

Benefits of becoming a U.S. Citizen

Right to Immigrate Family Members

A U.S. citizen can sponsor a wider number of family members to come to the U.S. and the waiting time for them to receive a visa is faster than for the relatives of permanent residents.

Derivative Citizenship for Children

When a permanent resident naturalizes, his or her children under age 18 may automatically become U.S. citizens by derivation. There are certain requirements to qualify for derivative citizenship.

More Employment and Educational Opportunities

Many federal, state, and local government jobs, as well as certain scholarships for higher education, require U.S. citizenship.

Full Civic Participation

A U.S. citizen has the right to vote in national, state, and local elections; to run for elected office; and to serve on a jury.

Travel Benefits

A U.S. citizen can travel outside the U.S. for unlimited periods of time and re-enter freely.

Public Benefits

A U.S. citizen can receive public benefits such as food stamps and Medicaid without the restrictions imposed on non-citizens.

Keep Your Residency

In general, a U.S. citizen's right to remain in the United States cannot be taken away.

Learn more at cliniclegal.org/citizenship.

CLINIC's Citizenship Navigator and text4refugee Projects are funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Grant # 90RB0051-01-00. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.