filing of the naturalization application.

Citation

Volume 12: Citizenship and Naturalization Part E, English and Civics Testing and Exceptions, Chapter 3, Medical Disability Exception (Form N-648) [[12 USCIS-PM E.3](#)].

¹ See Section 108 of the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994, Pub. L. 103-416, 108 Stat. 4305, 4309 (October 25, 1994) (adding INA 312(b)).

² Only medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, or clinical psychologists licensed to practice in the United States (including the U.S. territories) are authorized to certify the form. See [8 CFR 312.2\(b\)\(2\)](#).