



**SOVEREIGN
MAN**



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SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE AGE OF TURMOIL

Chilean Residency Update and a Step-by-step Guide to Applying for a Chilean Passport



Capital City Santiago

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N.B.: The information below is accurate as of November 2016. Be aware that policies and information can change quickly, and so it's important to speak with an immigration lawyer/expert or read the latest official updates on the government's Immigration website (in Spanish) before moving forward with the process of obtaining residency in Chile.

Obtaining Chilean residency

Obtaining a second residency in a foreign country is a huge step towards personal freedom and resilience; it ensures that you'll always have a place to go in the event that the situation in your home country isn't as rosy as the politicians and central bankers lead you to believe.

Plus, a few years after establishing official residency, you could be eligible to apply for naturalization and a second passport.

This is something that makes sense, no matter what. You're not going to be worse off because you have a place to go, or because you've obtained a second passport.

But if the worst should happen, having a second residency and/or passport in your back pocket will turn out to be one of the smartest moves you've ever made.

Naturally, it makes sense to establish this second residency in advance.

You don't want to begin the analysis of where to take your family while you're packing your bags. The world is a big place, and there are a lot of possibilities out there.

And while each individual's circumstances differ, Chile presents an option that checks off a lot of boxes for a lot of people.

As a country, it's a fantastic place to live: secure, resilient, and tremendously abundant in natural resources.

Chile is also safe, especially when it comes to violent crime. Statistically speaking, Chile is the second safest country in the entire Americas when measured by a number of intentional homicides, right after Canada and ahead of the United States.

Chile is modern and civilized, and that's especially true of its capital, Santiago. Given the wide variety of products and services in the country, foreigners don't have to go very far to find nearly anything that they need – whether it's organic soaps, specialty clothing, or the latest Ferrari model. It's all in Chile.

There's one “drawback” to Chile's status as an advanced country: It's not an impoverished third world nation, and consequently, it is not priced as an impoverished third world nation would be. (Although there are indeed pockets of deep poverty in the country.)

The resulting cost of living is substantially higher than in, say, Ecuador or Cambodia. But the standard of living in Chile, likewise, can be much higher than in those places.

Also, Chile is a great place for productive “doers”. The business and investment opportunities in Chile are nearly boundless. And growing.

This isn't a place to hide from the world; rather, it's a place to engage with the world from a position of strength.

Most of all, Chile has a very straightforward residency program. The country welcomes foreigners with open arms, and there are a number of ways to obtain Chilean residency.

The best part: After five years of residency, you can apply for naturalization and obtain a Chilean passport... one of the most valuable in the world.

As of 2016, Chilean citizens can travel visa-free to the United States, Canada, the European Union, Russia, and many other countries and regions.

And Chile is likely the only country in Latin America where you can go through the immigration process yourself, without the need of an immigration lawyer, especially if you speak Spanish.

But as straightforward as the process is for obtaining residency in Chile, it can be a bit difficult for a foreigner to navigate. Especially if knowledge of Spanish is not your strong suit.

We have covered the process of Chilean residency before, but some of that information is now obsolete; therefore, we decided to outline the entire process for you once again, folding in the latest developments.

The main changes to immigration procedures (since we last covered Chilean residency and citizenship)

Before we dive deeply into details, let's take a look at the major changes to the residency and citizenship processes since we last covered the topic a while back. Fortunately, we have only good news for you here:

Apostille legalization – since September 2016, Chile became part of The Hague Apostille Convention, which effectively abolishes the tedious consulate legalization of documents among convention members.

The minimum age to be eligible for naturalization used to be 21 years old (in some cases going down to 18). That changed in 2016, when the minimum eligible age dropped to 18 (and 14 for children of foreigners.)

Finally, **for those planning to give birth** in Chile, there is good news too – you don't have to worry about applying for temporary residency in order for your child to receive citizenship upon birth. Now you can do everything just on your tourist visa.



Colorful houses in Valparaiso

Part I. Temporary and Permanent Residency in Chile

There are a number of ways to obtain residency in Chile; in fact, there are officially about a dozen different categories.

Some of them are much more common than others.

We've broken down the best options into three main tracks for you, each of which will guide you all the way through to qualifying for Permanent Residency.

Track 1: For people of all ages with passive income

The first track is often referred to as the “rentista” visa, and it is a great option for individuals who can demonstrate regular monthly or quarterly passive income that can be used to support themselves while living in Chile.

