

How To Get A Second Passport In 183 Days

By Lief Simon and the Editors of Live and Invest Overseas[™]



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Instant Passport—Your Legitimate Economic Citizenship Options

By Lief Simon and the Editors of Live and Invest Overseas™

You may never have considered it, but you do have a right to become a citizen of more than one country—and doing so could change your life for the better.

For Americans decades ago, this was a question, but under U.S. law, upheld by several U.S. Supreme Court decisions, holding a second citizenship does not jeopardize U.S. citizenship. In fact, the U.S. government isn't interested in revoking any American's U.S. citizenship. As long as an American holds his blue passport with the gold eagle on the cover, he retains his U.S. tax obligation, no matter where in the world he roams. Certainly, Uncle Sam isn't interested in interfering with that.

While it's impossible to know exactly how many Americans have acquired another passport, professor Stanley Renshon of City University of New York puts the number of U.S. citizens who either hold or who are entitled to hold a second passport at about 40 million.

But why would any U.S. citizen need to acquire a second nationality and the additional passport that goes with that expanded political status?

Safer, easier, less costly travel to a safe haven, easier access to foreign banking, increased access to foreign investment options, expanded business opportunities... the advantages of carrying a second passport can be many.

Traveling on a U.S., U.K., or even a Canadian passport can make you a potential target in some parts of the world, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, but elsewhere, as well. Citizens from the Anglophone world have been targeted in the past by terrorists and opportunists. Being able to travel on a less high-profile passport can help keep you out of harm's way.

Increasingly, the U.S. government imposes highly burdensome restrictions on the freedoms that the nation's founders set down in the U.S. Constitution. For people of wealth, in particular, there is now an extensive web cast to catch persons the government decides may be doing something wrong. And the current definition

of "wrong" is so expansive as to be all-inclusive in the bureaucratic mind.

For example, the very fact that one has an offshore bank account, creates an offshore trust, or owns shares in an international business corporation—any and all of these innocent financial choices can suggest potential tax evasion in the jaundiced eyes of the IRS. It is not an exaggeration to state that the current IRS attitude is that any American with offshore financial activity is presumed to be engaged in tax evasion.

An alternative citizenship is, therefore, increasingly important as a powerful personal tool for truly international tax planning and investing. A second passport can be your key to a whole new world of freer movement, expanded international investment, and greater financial flexibility. You'll have a second home to return to should things take a turn for the worse wherever elsewhere you're residing.

You'll have an escape hatch of sorts.

And these benefits apply not only to yourself but to your family, too—both your current existing family, but also, in most cases, to your descendants, as the citizenship can often be passed down to your children who can then pass it on to theirs.

So how does one become a citizen of another country if you don't qualify for it by right of birth (or ancestry, as is possible with some European countries, including Ireland)?

You have to put in the time.

That is, you have to be a legal resident of the country long enough to qualify for naturalization. Most countries require five years of legal residency before you're eligible to apply for citizenship. The residency requirement can be as little as two or three years if you're married to a national of the country or if, in the case of the Dominican Republic, you invest in a business in the country. At the other extreme Andorra requires 20 years of legal residency.



Economic Citizenship: The Quickest Route To A Second Passport

What do we mean by economic citizenship?

Put simply, it's a passive, one-time investment or contribution leading to a second citizenship and passport.

Last century, several countries had legitimate buy-a-passport programs that became corrupted and eventually stopped because the passports of true citizens were being questioned when they traveled. In the new century up to 2013, only St. Kitts and Nevis and Dominica had realistic and legitimate options for obtaining an economic passport (that is, a passport through investment). However, many countries have launched programs in the last seven years with the competition among Caribbean countries getting fierce. Europe mostly launched residency-through-investment programs some of which don't actually lead to citizenship...and a few came up with direct to citizenship options.

Many countries, including the United States, offer easier residency (not necessarily citizenship) if you invest US\$1

million or more, again, in a local business. However, for straightforward give-the-country-some-cash-and-get-a-legitimate-passport programs, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis were, for a long time, the only two players in the game.

The sensible options available right now for true economic citizenship leading to a second passport are in Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Cyprus, Malta, Saint Lucia, and Vanuatu.

You should know, though, if a passport is your main goal out of secondary citizenship(s), that not all passports are created equal. Some offer more visa-free travel than others.

You can go to this [website](#) to see the rankings of different passports for visa-free travel as well as compare countries. The list is changing regularly as countries offer or take away visa-free travel for other countries, but generally countries with high rankings remain high. Overall, visa free travel has been expanding over the last decade rather than decreasing.

