

## .02 Accumulating 40 Quarters

Noncitizens may qualify using quarters of their own in combination with a spouse and parent through the month the noncitizen attains age 18.

For CA, noncitizens may accumulate their own quarters beginning when they are legally authorized to work in the U.S. (See [Noncitizens Legally Authorized to Work](#))

For NA, noncitizens may begin accumulating their own quarters regardless of their noncitizen status at the time the work is performed. (See [NA 40 quarter noncitizenship requirements](#))

Noncitizens may use the quarters of a current spouse and one or more deceased spouses beginning the quarter the marriage occurs, or the couple presents themselves as husband and wife.

Consider the following when counting 40 quarters:

- Include quarters during periods of voluntary or involuntary separation from the current legal spouse.
- Count quarters when the couple is living together and presents themselves as husband and wife to the community. This includes common law marriages. The noncitizen must live with the common law spouse. Verification of legal marriage or living as husband and wife is required. Also verify the date this status began.

### NA WARNING

When a noncitizen's marriage ends in divorce, the ex-spouse's quarters of earnings cannot be credited. The eligible noncitizen who divorces may become ineligible at renewal, when reapplying after a break in benefits, or when a change is reported, due to not counting the ex-spouses' quarters of earnings.

Noncitizens may use the quarters of their parent (natural, adoptive, or step) through the month the noncitizen turns age 18.

NOTE The relationship of the parent to the child must be verified.

The following quarters may be used:

- Quarters earned by a natural or adoptive parent before the child was born.
- Quarters earned by a parent (natural, adoptive, or step) before the child entered the U.S.
- Quarters earned by a stepparent while the child lived with the stepparent. This includes common law marriages and couples who live together and present themselves as husband and wife to the community.
- Quarters earned prior to the noncitizen turning 18 may be used after that noncitizen's 18th birthday. This is true even when the noncitizen does not reside with the natural or adoptive parent.