There is no clearly stated amount that you must demonstrate, nor is there an approved list of sources. But examples include:

- Rental income from real estate that you own (anywhere in the world)
- Pension income; including public pension / private pension / Social Security
- Dividends or distributions from public companies
- Dividends or distributions from private companies
- Interest income from bonds or other securities
- Interest income from a lump sum in a bank account or CD

Again, there is no clear guideline here, so applicants have a lot of flexibility. In fact, the government's official requirement is simply that you provide some documentation which "indicates you're obtaining periodic economic resources."

The only thing that is specifically mentioned is real estate rental income. But again, applicants have a lot of latitude.

Note – this income **should not be from a job**, though it's perfectly acceptable to demonstrate income you receive through dividends from a company that you own.

Therefore, if you have a company that has the potential to pay out this sum of money regularly, you may be able to set things up to strategically meet this requirement.

It is also much more preferable to receive your income monthly rather than a lump sum once a year.

Our recommendation is that you be able to demonstrate income of at least \$1,500 for a single applicant, plus \$500 per each dependent. So for a family of four, we would recommend demonstrating a passive income \$3,000 per month.

An important thing to keep in mind as well is that you will need to show this passive income stream when applying for both temporary and permanent residencies, so be prepared to maintain this financial situation for at least a year and a half.

Track 2: For retirees with a "lump sum" in the bank

The second track is exclusively for those of retirement age – generally 55 and over – who have the option to demonstrate financial independence through a lump sum of liquid assets.

For a lump sum, amounts of at least \$125,000 for a single applicant, plus \$25,000 for each dependent are advisable.

These can be demonstrated across brokerage accounts, bank accounts, retirement accounts (IRA, 401(k), etc.), or any combination of the three. They can also be held anywhere in the world.

You will need to show this lump sum when applying both for temporary residency and again for permanent residency, so be prepared to maintain this level of liquid assets for at least a year and a half.

The evidence of the lump sum can simply be bank or brokerage account statements.

Unfortunately, being retired and being of retirement age are not the same in the eyes of the immigration officials, thus the age requirement is essential to meet to qualify for Track 2.

Track 3: For people of all ages without passive income who intend to operate a company in Chile

Finally, the third option is for those intending to start a business in Chile.

For this, the financial requirement is lower, just \$60,000, but within three months after obtaining temporary residency, you will need to start your company in order to put you on track for permanent residency.

Please note there are additional costs associated with this – including the costs of setting up the company, accounting fees, and taxes to the Chilean government.

It's also important to keep in mind that the government evaluates the “success” of the business (i.e. a certain amount of revenue/income), and if they don't find the company's performance “good enough” at that point, they won't grant you Permanent Residency after the first year.

This isn't the kind of program where you can just open the company and sit on it (like in Panama). They want to see that you are operating the company, and contributing to the Chilean economy.

Which is why if you are able to qualify for Track 1 or Track 2 above, we advise you to pursue those. These are far and away the simplest ways to qualify.

When it comes time to apply for permanent residency, the government is going to want to see that you have met certain criteria during your first year of operations. So we will also advise you on getting your company set up properly to ensure you are on the right path to qualify for permanent residency.

In each of the three tracks above, the requirements listed are for the primary applicant only.

A primary applicant can apply for his/her dependent family members as well. But dependents are generally not entitled to seek work during the temporary residency period (no restrictions for permanent residency holders).



Chilean Vineyard

Timeline until citizenship and the application process

The most important step for you as an applicant is to gather all the required documents.

Once you gather the documents, you'll be ready to book your flight down here. A residency application **MUST** be lodged from Chile.

By the end of your trip, your temporary residency application will be in process.

It will take the immigration department approximately 2 months to provide a provisional approval, and another 2 to 4 months to issue a final approval.

(Obviously this is an estimation subject to change...)

Once the application has been fully approved, you must return to Chile within two months of that date.