On the other hand, it might not matter to you to have the highest number of visa-free countries if one country you have particular interest in isn't on the visa-free travel list...

If, for example, you travel frequently to Russia (or would like to), then a passport that offers visa-free travel to Russia should be higher on your priority list than the sheer number of countries. (Incidentally, Vanuatu is

the only passport on the entire CIP market that boasts visa-free privileges with Russia—a real boon considering Russia's notoriously easy-to-offend immigration based more on the officer than policy... not to mention the visa fees.)

Or perhaps you're a safari enthusiast... Americans need a visa to enter Kenya, but citizens of Cyprus, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, Vanuatu, and St. Kitts and Nevis don't.



The Caribbean Connection

The Caribbean island nations have much in common, although each has its own character. They are all located in the string of islands known as the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean West Indies, stretching between Puerto Rico and Venezuela. They were all originally inhabited by native tribes—the Arawak, Carib, or Ortoroids—and subsequently conquered by European colonists. Spanish, French, and British invaders all left their marks and slavery contributed to their economic and cultural development.

Since achieving independence, each country has established incentives for foreign investment and

residency, including their respective CIP options. Let's look first at what they have in common...

- Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia all offer two options for economic citizenship. One involves the purchase of real estate in a government-approved development. The other requires a donation or deposit in a government-sponsored fund. Saint Lucia as well as Antigua and Barbuda have a couple other options.
- They all offer permanent lifetime citizenship that can be passed on to your descendants.

- These countries impose no income, inheritance, or wealth taxes on international revenue. They do impose taxes on revenue generated in the country.
- In all cases, it is not required that the applicant travel in person to the country during the application process, though an in-person interview may eventually be required.
- In all cases, the application process is expedited with completion in two to six months once all documentation has been submitted.
- They all speak English as the official language.

With this foundation, let's explore the specifics of each country's CIP and see how they differ...

St. Kitts And Nevis, The CIP Veteran

The oldest current CIP program marketed was that of the two-island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

Just west of Antigua and Barbuda, the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis is at the northern tip of the West Indies. St. Kitts is the more developed of the two islands, while Nevis has a more natural environment.

These islands were also colonized by both the English and the French and finally dominated by the British. Sugarcane became the country's exclusive crop, tended by slaves. Over time, sugar production waned, slavery was abolished, and, ultimately, the sugar production industry closed down altogether.

As a member of the Commonwealth realm, the country maintains close ties to Great Britain. Tourism, offshore banking and services, and light industry drive the economy.

Invest in real estate and get a passport... That's the straightforward premise behind the economic citizenship program that St. Kitts and Nevis has put together.

Of course, for most people who might consider this, the investment return is secondary to the second citizenship and the second passport.

It's a relatively straightforward passport to obtain. All you have to do is to buy a piece of government-approved real estate on either St. Kitts or Nevis for a minimum investment amount. A property of at least US\$400,000 must also be held for five years. A property of at least US\$200,000 must be held for a minimum of seven years.

On top of this, you'll have about 12% in real estate closing costs, including taxes and fees. Plus, you'll have fees for you and any dependents included in your application.

Government application fees under the real estate option are US\$50,000 for the main applicant, US\$25,000 for the spouse and dependents 18 and under, and US\$50,000 for dependents older than 18.

In addition, there are the following due diligence fees: US\$7,500 for the main applicant and US\$4,000 per dependent older than 16, including a spouse.

The piece of real estate you purchase can be rented out. However, realistically, at best, you're going to see a net yield of maybe 3% a year. If and when you do resell, you can't do so to another person seeking economic citizenship, meaning you're selling on the local market. We'd expect that, after holding for five or seven years, you might break even on the purchase price.

The point is that this isn't a real estate investment. This isn't about the yield or the capital appreciation but the second citizenship and passport.

However, St. Kitts and Nevis offers a less expensive donation option. Instead of buying a small piece of one of their islands, you can obtain a passport from them by making a donation to the Sustainable Growth Fund.

Your donation will be:

- US\$150,000 for a single applicant;
- An additional US\$25,000 for a spouse;
- US\$10,000 for each additional dependent.

Note that until December 31, 2020 the country is waiving the additional donation amounts for up to three dependents, i.e. the US\$150,000 covers a family of four.

The same due diligence fees required for the real estate option in St. Kitts and Nevis apply for the sugar industry donation route as well.

While handing over US\$150,000 directly to the government compared to buying a US\$200,000 property may seem a bad investment, consider the additional costs of closing on a property, managing and maintaining it for seven years, the likelihood that you'll not see any appreciation on the property, and the government fees when going the real estate route that can be more than 50% of the donation costs giving to the Sustainable Growth Fund, you may find the US\$150,000 donation route isn't so bad.

