



## UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS

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# New Secure Certificate of Indian Status (Status Cards)

## FAQs

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### Frequently Asked Questions

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Information below extracted from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website  
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/br/is/index-eng.asp>

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#### **What is a Certificate of Indian Status or Status card and why does INAC issue it?**

The Certificate of Indian Status, more commonly referred to as a Status card, is an identity document issued for administrative reasons by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to confirm that the cardholder is registered as a Status Indian under the *Indian Act*.

#### **Who is eligible for a Status card and what is it used for?**

Any individual registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act* is eligible for a Status card, regardless of age and can voluntarily apply for a card. The Status card is provided to assist registered Indians in accessing a wide range of programs and services administered by federal agencies, provincial governments and other private sector program and service providers. Many of these organizations use the Status card as the main or sole proof that a person is entitled to receive the benefits.

#### **Why is INAC creating a new and improved Status card?**

The new Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) features several security improvements that significantly reduce the risk of unauthorized alterations or duplication. This helps to ensure the ongoing integrity of the programs and services by protecting them from incidences of fraud and identity theft.

This initiative is called the Secure Certificate of Indian Status Project. It originated through a joint initiative between the Assembly of First Nations and the Lands and Trust Services Sector of INAC and a related project with Treaty 7 First Nations. The goal is to address the need for increased security features on Status cards so issues of stolen identity and fraud can be reduced or eliminated.

**When will the Secure Certificate of Indian Status be available?**

On December 21, 2009, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada began issuing Secure Certificates of Indian Status to applicants who applied in the border communities that received advance application intake visits in the spring of 2009 and whose files were complete.

INAC continues to finalize the phased roll-out plan for the national application process. As information becomes available it will be posted on INAC's website.

**What does the term "SCIS application intake" mean?**

"SCIS application intake" refers to the initial application process for a SCIS card when an individual completes the SCIS application form provides the required identification documentation and a photo is taken. When the application intake is completed, the application is sent to INAC's Headquarter offices for processing.

Application "processing" involves a number of steps that include verification of the Indian Registration number; validation of identification; secure filing of the application; and the printing of the secure card.

**Application intake will be offered at First Nations Offices and INAC's regional offices. Are there different levels of service between the two? What are they?**

Yes. Since the U.S. Government will only allow federal employees to intake applications for the border-crossing format of the SCIS card, needed to enter the U.S., by land and water ports of entry, **only** INAC employees will be certified to intake applications for the border-crossing format. However, Indian Registry Administrator (IRA) will be asked to:

- Coach applicants in completing the border-crossing application
- Check to ensure applicants have the proper documents required to apply
- Take photos of the applicants
- Direct applicants to the closest INAC Regional Office

The table below illustrates the services which will be offered by each office:

<b>Service</b>	<b>First Nation Office</b>	<b>INAC Office</b>
In-Canada card	Yes	Yes
Border-Crossing card	No	Yes
Photographs	Yes	Yes

IRA's will receive training, certification and the required equipment to provide the following services:

1. Educate First Nations individuals on the SCIS application process
2. Conduct the intake of '*In-Canada*' SCIS applications
3. Assist applicants with completion of application form
4. Ensure all applicants have the required documentation
5. Verify the documentation for accuracy
6. Ensure that all name linking documents are included
7. Complete the checklist for documents
8. Take photos of applicants
9. Copy and bundle applicant information and submit to INAC headquarters for processing
10. Coach applicants in completing the '*Border-Crossing*' SCIS application and check to ensure clients have the proper documents required to apply

**What are the two formats of the SCIS?**

INAC has two formats of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status in circulation, as follows:

**In-Canada SCIS Card**

The '*In-Canada*' card is for accessing services and benefits in-Canada. Consistent with the current practice, INAC does share information with the appropriate government agencies for the provision of services within-Canada. (e.g. health benefits, drug benefits).

**Border-Crossing SCIS Card**

The *Border-Crossing* format, provides the same access to services as the in-Canada format and is an acceptable document to present when visiting the U.S. via land and water ports-of-entry.

**Can I obtain a SCIS application form from INAC's website?**

The form will be available once INAC has reviewed and adjusted its processes and procedures in issuing the status card. INAC intends to make the form available once the phased national rollout begins.

**What will happen to the old versions of the Status card once the new one is introduced?**

Older versions of the Status card will remain valid until their renewal date.

**Will applicants be charged a fee to obtain or renew their Status card?**

No, the Government of Canada will not be charging applicants any fees to obtain or renew their Status card.

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## **Application Process**

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The older version of the Status card (Certificate of Indian Status) is no longer being issued.

As of March 29, 2011, applications are being processed in-person at INAC Headquarters, Gatineau, QC.

**Appointments can be booked by calling 1-877-710-2908.**

Applicants will receive their new cards 8-10 weeks after their completed application form is received by INAC.

The following is what will be required when applying for the new SCIS cards.

### **For Registered Indians 16 years of Age and Older**

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- Current status card (if applicable)
- Original birth certificate (long or short form)
- Two passport style photographs
- Valid identification (*see below what constitutes 'valid identification'*)

And if you have taken your spouse's last name, you will need:

- Copy of marriage certificate(s) - (if you have valid ID in your married name)
- **OR** Original government issued marriage certificate(s) - (if you do not have valid ID in your married name)
- **OR** Legal change of name document

**Note:** Original Baptismal Certificates are acceptable (for applicants 65 years of age or older) however individuals are only eligible to receive an 'In-Canada' SCIS card.

**Valid identification includes:**

You need to present **ONLY ONE** of these:

- Canadian or United States Passport
- Border-crossing SCIS
- Enhanced Driver's License
- Enhanced Identification Card
- NEXUS or FAST card

**If you do not have any of the above**, you will need to present **TWO** of the following:

- Driver's license (provincial, territorial or state)
- In-Canada SCIS or current status card
- Other government-issued ID (federal, provincial, territorial or state)

An IRA (Indian Registry Administrator) has a form to be completed if you only have one piece of ID (however you can only apply for an in-Canada SCIS)

The valid identification presented must include a photograph and the signature of the applicant, though not necessarily on the same document.

**For Registered Indians 15 years of Age and Under OR Dependent Adults**

- Original long form birth certificate (or short form with both parents named)
- Current status card (if applicable)
- Two passport style photographs; **AND**

The parents and guardians must provide the following:

**For an *In-Canada* SCIS Card;**

- **Only one parent** or **legal guardian** is required to accompany the child or dependent adult and sign the application form
- Marriage certificate or other name-linking documents (only if your ID has a different last name than the name on the child's birth certificate or custody documents)

- Legal guardians are also required to provide documentation of trusteeship/ guardianship
- The parent or legal guardian must present one piece of valid identification.

**For a *Border-Crossing SCIS Card (in addition to the above requirements):***

- **Both parents or legal guardians** are required to accompany the child or dependent adult and sign the application form (if applicable)
- **OR One parent can** accompany the child / dependent adult, however either a completed guarantor form OR the original documentation of the other parent or legal guardian must be presented
- In the case of separation or divorce, complete copies of all legal documentation regarding the child's custody, access or mobility are required

**Valid identification includes:**

- Canadian or United States Passport
- Current Status Card or SCIS
- Enhanced Driver's License
- Enhanced Identification Card
- NEXUS or FAST card
- Driver's License (provincial, territorial or state)
- Other federal, provincial, territorial or state government-issued ID

The valid identification of parents / legal guardians must include a photograph and a signature, though not necessarily on the same document.