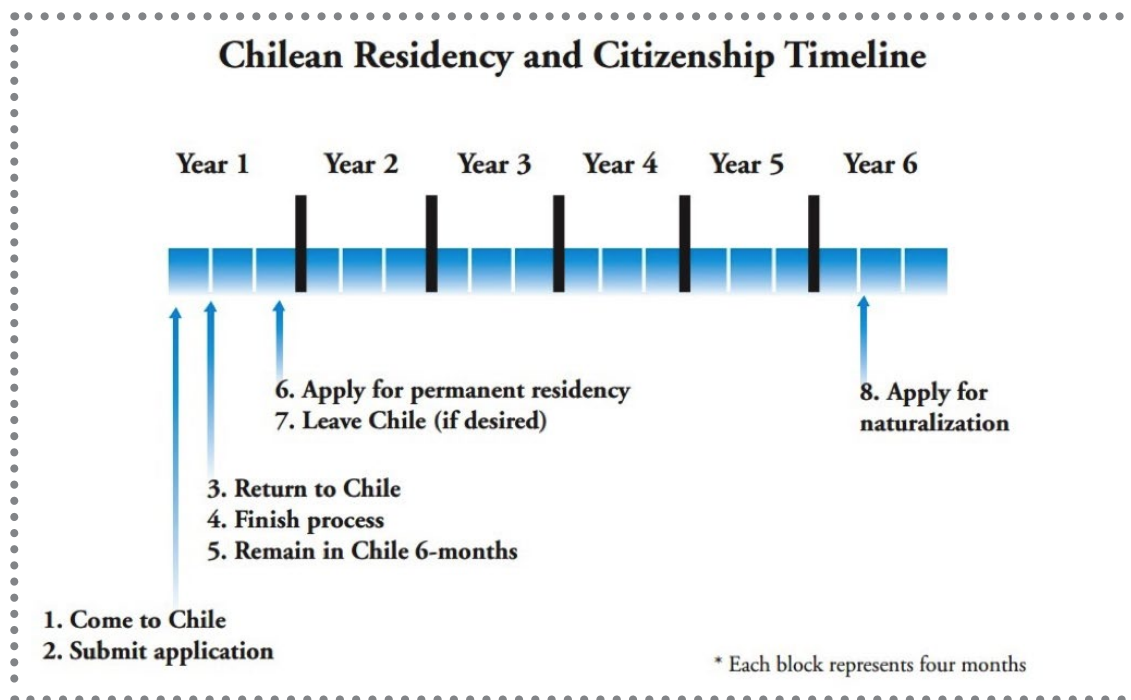
Let's say you lodge your application on January 1st; you should have your approval sometime between May and June.

This means you'll want to plan your schedule to ensure travel to Chile for a second time between June and August to complete the process.

The second time you come to Chile, you'll need to finalize a few steps, including getting your passport stamped with the temporary visa.

It's at this point that the official "clock" starts ticking for temporary residency (and for the 5-year period until naturalization).

Obviously, if you choose to live in Chile full-time, you can do that. There is no need to return to your home country after applying for residency unless you choose to do so.



Your foremost mission is to get your temporary residency. With temporary residency approved, everything else is just a matter of time.

The process goes like this:

1. Obtaining all the relevant documents

It is the one part of this process that only you can accomplish.

The lawyer whom you will be working with (if you chose to work with a lawyer at all) will send you the latest list of required documents, the exact nature of which will depend on the residency path you choose.

Our legal counsel recommendation

Whether to use a lawyer is completely up to you and your Spanish language proficiency (and your ability to resist frustration when dealing with inefficient bureaucracy). We know many people who successfully went through the process by themselves; however, in most other cases, **getting professional help will save a GREAT deal of frustration and time**, so that's what we recommend by default.

If you chose to work with a lawyer, we recommend contacting *Della Maggiora Eyzaguirre Abogados*.

Website: www.dmey.cl

Tel: +56 (2) 24995990

Email: info@dmey.cl

Don't forget to mention you are a Sovereign Man subscriber, because we have a discount negotiated just for you. The price per applicant will be \$950, which is about \$300 off their normal "walk-in" price.

Note that this price does not include translation fees, if any of your documents require it. Nor does it include the government's immigration fee, which you must pay upon approval of your temporary visa. The latest fee schedule *can be found here* (in the "visa temporaria" column).

As you can see, fees range widely (from \$0 to over \$1,300) and depend on the nationality of the applicant. Only the main applicant pays this fee, and any dependents pay a trivial sum.

Otherwise, the latest list can be found on the official governmental website, in Spanish. (Scroll to "rentista y jubilado" section – they correspond to Tracks 1 and 2 outlined above):

<http://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/tipos-de-residencia-temporaria/>

We will discuss the required application documents in more detail below.

2. Coming to Chile

Plan on spending around 7-10 business days in Chile during your first trip.

Realistically, everything can be completed in a single day, but if you are new to the process, and especially if you are not using any help of a professional, we recommend spending several days here. Besides, you've just flown all the way down to Chile, so why rush through the experience?

You will need to physically mail the application package with all gathered documents to:

CLASIFICADOR N° 8,
CORREO CENTRAL, SANTIAGO.