Generally, the entire process takes up to six months. However, they implemented an Accelerated Application Process for those in a hurry. You can pay US\$25,000 for the main applicant and US\$20,000 per dependent for your application to be processed within 60 days.

[For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for St. Kitts, check the official government's program website here.](#)

Dominica, Lowest Cost Option For An Individual

The Commonwealth of Dominica (not to be confused with the Dominican Republic) is another Caribbean CIP option.

Dominica is located midway along the island chain and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations as a former British territory. The French were the first Europeans to settle here, and their influence is still strong, giving the community a distinctly French flavor. Dominica is known for its unspoiled nature, several protected parks, and its large thermal lake. Whales and dolphins abound in the nearby waters. Agriculture is the main source of revenue, primarily producing fruits, flowers, and coffee.

For the real estate investment option of their CIP, the minimum required investment is US\$200,000 and the property must be held for at least three years, which is the lowest among this group of islands. However, if you hold for at least five years, you can resell your property to someone else investing for the CIP program. That feature is unique among the Caribbean CIP countries.

Government fees for the program when using real estate are US\$25,000 for the primary applicant, US\$35,000 for a couple, US\$35,000 for a family of four, US\$50,000 for a family of six, and US\$70,000 for a family of seven or more.

For the donation investment option (a nonrefundable, cash contribution to the government's Economic Diversification Fund), the minimum requirement is US\$100,000 for an individual. The amount increases to US\$150,000 for a couple and US\$175,000 for a family of four. If you want to tack on dependent adult children 18 to 25 years old, they'll set you back US\$25,000 each.

The government calls this a "donation," but being charitable is not the goal. You're buying a second citizenship and passport. (To be fair, the government

claims to use the funds generated by the program will be used to build schools, renovating hospitals, and improving other industries.)

Again, all contributions are nonrefundable, but you aren't required to pay until after the government has provisionally approved your application.

For both options, other fees include US\$100 for each passport issued, which is valid for 10 years for adults and 5 years for children. A processing fee of US\$3,000 per application (individual or family group) is also collected and US\$750 for each certificate of naturalization.

In addition to the required documentation, a due diligence background check is required for each adult, and the cost for the main applicant and spouse is US\$7,500 each. The cost for each additional dependent under age 16 is US\$4,000.

Generally, the entire process takes up to six months. You can expect provisional approval about halfway through, at which time you'll need to make the agreed-upon contribution or close on the property.

For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for [Dominica](#), [check the official government's program website here.](#)

If you noticed that the St. Kitts and Nevis and Dominica programs are similar especially regarding the due diligence fees, that's not an accident. St. Kitts and Nevis introduced the US\$200,000 real estate option and lowered their donation amounts to compete better with not only Dominica whose passport has improved in recent years for visa-free travel catching up with that of St. Kitts and Nevis and the other Caribbean CIP options, but to also compete with those other options.

Dominica added the real estate option and the corresponding government fees in order to offer a real estate option.

You'll find the other Caribbean options to be similar.

Antigua And Barbuda—The Cheapest Family Option

Antigua and Barbuda consists of the two main islands and several smaller islets situated at the northern end of the Lesser Antilles. It's a former British colony and now an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Antigua is the more developed and tourist-oriented of the islands, with Barbuda mainly lowlands and beaches. It is known as the former home of Admiral Lord Horatio

Nelson, and his sailing legacy lives on in many yachting activities. Tourism is the main source of economic activity with little agriculture due to limited fresh water supply.

To keep things interesting, Antigua has four options under its CIP program—donation, real estate, business, and a special option for large families that includes one-year tuition at a local university.

The donation option requires a minimum of US\$100,000 given to the National Development Fund (NDF) which funds government projects and charitable investments. That donation covers the main applicant and up to a family of four (applicant, spouse, and two kids). For a family of five or more, the donation goes up to US\$125,000.

These represent the lowest amounts available around the world for a full family citizenship.

Government fees are US\$30,000 for up to a family of four. Each additional dependent is US\$15,000.

Alternatively, you can invest a minimum of US\$400,000 in real estate located in approved development areas and must hold the property for at least five years. Under the real estate option, two related applicants, say two brothers with wives and families, can invest US\$200,000 each in the same property and qualify.

Additionally, if you have friends and find a property you want to go in on together, you can each invest US\$400,000 to buy an US\$800,000 property.

On the business side, you can invest a minimum of US\$1.5 million into an existing or a proposed business approved by the Citizens By Investment Unit. Interestingly, the list of approved businesses is mostly real estate and tourism.

