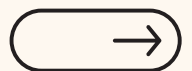




Family-Based Immigration: Marriage-Based Green Card Document Checklist

A Comprehensive Guide to Required Documentation for Spouses



gonzalezlawri.com
info@gonzalezlawri.com

Tel: (401) 432-7500

Deborah Gonzalez, Esq
Gonzalez Law Offices

Address : 197 Taunton Avenue, 2nd
Floor, East Providence, RI 02914



Welcome & Overview

Applying for a marriage-based green card requires proving two primary components to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): the legal identity of both partners, and the authenticity of the marriage itself (proving it is a "bona fide" relationship built on a shared life).

Missing documents or incomplete forms are among the leading causes of Requests for Evidence (RFEs), which can severely delay your application. This checklist outlines the essential forms and supporting documents required for a standard Adjustment of Status filing package when the foreign spouse is applying from within the United States.

Important Notice: Every family situation is unique, and immigration requirements change frequently. This document is an educational checklist based on general USCIS guidelines and does not constitute formal legal advice. Gonzalez Law Offices charges for formal case evaluations and specific legal strategy sessions.

The 4 Core Checklists for Spousal Sponsorship

Section 1: Core Government Forms

- **Form I-130:** A family-based immigrant petition filed by the U.S. citizen or permanent resident sponsor to establish the legal family relationship.
- **Form I-130A (Supplemental Information for Spouse Beneficiary):** Completed by the foreign spouse to provide additional biographical details.
- **Form I-485 (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status):** The primary application used by the foreign spouse to apply for the green card from inside the U.S.
- **Form I-864 (Affidavit of Support):** A legally binding contract completed by the sponsor showing they meet federal income requirements to support the household.
- **Form I-693 (Report of Immigration Medical Examination):** Completed by a USCIS-approved civil surgeon to show the applicant meets health prerequisites. This must remain sealed in the doctor's official envelope.
- **Form I-765 (Optional: Application for Employment Authorization):** Requests a temporary work permit while your green card application is being processed.
- **Form I-131 (Optional: Application for Travel Document):** Requests "Advance Parole," allowing the foreign spouse to travel outside the U.S. while the case is pending.

Section 2: Identity & Legal Status Documents

Provide clear, legible photocopies of these documents. Do not send original documents to USCIS unless explicitly requested.

For the U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident Sponsor:

- **Proof of Citizenship or Residency:** A copy of your U.S. Birth Certificate, Naturalization Certificate, valid U.S. Passport, or Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).
- **Government Photo ID:** A copy of a valid state driver's license or state identification card.
- **Passport Photos:** Two (2) recent, identical color passport-style photographs.

For the Foreign Spouse (Beneficiary):

- **Passport Pages:** A copy of the biographic data page and any pages showing U.S. visas, entry stamps, or structural changes.



- **Birth Certificate:** A copy of your long-form birth certificate showing parents' names (must include a certified English translation if the original is in a foreign language).
- **Proof of Legal Entry:** A copy of your latest Form I-94 arrival/departure electronic record.
- **Passport Photos:** Four (4) recent, identical color passport-style photographs.

Section 3: Evidence of a Genuine Marriage (Bona Fide Proof)

You must prove to the government that your marriage is genuine and not entered into solely for immigration purposes. The more financial and residential overlap you can show, the stronger your case.

- **Certified Marriage Certificate:** The official legal document proving your marriage occurred.
- **Proof of Terminated Prior Marriages:** If either spouse was previously married, copies of legal divorce decrees, annulment papers, or death certificates.
- **Joint Financial Accounts:** Copies of monthly statements for joint checking/savings accounts, shared credit cards, or joint investment portfolios.
- **Shared Housing & Real Estate:** A copy of a joint residential lease agreement, a property deed showing both names, or home insurance policies.
- **Joint Utilities:** Copies of electric, gas, water, internet, or phone bills listing both spouses' names at the same residential address.
- **Insurance Policies:** Documentation showing both names on health, auto, or life insurance policies, or listings as dynamic beneficiaries on retirement/401(k) accounts.
- **Affidavits from Family & Friends:** Two to three sworn, signed letters from family members, friends, or community leaders who can personally attest to the validity of your relationship.
- **Relationship Photographs:** A collection of 10–20 photos spanning the duration of your relationship, including family gatherings, trips, holidays, and your wedding day. (Tip: Print captions including dates, locations, and names of others present).

Section 4: Sponsor Financial Sufficiency Documents

The sponsor must demonstrate they have the financial capability to support the household at or above 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- **Tax Transcripts:** Complete copies of IRS federal tax transcripts or signed tax returns (Form 1040) along with all relevant W-2s or 1099s for the most recent tax year.
- **Proof of Current Income:** Copies of consecutive pay stubs covering the last 3 to 6 months.
- **Employment Verification:** A recent letter from the sponsor's current employer confirming their job title, annual salary, and employment status.

Key Takeaways for Couples

- **Certified Translations:** Any document not written in English must be accompanied by a full English translation that the translator has certified as complete and accurate.
- **Keep a Master Copy:** Always scan or make a complete photocopy of every single form, fee check, and supporting document before mailing the physical packet to a USCIS lockbox.
- **Beware of Scams:** Rely strictly on verified government updates and accredited legal professionals. Avoid unlicensed individuals or "notarios" who make false guarantees regarding case outcomes.



Need Personalized Guidance?

The marriage green card process requires meticulous attention to detail. At Gonzalez Law Offices, we stand by families through every phase of the immigration framework.

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