Please note that mailing your package to aforementioned address only applies to residents of Santiago Metropolitan Region. Residents of other regions of Chile should present their packages personally. Some of the other requisites may also be different (like number of photos or copies of the passport you need to include). Please refer to the latest *requirements here*.

Yes, you will need a residential address to put into your residency application form. That's where the government will be sending you the documents about your progress status (*can also be tracked online*). If you come and stay in Chile during the process, you will understandably have an address that you will be able to use.

If you decide to leave Chile, however, your lawyer will provide you with an address. If you don't have a lawyer, you will need to cooperate with someone in the country who will allow you to use their address.

3. Coming back to Chile to pick up your temporary residency visa after it's approved.

The residency clock will start ticking during your second visit to Chile, so you'll need to make sure you can spend six (185 days to be exact) out of the following twelve months in Chile to qualify for permanent residency. Again, this can be split up into a number of trips in and out of Chile.

At this point, your first mission will be complete, and you'll be a bona fide resident of Chile.

About the legalization process

All documents that were issued outside of Chile need to be apostilled or legalized at a Chilean consulate before presenting them to the Chilean government. Legalization is a standard international process that solves one fundamental problem – it allows civil and judicial officials to reliably verify the authenticity of a document issued abroad.

And here is a good news: Up until recently, you had no other option but go through a lengthy and tedious process of consulate legalization. However, Chile has recently joined the Apostille Convention, so from September 2016 a much simpler process of apostille certification is in place.

In order to know which path to choose, you need to identify if your country is a *member of the Apostille Convention*.

• **If your country IS a member of the Apostille Convention:**

Apostille certification is an easy option. It saves time and often money by reducing the chain of foreign public document legalization to just one step – getting an apostille certification.

An apostilled document can be presented to the Chilean authorities.

However, not all countries are members of the Apostille Convention, though new parties constantly sign up, as you can see from the Chilean example. Currently, The UK and USA are part of the Convention, while Canada is not.

Please search online for the governmental office in your area that is responsible for providing apostille legalization. In the US, this is done by the office of the Secretary of State.

• **If your country IS NOT a member of the Apostille Convention:**

In this case, you need to contact the Chilean consulate located in your country to find out their requirements for document legalization.

Typically, the consulate legalization involves following steps:

1. A local notary or other authority in your home country certifies the document;
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of your country attests the signature and seal of the notary; alternatively, Chilean consulate may still instruct you to get an apostille certification (again – talk to the consulate).
3. You take the document to the Legalization Section of the Chilean Embassy or Consulate located in your country. There, consular officials verify the authenticity of stamp and signature of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or verifies an apostille certificate) and affix their own, and, finally;
4. Upon coming to Chile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in Santiago makes the final verification of a stamp and signature of a Chilean consul in your country.

By the end of the process, your document will look like a Christmas tree with so many stamps, signatures and colors.

Translation

If any of your documents are written in a language other than Spanish, English, Italian, French or Portuguese, it must be translated to Spanish before being sent to the Immigration Department in Chile.

Notarization

In the case of a bank account statement, you simply need to sign it (any blank space on the statement) in front of a notary public. Same goes for a letter or statement issued by a pension provider. No need to bother the issuer to do the notarization when you can do it on your own.

Another option is to ask the notary to make a photocopy of the original letter/bank statement and simply certify that the photocopy is a true and accurate copy.

It's important to note that any financial/bank statement/letter must be "recent", i.e. issued within the last 3 months.

In the case of Birth Certificates, Marriage Certificates, and Diplomas, you simply ask the notary to make a photocopy of the original and notarize it certifying that it is a true and accurate copy of the original. If they need your signature or a written statement on the photocopy, go ahead and add this in any white space.

**** IMPORTANT **** – Do not notarize your only original copy of your certificates or diplomas— you will NOT receive these (or any other!) documents back. Keep this in mind.



Plaza de Armas in Santiago

Documents you will need to gather

As stated, the most critical thing for you to do is gather the appropriate documentation prior to coming to Chile.

There is a minimum set of documents that are required for the application for the Temporary Residency Visa. But we **encourage** you to provide additional ones if you can.

The Chilean government is trying to paint a picture of what kind of person you are based upon the documents you provide. Thus, in our experience, **the more documents you can provide, the better.**

Additionally, certain documents are required to be apostilled, while others may simply be allowed as a regular document without any special stamps. Most documents, whether they need to be legalized or not, are fine as photocopies of the original, so long as the photocopy is notarized.