Honestly, if you have US\$1.5 million to invest in a business, you have other options for residency or citizenship to look at including the U.S. for non-Americans. Stick with the real estate or donation options or, if you have a large family with six or more people you could look at the University of the West Indies fund in Antigua.

This last option is the newest and cheapest option for a large family. You donate US\$150,000 to the UWI Fund and besides citizenship for your family, one member gets to attend one year at the university tuition-free. The donation amount includes the processing fee for six people.

If your family has seven or more people, then you just pay an additional government fee of US\$15,000 for each additional member starting with the seventh.

Due diligence fees are US\$7,500 for the main applicant; US\$7,500 for a spouse; US\$2,000 for children 12 to 17; and US\$4,000 for other dependents except those 12 and younger which have no due diligence fee.

Antigua and Barbuda may be the most cost-effective CIP in the Caribbean, but their passport holds up to the other options for visa-free travel.

Of course, you shouldn't make a decision as important as this one on price alone. Other programs don't require you to spend any time in the country, whereas the Antigua one does—five days in the first five years in order to renew your passport. That could be a plus or a minus for you.

[For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for Antigua and Barbuda, check the official government's program website here.](#)

Grenada—Old Player Reborn

The island nation of Grenada sits at the southern end of the Antilles chain, just north of Tobago. It was initially settled by the French and ultimately became a British territory through a treaty agreement.

Today, Grenada is a stable, independent nation that maintains ties to the British monarchy after a brief period of political upheaval in the 1980s that was resolved by U.S. invasion.

This is the famous "Spice Island," so-named for its production of nutmeg and mace, its major export crops. Grenada is a frequent cruise ship destination, and tourism is now a chief contributor to the economy. Another feature is St. Georges University, a highly respected educational institution and major employer.

Grenada actually had a CIP before that they ceased in 2001. Renewals of passports issued under the program were possible for some, but apparently not everyone who bought citizenship in Grenada.

Old program grandfathering issues aside, Grenada falls into the general range of the other Caribbean programs for investment requirements—US\$350,000 in real estate or a US\$200,000 donation to the National Transformation Fund (NTF). The real estate investment covers an entire

family no matter the size. The NTF donation covers a family of four. A single applicant needs to donate only US\$150,000. Under the NTF option each dependent beyond three is an additional donation of US\$25,000.

Once again, like the other Caribbean programs, the real estate option carries an additional government fee. In the case of Grenada, it is US\$50,000 for a family of four and US\$25,000 for each additional family member.

Plus, due diligence fees are US\$5,000 per person 17 or older and zero for those 16 and younger; application fees are US\$1,500 per person; and the processing fee is US\$1,500 per person and US\$500 for those under 18.

You have to work through an authorized agent and most state that citizenship can be finalized within four months of starting the process.

The passports are valid for five years and need to be renewed after that. Any applicant granted citizenship by investment under this law will have all the rights of a citizen of Grenada. Grenada used to have a requirement to spend time in the country during the first five years after receiving citizenship, but has eliminated that from the program.

[For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for Grenada, check the official government's program website here.](#)

Saint Lucia: The Newest CIP Option In The West Indies

The newest addition to the list of CIP countries in the Caribbean is Saint Lucia, a large island situated about midway in the chain of the Antilles.

The island is known for its pair of volcanic mountain peaks, the Pitons, which are preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The French and English went to war over Saint Lucia no less than 14 times, and it retains a decidedly French flair while being part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Its many beaches and dramatic scenery make it a popular cruise ship and yachting destination.

Saint Lucia is different from the other four island nations with programs. Although from 1814 until independence it remained under British control, and it is today a proud member of the British Commonwealth with Queen

Elizabeth II as head of state, the island still has much more of a French influence. This is reflected in everything from the local creole-style French, spoken by 95% of the population in addition to English, to the civil code, based on that of Quebec.

The Saint Lucian economy is dominated by tourism and international financial services, but the citizenship-by-investment program that was developed broadens the economic base of the country by encouraging further long-term foreign investment and raise the country's profile and reputation abroad.

In Saint Lucia, you have four options for obtaining citizenship—an outright donation to the country through its National Economic Fund, real estate, investment in approved enterprise project (note, to date they've not approved any business investments), or investment in government bonds.

The qualifying amounts for the donation route are:

- US\$100,000 for a sole applicant;
- US\$140,000 is the cost for a married couple;
- US\$150,000 covers the couple and up to two qualifying dependents;
- US\$25,000 applied to each additional dependent.

