



*circulated at the request of Councilor Minnan-Wong*

# Citizenship and Immigration Canada

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*GM 22.15.24*

## Determine your eligibility – Citizenship

To be eligible to become a Canadian citizen, you must meet the requirements in all of the following areas:

- [Age](#)
- [Permanent resident status](#)
- [Residence in Canada](#)
- [Language abilities](#)
- [Criminal history \(prohibitions\)](#)
- [Knowledge of Canada](#)

### Age

You must be at least 18 years old to apply for Canadian citizenship.

To apply for citizenship for a child under 18, the following conditions must be met:

- the person applying is the child’s parent, adoptive parent or legal guardian
- the child is a permanent resident, but does not need to have resided in Canada for three years; and
- one parent is already a Canadian citizen or is applying to become a citizen at the same time. This also applies to adoptive parents.

### Permanent resident status

To become a Canadian citizen, you must have permanent resident status in Canada, and that status must not be in doubt. This means you must not be the subject of an immigration investigation, an immigration inquiry or a removal order (an order from Canadian officials to leave Canada).

### Residence in Canada

To become Canadian citizens, adults must have resided in Canada for at least three years (1,095 days) in the past four years before applying. Children under the age of 18 do not need to meet this requirement.

You may be able to count time you spent in Canada before you became a permanent resident if that time falls within the four-year period.

Use the [citizenship calculator](#) to find out if you have lived in Canada long enough to apply for citizenship.

### Language abilities

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:

- The results of a CIC-approved third-party test; **or**
- Transcripts or a diploma from a secondary or post-secondary education in English or French, in Canada or abroad; **or**
- Evidence of achieving Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB)/Niveau de compétence linguistique canadien (NCLC) level 4 or higher in certain government-funded language training programs.

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Please see the [full list of documents we will accept as proof](#) of the language requirement for citizenship. You can also consult the [Do you have acceptable documents for the citizenship language requirement? flowchart](#).

CIC staff will also look at how well you:

- understand basic spoken statements and questions, and
- express basic information or answer questions.

When you talk to [CIC](#) staff or a citizenship judge interviews you, you will have to:

- take part in short, everyday conversations about common topics;
- understand simple instructions and directions;
- speak using basic grammar, including simple structures and tenses; and
- show that you know enough common words and phrases to express yourself.

A citizenship judge makes the final decision on all cases.

### **Criminal history (prohibitions)**

You cannot become a citizen if you:

- have been convicted of an indictable (criminal) offence or an offence under the *Citizenship Act* in the three years before you applied;
- are currently charged with an indictable offence or an offence under the *Citizenship Act*;
- are in prison, on parole or on probation;
- are under a removal order (have been ordered by Canadian officials to leave Canada);
- are under investigation for, are charged with, or have been convicted of a war crime or a crime against humanity; or
- you have had your Canadian citizenship taken away in the past five years.

If you are on probation or are charged with an offence and are awaiting trial, you should wait until after the probation has ended or the trial is over to apply for citizenship.

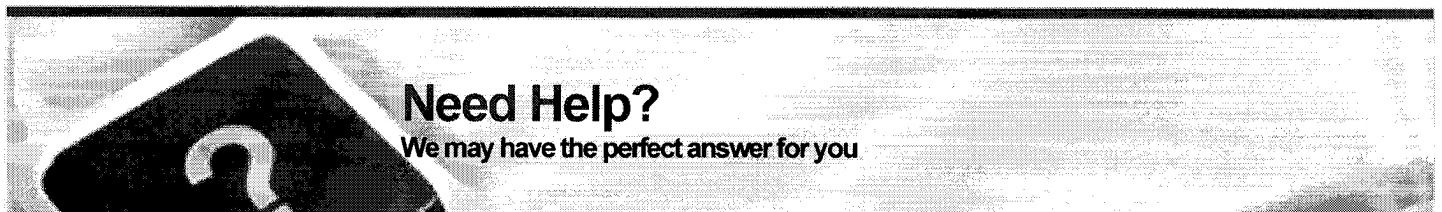
If you have spent time on probation, on parole or in prison in the last four years, you may not meet the residence requirement for citizenship.

Time in prison or on parole does not count as residence in Canada. Time on probation also does not count as residence in Canada if you were convicted of an offence. If you have spent time on probation from a conditional discharge, it may be counted toward residence. For details, contact the [Call Centre](#).

### **Knowledge of Canada**

To become a citizen, you must understand the rights, responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, such as the right and responsibility to vote in elections. You must also demonstrate an understanding of Canada's history, values, institutions and symbols.

The information you need to know is in our free study guide [Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship](#). We will send you a copy of it once we have received your application. The questions in the citizenship test are based on the information in this guide.



### **Top questions**

- › [What are the requirements for becoming a Canadian citizen?](#)