The list can be broken down by category into a simple checklist:

1) General documents (for every applicant)

- *The Chilean government's application form*
- Copy of your passport (identification page, passport number, expiration and issuing date and page with the Chilean entry stamp)
- Copy of a tourist card or "tarjeta de turismo" (small white paper issued upon entering a country)
- Color photo

Again, all documents from outside of Chile need to be legalized and possibly translated.

2) Proof of economic resources (income / liquid assets):

Track 1 – Passive Income: Again - there is no "minimum monthly income level" for this, but we have seen approval for passive income as low as \$1,000/month for an individual. We typically recommend \$1,500/month, and the more you can show, the better.

You will need to provide a statement of payment, like a rental contract or a letter from your pension provider.

If you are applying with family members (dependents), you must also show sufficient income for everyone, i.e. an additional \$500 per person per month.

For your application, you should show a dated letter issued by the payer. So if you receive Social Security, you should obtain a letter from the Social Security Administration with your monthly payment amount stated on it.

You can *download this letter online from the Social Security Website by following the steps here.*

If you receive a monthly payment from another pension provider, simply ask them to draft you a letter explaining your monthly benefits. Keep in mind that the letter must be on their official company letterhead.

For temporary residency you need to obtain this letter no more than 3 months prior to submitting your application. You'll again need to obtain the letter a second time 3 months prior to submitting the application for permanent residency.

And if you will be satisfying a "stable income" requirement by showing the rental contract of a property you own, keep in mind that you will also need to present the contract twice (for the temporary and permanent residency applications) showing the lease term has not expired.

That means that not only that you will be signing a new contract or addendum, but also that you will have to legalize it to be able to present in Chile.

However, the double work of signing and legalizing contracts or addendums may be avoided if your initial lease term states that it is set to "automatically renew" upon the expiration of the initial term.

Track 2 – Retirees with a lump sum: For those of retirement age (55 and above), you may demonstrate a sizable sum of money in financial accounts in your name. There is no hard number for the "minimum" here either, and we have seen success with accounts as low as \$60,000 to \$100,000 for an individual. We typically recommend \$150,000 for an individual and an additional \$25,000 per dependent.

Again, the more you can demonstrate, the better. This amount may include holdings in savings accounts, checking accounts, brokerage accounts, etc. so long as the funds are "liquid".

Track 3 – Operating a company in Chile: For those pursuing the third track of starting a company, the amount of liquid funds you should aim to prove is \$60,000.

In addition, you will have to submit a business plan in your application.

3) Documents for dependents

In addition to demonstrating sufficient income levels to support your dependents financially, you will also need to prove your link to the dependents – i.e.

- Marriage Certificate (for spouse)
- Birth Certificate (for children)
- Sworn declaration of expenses (declaración jurada de expensas) – a simple form signed in front of a notary in Chile stating you will indeed be covering the expenses of your dependent(s) while in the country.

If you aren't sure about what it means to apply as a dependent vs. independent, the big differences are:

- The holder of a dependent visa cannot legally work from within Chile until they receive permanent residency.
- The dependent does not demonstrate any sources of income for the application since this person relies on primary applicant financially. That also means that dependent's passive income, or accounts only in their name, cannot be included in application.
- The holder of a dependent visa cannot open a company in Chile.

4) Optional documents

Upon reviewing your case, the lawyers will suggest if you should include any extra documents. In some cases, for example, they might suggest you include a letter explaining why you are applying for the temporary residency in Chile. They will be able to provide you with more information on how to write such statement, if needed.

Also, please note that your **high school or college diploma should definitely be on your list**, even if you don't include it in your residency application.

In order to obtain a driver's license in Chile you will be required to show evidence that you graduated **8th grade or higher**. Like everything else, it (or rather its notarized copy) must be apostilled or legalized the same way as the rest of the documents for residency.

So if you plan to obtain a Chilean driver's license at any point in the future, I suggest you go through the hassle of the apostille or consulate legalization now to obtain a fully legalized diploma so that you have it for the future.



Volcano Osorno and Petrohué waterfalls

About permanent residency in Chile

You see, the reason they call it a “temporary visa” is because it’s just that—temporary. The particular visa in Tracks 1 - 3 is called “Visa Temporaria” and it’s valid for one year.

But if you have spent at least six months in the country over that one year, then you’ll be eligible to apply for permanent residency.

