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Policy Alert

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Military Accessions Vital to National Interest Program

Purpose

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is issuing policy guidance in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to provide information about the existing Department of Defense (DOD) Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Program. This update incorporates currently available information about MAVNI and does not establish new policies or procedures.

Background

In 2009, the DOD authorized the MAVNI pilot program as a recruitment pilot to enlist certain nonimmigrants and other foreign nationals with skills considered vital to the national interest of the United States.¹ The program applies to certain health care professionals and foreign nationals fluent in certain foreign languages. MAVNI enlistees may apply for naturalization under section 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) upon completing the enlistment process of the U.S. armed forces. This update adds a designated section on the DOD MAVNI program in Volume 12 of the Policy Manual.

Policy Highlights

- Provides the DOD MAVNI eligibility requirements including who may be eligible.
- Explains that the DOD does not permit MAVNI applicants who are nonimmigrants to have been abroad for more than 90 days during the 2-year period preceding enlistment.
- Clarifies that J visa exchange visitors (and their dependent spouse or child) who enlist through MAVNI are not required to comply with the INA 212(e) residency requirement to naturalize.

Citation

Volume 12: Citizenship and Naturalization, Part I, Military Members and their Families
[\[12 USCIS-PM I.3\]](#)

¹ See the DOD MAVNI Fact Sheet at <https://dod.defense.gov/news/mavni-fact-sheet.pdf>.