PENDER & COWARD
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELLORS AT LAW

PRACTICE AREA

NATURALIZATION AND CITZENSHIP

Becoming a U.S. citizen and holding the U.S. passport is the American dream for many immigrants. We are privileged to assist our clients through this process by accurately assessing one's eligibility to obtain U.S. citizenship, preparing a quality naturalization package, preparing for a citizenship interview, and accompanying our clients to the citizenship interview. Pender & Coward immigration attorneys guide our clients throughout the naturalization process until they are holding their Naturalization Certificate in one hand and an American flag in the other.

Naturalization and Citizenship Applications

Naturalization is the process of becoming a U.S. citizen for people who were born outside of the U.S. If you have a parent who was a U.S. citizen before turned you turned 18, then you can apply for a Certificate of Citizenship, instead of Naturalization, as you can obtain automatic U.S. citizenship through your parent.

Before naturalization, a lawful permanent resident applicant must be 18 years old or older and willing to support and defend the U.S. and its Constitution, and the applicant must meet the physical, continuous presence requirement. Specifically, permanent residents who are still married to and cohabitating with their U.S. citizen petitioners can apply in 3 years, while other permanent residents have to meet the five-year continuous permanent resident status. Also, an applicant must have been physically present in the U.S. for at least half of the required continuous presence time, unless one meets an exemption based on certain overseas employment.

Permanent Residency and Green Cards

In general, one may obtain permanent residency (Greencard) through employment-based immigration or family-based immigration. For specifics, please visit our employment-based immigration page and family-based immigration page.

Citizenship Tests and Interviews

Once an applicant submits a naturalization application, the U.S.C.I.S. will schedule an in-person interview at a local field office. At the interview, the interviewing officer will review the application and the applicant will take a citizenship or naturalization test, unless the applicant qualifies for an exemption.

Applying for naturalization to become a U.S. citizen is an exciting process for our clients. Pender & Coward immigration attorneys are experienced in filing for naturalization for conditional permanent residents, as well as in assessing eligibility for filing for applicants with criminal/arrest/citation records or other state/federal law violation history.

One can apply for naturalization within 90 days preceding the continuous resident requirement, instead of waiting for the full 5 years (or 3 years for permanent residents who are still married or cohabitating with their U.S. citizen petitioners). If you wish to file for naturalization as soon as you are eligible, then we advise our clients to speak to Pender & Coward immigration attorneys as soon as you are interested in and eligible to file for naturalization.