(Specifically, the rule states that you cannot be out of the country for more than 180 days if you want to qualify to apply for permanent residency. So if you want to split the 6 months into different trips to Chile, you can.)

Having permanent residency in Chile is a big deal. Because at this point you’ll be able to leave Chile when you like. There’s no more physical presence requirement at that point.

Almost.

Still, in order to maintain your permanent residency status, you are required to set foot on the Chilean soil once **every 365 days**.

This requirement can be waived for up to four years in a row by filing a special extension form at a Chilean consulate abroad **no less than 60 days** before each year expires.

Note that you’ll be required to provide a valid reason for why you can’t return to Chile that year. What exactly is considered a valid reason can differ from one consulate to another. Family circumstances and health conditions are typically among the valid ones.

Chilean consulates in the United States are known to be picky, and in addition to a simple explanation they may also demand supporting documents (like medical certificates, etc.).

After five years of total residency (starting from the day your temporary visa is stamped into your passport), you can qualify to apply for naturalization, and for a Chilean passport.

A few statistics and final thoughts on Chilean residency

Chile has a very straightforward process for obtaining residency, and, eventually, a very solid passport.

Currently, it is easy to qualify for residency here – something that will likely become much harder in future just because of supply and demand fundamentals.

Over the past 10 years, the total number of visas issued by the Chilean government increased fourfold – from 41,885 (in 2005) to 166,469 (in 2015). Permanent residencies issued also rose significantly – from 11,907 (in 2005) to 48,835 (in 2015).

Our advice – if you are ready to spend at least 6 months outside of your home country, then apply for Chilean residency today, while it is still easy. The situation may indeed change in the future.

Note, however, that Chile is not a place for “paper residency”. If spending time on the ground is a problem for you due to work or family circumstances, then you’ll need to consider other options. Panama, for example, requires very little physical presence in the country to qualify for residence.



Guanacos in Torres del Paine National Park

Part II. Obtaining Chilean citizenship

Now to the most interesting part.

The Chilean passport is a valuable one, and definitely worth the 5-year wait.

As you know, a large part of Sovereign team is located in Chile. This is a team fully comprised of foreigners. The majority of them will, at some point, apply for a Chilean passport, because:

- It is one of the best visa-free travel documents in the world, permitting access to over 150 countries and territories.
- Chile allows you to keep your old citizenship (although you may still officially give up your original one if that's the law in your home country).
- There is no military conscription (however, in a very rare year they may do a limited call-up when not enough people sign up as paid professionals).
- Chile (unlike the US) does not tax its citizens on the worldwide income.
- No one ever threatens to kill all Chileans when hijacking an airplane.

The Chilean passport is indeed a gift to cherish, and still it is relatively simple to obtain. However, simple is not the same as easy, because, as you know by now, you must commit to the country by living here for at least 6 months in the first year. Then you'll need to create some additional ties to it (more on that further.)

That's why we follow the naturalization process of one of Sovereign Man's team members with great interest. This person has been living in Chile for a few years already and has qualified for naturalization.

But before we go into details of his application, let's first cover the basics.

Basic naturalization requirements in Chile

Chile's latest immigration law and procedures state that the following requirements apply to become eligible for naturalization:

1. Applicant needs to be a foreigner [DUH].
2. Five years of residency are required in order to qualify for naturalization.

This five-year window starts from the date of the first residency issuance (the first year of residency is a temporary residency for most visa types – the one that is stamped in your passport).

3. Applicant needs to be 18 years old (or 14 years old if they are children of foreigners).
4. Applicant needs to be a permanent resident of Chile.
5. Applicant cannot be convicted of crime in Chile.
6. Applicant needs to be able to make a living.

Those are the most important requirements.

(You can also refer to the most current requirements *on the official website here*).

Even if you meet the requirements, it's important to remember that the Chilean immigration authorities do have latitude when approving / rejecting applications for both naturalization and residency.

And just like nearly every other country on the planet, if an applicant meets the naturalization requirements, doing so **merely qualifies the individual to apply**. It does not guarantee the successful approval.

During the application process, for example, Chilean authorities will want to see that you have taken steps to integrate into the Chilean society.

By looking at the additional requirements we conclude that the Chilean government is far more concerned to see whether you have paid taxes, made bank deposits, speak a bit of Spanish, own a property, have Chilean relatives etc.

And so if you plan on spending exactly one day in the country each year after obtaining your permanent residency, it will be very difficult to have accomplished any of these things. That is, you will not be able to demonstrate that you have really integrated into the Chilean society.