For the real estate investment option, the minimum required investment is:

- US\$300,000 and the property must be held for at least five years;
- Government fees are US\$50,000 for the primary applicant, US\$35,000 for a spouse, US\$25,000 for dependents under age 18, and US\$35,000 for dependents age 18 and over.

If investing in an enterprise project (when they approve one), amounts are as follows:

- US\$3.5 million for the primary applicant;
- US\$6 million total investment if application is for multiple applicants (a joint venture), with each applicant contributing at least US\$1 million.

The enterprise project investment option has the same government fees as the real estate option.

The categories for enterprise projects are: specialty restaurants, cruise ports and marinas, agro-processing plants, pharmaceutical products, ports, bridges, roads and highways, research institutions and facilities, and offshore universities.

If the bonds are of interest, the investment amounts are:

- US\$500,000 for the primary applicant;
- US\$535,000 for a married couple;
- US\$550,000 for a couple and up to two qualifying dependents;
- US\$25,000 for each additional dependent

The bonds don't pay any interest and you have to hold them for 5 years.

In the wake of the Covid crisis, Saint Lucia introduced a temporary Covid-19 bond option until December 31, 2020. The investment amounts for the Covid-19 bond are:

- US\$250,000 for the primary applicant (hold the bond for 5 years);
- US\$250,000 for a married couple (hold the bond for 6 years);
- US\$250,000 for a couple and up to two qualifying dependents (hold the bond for 7 years);
- US\$300,000 for a couple and up to two qualifying dependents (hold the bond for 5 years);
- US\$15,000 for each additional dependent

Like the regular bonds the Covid-19 bonds pay zero interest. However, they also offer a reduced government fee of US\$30,000

Government fees in Saint Lucia are due diligence fees of US\$7,500 for the main applicant and US\$5,000 per

dependent older than 16, including a spouse. Processing fees are US\$2,000 for the main applicant and US\$1,000.

[For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for Saint Lucia, check the official government's program website here.](#)

What You Get? What Do You Give Up?

Nothing distinguishes an economic citizen from natural citizens of any of these countries. You'll have the same rights, including the right to vote (Antigua and Barbuda requires all citizens to reside in their constituency for at least a month before an election to vote). Furthermore, as citizen of either of these Caribbean nations, you'll have the right to live and work in other members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM; Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago).

None of these countries impose taxes on citizens who don't live on their islands, except on income generated by local property or businesses. You will not pay taxes on income generated offshore.

None impose military obligations on their citizens. In fact, these island nations have no enemies and are entirely peaceful.

You do not need to fear losing your U.S. citizenship with any program either. However, if that is a goal, now armed with a second citizenship and passport, you can safely renounce your U.S. or other citizenship without rendering yourself stateless or passport-less.

Although these countries provide straightforward options for obtaining a quick and relatively affordable second citizenship and passport, you'll need to engage an authorized agent registered with the country you select to submit your application. This adds more fees so shop around. Each country's website has a list of authorized agents.



Maybe The Mediterranean?

Two island nations in the Mediterranean Sea offer recently created CIPs worthy of consideration.

Cyprus and Malta have much in common; their strategic locations made them the object of contention among many civilizations over hundreds of years. Most recently part of the British Empire, they each gained full independence and are now members of the European Union and the Commonwealth of Nations.

International trade, shipping, light manufacturing, and tourism are the main contributors to their economies. While both have local languages, English is widely spoken in both (it's the official language in Malta).

These countries should appeal to those who prefer a more temperate, less tropical climate and the cultural offerings that come with living in Europe.

Most importantly, these both grant EU citizenship; both allow you to live and work through the European Union. However, a notable difference between the two is that Malta is a member of the Schengen Zone, and Cyprus is not.

Find A Secure Investment In Second Citizenship On Cyprus: The Most Customizable Investment Option...

Cyprus has a Middle Eastern flavor due to its location in the eastern Mediterranean, with close ties to Greece and Turkey. While the country's official languages are Greek and Turkish, the vast majority (estimated at 80% or more) of the country speaks English. In addition, under their citizenship program you're not required to speak or take any tests in the official languages.

The current investment requirements for Cyprus' CIP came into effect in 2016 requiring less capital than previously required. That said, it still requires a significant investment.

In 2018, the Cyprus' government started limiting the program to just 700 applicants a year to be able to properly process due diligence and background checks on applicants.

And in August 2020, they increased the donation part of the program from 150,000 euros to 200,000 euros.

