

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Asylum document checklist (Form I-589)

A printable list of the documents the official Form I-589 instructions ask for when you apply for asylum, withholding of removal or protection under the Convention Against Torture, with copies and translations, the one-year deadline and where to file.

Reviewed by Carlos Maury (<https://carlosmaury.law/about>), former U.S. Immigration Judge. Last reviewed: October 6, 2026.

This is a printable checklist. To print it, use your browser's Print command (Ctrl+P, or Command+P on a Mac). Each box lists a document the official Form I-589 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>) instructions or the regulations ask for, and where that request comes from. Form I-589 is the single application for asylum, withholding of removal and protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

The application itself

- ☐ **The completed, signed original Form I-589**, every question answered, signed by you in Part D — Form I-589 instructions (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-589instr.pdf>), Section VI, item 1, and Section XI (an unanswered question or a missing signature makes the application incomplete).
- ☐ **Part E signed by the preparer**, if anyone other than you or your spouse, parent or child helped prepare the form — Form I-589 instructions, Part E; without it the application is returned as incomplete.
- ☐ **The originals of any supplementary sheets and statements**, including Supplement A (more than four children) and Supplement B (more space for Parts B and C) — Form I-589 instructions, Section VI, item 1, and "Supplements to Form I-589".
- ☐ **Your name, A-Number (if any), signature and date on every added page** — Form I-589 instructions, Section X, note.
- ☐ **Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance**, signed by you and your attorney or accredited representative, if you have one — Form I-589 instructions, Section X, item 1.

- ☐ **An extra copy of the completed application for your own records** — Form I-589 instructions, Section VI, item 1.

Identity and travel documents

- ☐ **A copy of every passport or other travel document in your possession, cover to cover**, for you and each family member included — Form I-589 instructions, Section VI, item 3. Do not send original passports or travel documents unless they are specifically requested.
- ☐ **A copy of any U.S. immigration document, such as Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record**, for you and each family member included, if you have one — Form I-589 instructions, Section VI, item 3.
- ☐ **A copy of any other identity document** (birth certificate, military or national identity card, driver's license) — recommended by the Form I-589 instructions, Section VI, item 4, with the originals brought to any interview.

Spouse and children included in the application

You may include your spouse and unmarried children under 21 who are in the United States. Married children and children 21 or older must file their own Form I-589 (Form I-589 instructions, Part A.II).

- ☐ **Spouse: a copy of your marriage certificate and proof that any prior marriage ended** — Form I-589 instructions, Part A.II, item 1, and Section VI, item 2.
- ☐ **Each unmarried child under 21: a copy of the birth certificate** — Form I-589 instructions, Part A.II, item 2.
- ☐ **If those documents do not exist or cannot be obtained: secondary evidence**, such as medical, religious or school records, or **sworn affidavits** (submitted in the original) from people with personal knowledge of the event, **plus your explanation of why the primary document is unavailable** — Form I-589 instructions, Part A.II and Section VI, item 2.

Evidence supporting your claim

The instructions say you must submit reasonably available corroborative evidence of both the general conditions in your country and the specific facts of your claim (Form I-589 instructions, Section VII).

- ☐ **Evidence of the specific facts of your claim**, such as witness affidavits, medical or psychological records, doctors' statements, photographs, official documents and personal statements — Form I-589 instructions, Section VII.
- ☐ **Evidence of conditions in your country**, such as newspaper articles, periodicals, journals, books and reports — Form I-589 instructions, Section VII.
- ☐ **A written explanation, on Supplement B or added sheets, of any evidence that is not reasonably available** or that you are not submitting now — Form I-589 instructions, Section VII.
- ☐ **A health professional's report**, if you have difficulty talking about the harm you suffered (optional) — Form I-589 instructions, Section VII.
- ☐ **If it applies to you: proof** of membership in the Ms. L. settlement class, which has its own accommodations for the one-year deadline — Form I-589 instructions, Part C.

Photos and fingerprints

The current USCIS filing tips say **not** to submit passport-style photos with a Form I-589 filed by mail (uscis.gov/i-589 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>), "Form Filing Tips"). Instead, you and each spouse or child listed in the application are fingerprinted and photographed at a biometrics appointment; USCIS sends a written notice with the time and place (Form I-589 instructions, Section IX). If you are in immigration court, DHS counsel gives you the biometrics instructions (Section XII).

- ☐ **Your biometrics appointment notice**, kept with your papers, and attendance at that appointment for you and every family member listed — Form I-589 instructions, Section IX.

Translations, copies and originals

- ☐ **A full English translation of every document in another language**, with the translator's signed certification that the translation is complete and accurate and that the translator is competent to translate into English, including the translator's printed name, signature, date and contact information — Form I-589 instructions, "Translations"; 8 CFR 103.2(b)(3) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2>) for USCIS.
- ☐ **In immigration court: an English translation with the translator's signed certification** of competence and of a true and accurate translation, attached to every foreign-language document — 8 CFR 1003.33 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.33>).