Anyone who makes a bona fide effort to live here should have solid expectations of success in the naturalization process, even if business and family commitments keep them out of Chile for more than six months each year.



Lagoon in San Pedro de Atacama desert

How to improve your chances of getting the Chilean passport

We're not going to bore you with the entire list of required documents. For the most part, it's generic and includes what you'd expect: a copy of your current foreign passport, color photos and a signed naturalization form, among others.

Most of us are still few years away from applying for naturalization here, so the list of documents may change. You can find the full and current list in Spanish *here*.

Instead, let's focus on the documents and conditions that you need to pay special attention to. These are the ones that could "make or break" your application:

1) Spending time in Chile

As you know, it is imperative to spend 185 days during the first year of residency to qualify for permanent one. **There is no mandatory presence rule for citizenship, however.**

All you are asked is to have an active permanent residency, which you achieve by spending at least one day a year in Chile (or filing for an extension overseas).

Nonetheless, in many cases officials do pay attention to how much time you spend in Chile. We have seen at least one application denied because the applicant “was spending less than 185 days per year on the ground”.

The other denied application that we know of involved the overseas extension. An applicant was initially denied citizenship because he was not present in Chile during the last 2 years out of 5, and applied for an extension from overseas. However, we know for sure this case ended favorably after an appeal was filed since he thoroughly and satisfactorily explained why he was not able to come to Chile (employment-related circumstances).

2) Connection to a Chilean national (if applicable)

Among the documents that Chilean government asks for is a proof of connection to a Chilean national – your Chilean spouse, parent or child (of course only if applicable).

That’s another advantage of giving birth to your child in Chile. Not only your child receives a citizenship automatically in the country upon birth, but it also gives a strong reason for government to give the parents citizenship as well.

3) Proof of your activities and income

Essentially, the Chilean government wants to avoid a situation wherein a newly naturalized person becomes a liability for the state. Therefore, it is in your best interest to prove you will not be one.

In particular, the government wants to see your bank and brokerage account statements, documents proving ownership of real estate and vehicles. Obviously, it will be even better if you have all that in Chile, also proving your ties to the country.

Additionally, depending on how much your personal circumstances allow, you should be present in the country as much as possible.

Here are some examples of ‘proofs’ you might show if you are a/an:

Employee: work contract, tax returns, professional certifications you obtained in Chile;

Entrepreneur: certificate of incorporation showing you as a (co)owner, work contracts of your employees, tax returns;

Pensioner: proof of pension from your home country, and conversion of it to Chilean pesos if applicable. Again, regular conversion of your monthly pension to Chilean pesos may give the Chilean government an additional indication of your connection to Chile;

Passive income receivers: real estate rental contracts, documents proving property ownership, assessed value of the property, documents demonstrating the source of your other stable income (CD, dividends from a company, bond interest...), tax returns;

Students: your diploma or proof of ongoing education. Also, applicable proof of student loan or sworn declaration of financial support from a person supporting you financially (who in turn has to prove their income). That person has to be your (the dependent's) parent or spouse;

Dependents: sworn declaration of financial support from a person supporting you financially (who in turn has to prove their income). That person has to be dependent's parent or spouse. (Just as in the case of residency, do not send the originals – they will not come back to you.)

4) Your CV

You'll need to include a letter written in Spanish explaining why you seek Chilean citizenship, and how successfully you managed to establish yourself in Chile, including economically.

It is freeform. Include whatever you think may shed a positive light on your prospects in Chile. List your qualifications, achievements; describe your (deep) level of integration in Chilean society. Try to paint as rosy picture as you can about your ties to Chile.



Bahia Inglesa beach

Approximate timeline of the application process

Our team member has completed all but the very last step.

Alex, whose name we changed for privacy, has been living in Chile for more than six years and has held temporary and permanent residencies for more than five. Several years ago, Alex had a child in Chile (automatically a Chilean citizen).

Alex's native language is Spanish.

Alex has a work contract in Chile that he presented as a proof of economic activity in the country. Alex also owns a car here, ownership documents of which he included in the package.

In early 2016 he applied for naturalization. His timeline has looked like this:

1. In February 2016 Alex sent a completed application package in the mail. (He is a resident of Santiago Metropolitan Region.)
2. In the beginning of April 2016, an immigration department official called and asked to speak to Alex. The purpose of the call was to verify Alex's address and telephone number. They also mentioned that Alex would be contacted very soon for a naturalization interview.
3. About 10 days later, he received an email from immigration department. It contained appointment details with the PDI in Santiago (PDI – Investigations Police Department).