Along with the donation, you are required to invest a minimum of 2 million euros. The first investment requirement is a place to live of at least 500,000 euros. In addition, you have to either buy another 1.5 million euros worth of real estate or invest 2 million euros in other eligible investments. ([Calculate at today's exchange rate here.](#))

The other eligible investments include Cypriot company shares and bonds, an Alternative Investment Fund within Cyprus or the shipping industry. You can combine investments in any of these to reach the 2 million euros threshold.

You have to hold the investments for at least five years. In addition, along with the up front background and criminal checks, Cyprus added another criminal factor in their 2020 changes. Anyone convicted of a felony that comes with five years or more of prison time within the first 10 years of citizenship will have their citizenship revoked.

That new part of the program is probably due to the popularity of the Cyprus program in the past with high net worth individuals from what we'll call sketchy backgrounds coupled with pressure from the EU. You also can't have been what is termed a PEP or Politically Exposed Person having held office within the last 12 months.

Citizenship isn't granted immediately after approval like the Caribbean programs. You first get permanent residency status. Then after six months as a permanent resident your citizenship is formalized.

That doesn't mean you need to live in Cyprus for six months. The program doesn't have any requirement for spending time in the country.

Cyprus allows dual citizenship, so you can retain citizenship in your home country (if you choose) while still having the benefits of an EU passport. It means you can live, work, and travel anywhere in the EU.

Spouses are eligible to apply for citizenship along with the primary applicant, but children under 18 will have to wait to apply until the parents' citizenship comes through to apply for the citizenship. Financially dependent adult children up to the age of 28 can also apply as long as they are enrolled in school (conditions apply) or if they have any physical or mental disability making them unable to work.

Parents of the main applicant are also entitled to apply, provided that they are owners of a permanent residence

valued at 500,000 euros or more, excluding VAT. For this purpose, the investor and his/her parents may acquire one residential property of a total value of at least 1 million euros, excluding VAT.

Fees include a 2,000 euros application fee to be paid up front and a 5,000 euros naturalization fee to be paid upon receipt of the Certificate of Naturalization. The same amounts will apply to any and all dependents, with the exception of minor children who only incur a fee of 80 euros. The passport itself will cost 7 euros.

[For more information, advice, or to begin an application, contact our preferred agency here.](#)

Malta's CIP Is A Clear And Quick Path To Citizenship

The island nation of Malta lies smack in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Malta served as the home of the Knights of St. John from the 1500s until Napoleon invaded in 1798. Napoleon's rule lasted only two years. The island was part of the British Empire from 1800 to 1964. English is one of its official languages with Maltese being the other.

Malta has several residency-by-investment programs, but just one citizenship-by-investment option. It was enacted in 2014 and is a bit more complex and less flexible than the other programs. That said, the total capital requirement is half of that for Cyprus although the majority of the 1.1 million euros minimum is a donation to the government's National Development Fund.

Like Cyprus, Malta is an EU country so citizenship and the passport allows you to live and work in any EU country.

While the donation portion of the program is much higher than Cyprus', Malta does offer an option for renting a home rather than buying. The renting option is a bit more complicated, but cuts down on the up front capital requirement.

The Malta program requires you to be a resident for 12 months before getting approved for citizenship. You get residency by purchasing property worth 350,000 euros (which must be held for five years) or rent one for 16,000 euros or more for a year (also must be held for five years). ([Calculate at today's exchange rate here.](#)) You won't be allowed to let or sublet the property.

Under the rental option you have to spend at least 183 days in the country during that 12 month qualification

period. If you buy, you don't have to spend any time in the country.

In addition to the real estate part of the program, you have to make a 650,000 euros nonrefundable donation to the National Development and Social Fund as the main applicant and an additional 25,000 euros donation for your spouse and each dependent children under 25. Older children and your parents are an additional 50,000 euros each.

Finally, you must invest 150,000 euros in government approved local stocks or bonds (also to be held for a minimum of five years).

Due diligence fees for this application are 7,500 euros for the primary applicant; 5,000 euros for spouse, dependent children 18 to 26, and dependents over 55; and 3,000 euros for children 13 to 18. There's also a 200 euros bank charge per application and a passport fee of 500 euros per person.

One additional requirement for the program is applicants and their dependents must have a global health insurance policy that covers a minimum of 50,000 euros. Applicants dropping 650,000 euros should be able to pay any medical bills or already have health insurance. Still, Malta requires an international policy which can be obtained easily and at reasonable cost.

The original program has a cap of 1,800 applicants which is expected to be reached in 2020. The Maltese government will likely extend the program, but the expectation is they will modify the financial requirements. It could be they reduce the donation part to compete better with Cyprus while offsetting that with an increase on investment side. Or, they could simply increase the number of applicants allowed under the current program.

