GERMAN RESEARCHERS

German citizenship document checklist

Rules checked November 2026. Use with the free eligibility checker at germanresearchers.com/german-citizenship-eligibility-checker/

Your German ancestor

- [ ] **Birth or baptism record**
  The Standesamt (civil registry) of the birthplace for births from 1876 (Prussia from October 1874); church books in parish or church archives before that.
- [ ] **Marriage record**
  Same sources as the birth record, or a US county clerk if they married in America.
- [ ] **Proof of German citizenship**
  Old German passports, Heimatschein, citizenship certificate, residence registrations or military papers: family papers, city or state archives.
- [ ] **Emigration and arrival records**
  US passenger lists (National Archives) and Hamburg or Bremen emigration lists.
- [ ] **US naturalization record, or proof they never naturalized**
  USCIS Genealogy Program (index search, then record request); the National Archives and county courts for older naturalizations. The date decides whether citizenship passed on.

Every generation between the ancestor and you

- [ ] **Certified birth certificate (long form)**
  State or county vital records office.
- [ ] **Marriage certificate, and divorce decrees showing they are final**
  County clerk or state vital records office; court for divorces.
- [ ] **Death certificate (where relevant)**
  State or county vital records office.
- [ ] **Name-change records**
  The court that granted the change.
- [ ] **Discharge papers (DD-214) if anyone served voluntarily in a foreign army**
  National Personnel Records Center (NARA).

For you (the applicant)

- [ ] **Certified birth certificate and marriage certificate**
  State or county vital records office.

- [ ] **Notarized copy of your US passport photo page**
  Any notary.

- [ ] **FBI Identity History Summary, no older than 6 months (§ 5 and § 15 routes only)**
  FBI, ordered online.

Forms and legalization

Follow the BVA information sheet for your route: the rules differ between procedures.

- [ ] **The right BVA form**
  Certificate of citizenship: form F plus an Anlage V for each ancestor. Declaration: Vordruck EER. Restoration: form A (Article 116(2)) or E15 (§ 15). All on bva.bund.de.

- [ ] **Originals or officially certified copies, front and back**
  Plain photocopies are not accepted for a certificate of citizenship or a declaration.

- [ ] **Apostilles on US documents**
  Required for the certificate of citizenship and the declaration: Secretary of State of the issuing state. Usually not needed for restoration (except the FBI report for § 15).

- [ ] **Translations of non-German documents**
  Sworn translations for the certificate of citizenship and the declaration; generally not needed for English documents in restoration cases.

Missing a record? German Researchers finds and retrieves the records you need. Free consultation: germanresearchers.com/free-consultation/ or call 866-632-9291.
A guide, not legal advice. Requirements change; confirm with your consulate before you apply.