The email asked to bring his Chilean ID, passport and a certificate of permanent residency with him. The email also gave two appointment options – 1) for the very next day, and 2) for the day right after that.

Luckily, Alex was in Santiago and made it to the next-day interview just fine. When Alex arrived, he was greeted by an officer and was given a written form to fill out in Spanish.

- There was NO official verbal interview.
- Here are the questions that were in the form:
- Name and last name, Passport info, DOB, Chilean ID number, address in Chile.
- Names and last names of parents and if they are alive
- List of relatives that are Chilean nationals (if applicable)

- List of the places where applicant has lived since arriving to Chile
- Current occupation
- Educational background – highest degree and the name of educational establishment (you may want to bring your legalized university diploma with you)
- List of the companies that applicant has worked for while in Chile
- The date of first entry as a tourist (may want to bring all your passports with you, including expired)
- List of other nationalities (if you have more than one other one)

That's about it. The officer came by occasionally to see if Alex had finished or had any questions.

As you see, the interview process is simple, and most of the questions asked you should already be covered by the CV that you include with the package. Your answers just need to be consistent with what you've already presented.

The hardest part will likely be to make it to the appointment, since they seem to give you a maximum of 48 hours' notice.

Chances are it's done intentionally to make sure you are in the country, so we suggest you do not leave in the critical period between filing for your application and completing the interview.

If you must travel, you will have to inform PDI ahead of time with an explanation.

4. **At the beginning of June 2016** (4 months after lodging his application), Alex received a physical letter by mail confirming that he was successfully approved for naturalization by the Chilean immigration authorities.

The same letter mentioned he also needed to pay a government fee of a whopping \$5 (price goes up just a little if you don't have a Chilean relative) and mail in his certificate of permanent residency.

At this point, naturalization is pretty much a done deal for Alex.

However, it is not the end of the process. He still needs to await the arrival of his...

As we outlined in the step 4, Alex had to give up his certificate of permanent residency.

The thing is, this piece of paper is necessary for renewing your governmental ID (cedula). Keeping your ID unexpired is essential – without it you will not be able to leave or enter the country as a resident, apply for driver's license or even get a money order.

A permanent resident's ID is renewed every five years, and depending on when exactly you will be applying for naturalization, you may find your Chilean ID card very close to its expiration date.

If you see that you have just few short months left, we advise you to renew your permanent residence ahead of mailing in your certificate.

5. Naturalization order signed by the president.

As of this writing (November 2016) this final and long-expected step was still pending for Alex.

However, from now on he is free to leave the country if he wishes. The decree should arrive to his address listed in application. Once received, Alex will be able to get his Chilean national's ID, and the desired passport.

Unfortunately, the exact timeline for the last step is hard to predict. Immigration department functionaries are very vague in their estimations, mentioning that the entire naturalization process “can take up to two years, but hopefully much less than that.”

Whatever the case, we will keep you posted.

Here are some resources for your reference:

- *Here are the steps* required for naturalization.
- The progress of your naturalization process *can be tracked online here* (same as residency tracking).

Conclusion

In 2014 (latest data available), the Chilean government approved 980 naturalization applications.

Compare that to an incredible 252,000 naturalization applications that Canada approved last year (with end-to-end processing time of 18-21 months.)

You may wonder why there's such a disparity. Can it be that the number of applications in Chile is much higher than 980, but that the majority simply were denied?

We don't think so.

Canada has long been among the mainstream immigration destinations, along with the USA, Australia, and, lately, New Zealand. Hundreds of thousands of people go and stay there. Almost everyone applies for naturalization.

Chile, as an immigration destination, on the contrary, is just being discovered.

In fact, back in 2008, few were aware of Chile's attractiveness and viability as an immigration destination.

It started to be discovered much later, and Sovereign Man was one of the driving forces behind it.

Additionally, most of the foreigners here whom we personally know, and who qualify for a passport in Chile, do not bother applying for naturalization.

They are just fine with their permanent residencies. Residency gives them the full right to live, work and even travel within South America. They rarely bother with going through the procedure that seems complicated to them.

We reached out to the lawyers from Della Maggiora Eyzaguirre Abogados, whom we work with; they reported that they have never had an unsuccessful naturalization application.

We are confident that with a little bit of preparation, your naturalization application will be successful too, whether you go through the process with the help of a law firm or by yourself. It takes time and patience and preparation, but it is absolutely doable.

It just requires a certain commitment to the country.