One must use an authorized agent to submit your application to the Malta government. The authorized agents will know of any changes to the program first. You can find a list of approved agents [here](#).

[For a complete list of required documents, instructions on submission, and the application forms for Malta, check the official government's program website here.](#)

Montenegro: A Limited Time Program

The country was part of Yugoslavia and then connected with Serbia before finally becoming independent in 2006. This small coastal country on the Adriatic has some stunning coastline and a population of just around

650,000 people. It also has a long, interesting history. Up until its independence it was mostly a vacation spot for Serbs and Russians. However, it's expected to enter the EU by 2025 making an investment in Montenegrin citizenship today a potential low-cost back door into the EU.

Interestingly, Montenegro doesn't allow for dual citizenship in general. They made an exemption under their citizenship program so that applicants aren't required to give up their current citizenship. That's helpful since a Montenegrin passport is a good travel document, but not as good as Cyprus or Malta. It's the EU potential that you're buying into here with a much lower total investment than those two countries.

The program requires a donation of 100,000 euros to the government to aid poor communities plus a real estate investment. For the real estate side, you can invest 250,000 euros in an under-developed area or 450,000 euros in a developed area. The developed areas are considered the southern seaside destinations (where the Russian and Serb tourists went) and the capital, Podgorica, but it's hard to say which would be a better investment location.

Like other programs, you have to hold the investment for a minimum of five years.

Fees in Montenegro are double that of Malta and Cyprus at 15,000 euros for the applicant and 10,000 euros each for up to 3 dependents. Additional dependents are 50,000 euros each. Nevertheless, for a family of four the donation amount including fees remains less than Cyprus (and way less than Malta) including fees.

The question to ask yourself when considering the Montenegro's program compared to Malta and Cyprus is do you have more time or more money when trying to obtain an EU passport. There's no guarantee when, or even if, Montenegro will become an EU member. However, precedent exists with Slovenia and Croatia which are also former parts of Yugoslavia who have joined the EU.

While it's possible Montenegro may extend their program, it does currently have a closure date of December 31, 2021 so take action sooner rather than later. If it does extend the program, expect increases in the donation or investment amounts as it gets closer to EU confirmation.



A South Pacific Paradise

Vanuatu: The Fastest And Most Turn-key Option...

The nation of Vanuatu is an archipelago of volcanic islands located west of Fiji, east of Australia, and north of New Zealand.

As in so many other cases, the islands were inhabited by both French and English settlers, but, in a rare turn, the two countries jointly governed Vanuatu from 1906 until it became an independent country in 1980. Economic activity centers on cattle ranching and fishing along with tourism. Vanuatu is renowned as a diving destination with multiple reefs and wrecks and gained recognition as a "Survivor" television series locale.

Vanuatu amended its constitution in 2014 to permit dual citizenship in order to accommodate its CIP. The program offers immediate citizenship for the entire family to a country with no tax on income, wealth, or inheritance.

Vanuatu's current program is called the Development Support Program and unlike the Caribbean CIPs, only

offers a donation option. They've modified the donation amounts to better compete with the Caribbean programs.

Currently, the donation amounts are US\$130,000 for an individual; US\$150,000 for a couple; US\$165,000 for a couple and one child; and US\$180,000 for a couple and two children. Each additional dependent is US\$25,000.

You'll also have a US\$5,000 due diligence fee per person and an oath ceremony fee of US\$1,800 if done in Vanuatu and US\$5,000 if done overseas.

While the country changed the timeframe for completing the due diligence from two days to four days in 2020, Vanuatu still offers the fastest time to passport of any of the CIP programs. Typically, once documents are submitted, you're looking at about a month before you receive approval.

Should you decide to move there, Vanuatu has no income tax on domestic- or international-sourced income except local rental income.

Vanuatu has an annual quote for applications of 600. However, even as the program has become more popular in the last couple of years, they haven't reached the cap in any given year so far.

In terms of the process, first you'll have to submit your personal documents for review through a registered agent. Once you've passed the due diligence check, you pay 30% of the donation amount. The citizenship commission takes about 30 days to send a letter

confirming they received the application— you must pay the remaining balance of your donation within five days of receiving this letter. After another month, you'll receive a certificate of citizenship and an electronic copy of your Vanuatu passport. The final step is swearing the oath of allegiance, which can be done in person in Vanuatu or in your home country at the nearest embassy.

There is no physical presence requirement during or after naturalization.



The Process—Not The Bureaucratic Nightmare You Might Think

As most of the programs require the use of registered agents, the process is fairly painless. All you do is come up with the documents to submit and attend an interview if required. The agent does all the rest for you.

For any of the countries we list here, you'll need to obtain a medical report, a criminal background check (applicants whose check reveals a criminal record will be denied), and reference letters from your bank, lawyer, or other licensed professional. Some countries require a personal reference letter.

Many countries require an interview with the applicant, even those that allow you to begin the process from abroad. It's possible in some cases to hold the interview in another country, though, if there's a consulate nearby.

U.S. citizens may submit notarized copies of their current passport, driver's license, birth certificate, and marriage certificate (if applicable). For non-U.S. citizens, or U.S. citizens living abroad, copies of these documents, certified with an apostille, must be submitted (if they originate outside the United States).

CIPs At-A-Glance

	ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	CYPRUS	DOMINICA	GRENADA	MALTA
Investment Or Donation Options?	Both	Both Required	Both	Both	Both Required
Donation Amount (Primary)	US\$100,000	200,000 euros	US\$100,000	US\$150,000	650,000 euros
Donation Amount (Dependents)	US\$25,000 additional for family of 5; US\$150,000 total for family of 6 or more under the University donation program	N/A	US\$75,000 for spouse and two children under 18; US\$25,000 for dependent adult children 18 to 25	US\$200,000 total for family of 4; US\$25,000 for each additional dependent	25,000 euros each for spouse and children less than 25; 50,000 euros each for parents and grandparents And children over 25
Investment Amount (Primary)	US\$400,000 (real estate); US\$1.5 million (in a business)	2 million euros in any investment outlet; +500,000 euros for residence	US\$200,000 (real estate)	US\$350,000 (real estate)	350,000 euros in real estate purchase; OR 16,000 euros annual in rental property. PLUS 150,000 euros in stocks or bonds
Investment Amount (Dependents)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Government Fees	US\$30,000 for family of 4; US\$15,000 for each additional dependent.	2,000 euros per applicant for application; 5,000 naturalization fee per new citizen on application; 70 euros per passport	US\$25,000 for primary applicant; US\$35,000 for a couple; US\$35,000 for a family of four; US\$50,000 for a family of six; US\$70,000 for a family of seven or more.	US\$50,000 in government fees for a family of four; US\$25,000 for additional dependents;	2,000 euros; 500 euros per passport; 200 euro bank charge per application; 1,000 euro charge per dependent.
Due Diligence Fees	US\$7,500 each for applicant and spouse; US\$2,000 each for children 12 to 17; US\$4,000 each for other dependents except those 12 and younger (no fee).	N/A	US\$7,500 for main applicant and spouse; US\$4,000 per dependent under 16.	US\$5,000 per person over 17;	5,000 euros for spouse, dependent children 18 to 26, and dependents over 55; 3,000 euros for children 13 to 18.
Time In Country	5 days within first 5 years	One week at application	None	None	None
Validity	5 years	10 years	10 years	5 years	10 years

CIPs At-A-Glance

	ST. KITTS AND NEVIS	SAINT LUCIA	VANUATU
Investment Or Donation Options?	Both	Both	Donation Only
Donation Amount (Primary)	US\$150,00	US\$100,000	US\$130,000
Donation Amount (Dependents)	US\$25,000 for spouse US\$10,000 for each additional dependent	US\$140,000 for a married couple; US\$150,000 for couple and up to two qualifying dependents; US\$25,000 for each additional dependent	US\$150,000 for a couple; US\$165,000 couple and 1 child; US\$180,000 couple and 2 children; US\$25,000 for any additional dependents
Investment Amount (Primary)	US\$400,000 real estate held for at least 5 years; US\$200,000 real estate held for at least 7 years	US\$300,000 (real estate); US\$3.5 mil (business); US\$500,000 (bonds)	N/A
Investment Amount (Dependents)	N/A	Business: US\$6 million total investment if application is for multiple applicants (a joint venture), with each applicant contributing at least US\$1 million. Bonds: US\$535,000 for a married couple; US\$550,000 for a couple and up to two qualifying dependents; US\$25,000 for each additional dependent.	N/A
Government Fees	(Real Estate Only) US\$50,000 for the main applicant; US\$25,000 for a spouse; US\$25,000 per dependent under 18; US\$50,000 per dependent over 18;	*US\$50,000 for primary applicant; US\$35,000 for spouse; US\$25,000 for dependents under 18; US\$35,000 for dependents 18+	N/A
Due Diligence Fees	US\$7,500 for main applicant; US\$4,000 per dependent older than 16, including spouse	US\$7,500 for main applicant; US\$4,000 per dependent older than 16 including spouse	US\$5,000 per person
Time In Country	None	None	None
Validity	10 years	5 years	10 years

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