- ☐ **Photocopies, not originals**, of supporting documents. If you send an original, USCIS or the immigration court may keep it — Form I-589 instructions, "Copies". USCIS may later ask to see an original (8 CFR 103.2(b)(5) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2>)). For a mailed USCIS filing, do not send multiple copies of the form or of the evidence (uscis.gov/i-589 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>)).
- ☐ **In immigration court, filed on paper: a copy served on DHS and a certificate of service**; if every party uses EOIR's electronic filing system, EOIR serves the filing — 8 CFR 1003.32 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.32>). Documents for the court go on 8½ × 11 inch pages.

The one-year filing deadline

The Form I-589 instructions state that you must file within 1 year after you arrived in the United States, unless you can show changed circumstances that materially affect your eligibility or extraordinary circumstances related to the delay. Under 8 CFR 1208.4(a)(2) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1208.4>), the year is counted from your last arrival, and you must prove timely filing by clear and convincing evidence or show that an exception applies. If you cannot meet the deadline, the instructions note that you may still be eligible for withholding of removal or protection under the Convention Against Torture.

- ☐ **If filing more than one year after your last arrival: your explanation in Part C, Question 5, and the evidence of the changed or extraordinary circumstances** — Form I-589 instructions, Part C, which points to 8 CFR 1208.4 for your burden of proof.

Where to file: USCIS or the immigration court

- ☐ **Affirmative filing with USCIS**, if you are not in proceedings before an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals: file online or by mail as directed on uscis.gov/i-589 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>) (its Filing Instructions Tool tells you which) — Form I-589 instructions, Section XII.

- ☐ **Defensive filing with the immigration court**, if you were served with a Notice to Appear (Form I-862) or another charging document and are in proceedings: file with the immigration court that has jurisdiction over your case — Form I-589 instructions, Section XII. USCIS says to confirm that court through the [EOIR Automated Case Information \(https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/\)](https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/) system or hotline, because a filing at the wrong court is rejected; see also the [EOIR immigration court list \(https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing\)](https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing).
- ☐ **Unaccompanied children in removal proceedings** file with USCIS, by mail, with any DHS instruction sheet or Office of Refugee Resettlement custody papers they have — Form I-589 instructions, Section XII.
- ☐ **At an asylum interview, bring** identification, including your passports, other travel or identity documents and Form I-94; a copy of your I-589 (recommended); and, if you cannot proceed in fluent English, a competent interpreter who is at least 18 and is not your attorney, a witness or a representative of your country. Family members included must also attend with their identity and travel documents — Form I-589 instructions, Part 2, Section III.

Before you file

Forms and instructions change. Before you file, open the official [Form I-589 page \(https://www.uscis.gov/i-589\)](https://www.uscis.gov/i-589) and check that you are using the current edition and its current instructions; USCIS may reject a form from an outdated edition. Because the I-589, your declaration and your testimony must agree in every detail, have an attorney review the full packet before it is filed. Our [asylum lawyer page \(https://carlosmaury.law/asylum-lawyer\)](https://carlosmaury.law/asylum-lawyer) explains how we help with asylum, withholding and CAT cases at USCIS and in immigration court.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need passport photos for Form I-589?

No. The USCIS Form I-589 page says not to submit passport-style photos with a mailed application. You and each family member listed are photographed and fingerprinted at a biometrics appointment instead.

Should I send my original passport with the I-589?

No. The instructions ask for a copy of every passport or travel document you have, cover to cover, and say not to send originals unless they are specifically requested. Bring the originals to your interview.

What do I need to include my spouse and children?

For a spouse, a copy of the marriage certificate and proof that any prior marriage ended; for each unmarried child under 21, a copy of the birth certificate. If those do not exist, the instructions allow secondary evidence or affidavits with an explanation.

Do my documents need to be translated?

Yes. Every document in another language must come with a full English translation and the translator's signed certification that it is complete and accurate and that the translator is competent to translate. 8 CFR 103.2(b)(3) and 8 CFR 1003.33 require this for USCIS and the immigration court.

What is the one-year deadline for asylum?

The I-589 instructions say you must file within 1 year after arriving in the United States unless changed or extraordinary circumstances apply. The year is counted from your last arrival. If you miss it, the instructions note you may still be eligible for withholding of removal or CAT protection.

Do I file the I-589 with USCIS or the immigration court?

If you are not in proceedings before an immigration judge or the Board of Immigration Appeals, you file with USCIS. If you are in immigration court proceedings, you file with the court that has your case, unless you are an unaccompanied child.

Official sources

Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal — USCIS (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>)

Instructions for Form I-589 (PDF) — USCIS (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-589instr.pdf>)

8 CFR 103.2, Submission and adjudication of benefit requests (translations, copies) — eCFR (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2>)

8 CFR 1003.32, Service and size of documents (immigration court) — eCFR (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.32>)

8 CFR 1003.33, Translation of documents (immigration court) — eCFR (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.33>)

8 CFR 1208.4, Filing the application (one-year deadline) — eCFR (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1208.4>)

Automated Case Information — EOIR (<https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/>)

Immigration court list — EOIR (<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/eoir-immigration-court-listing>)

Responsible attorney: Carlos Maury (<https://carlosmaury.law/about>), former U.S. Immigration Judge. Carlos Maury is licensed in Florida (The Florida Bar No. 964239). Practice limited to federal immigration law; we represent clients in all 50 states. Carlos Maury is no longer on the bench and cannot influence any sitting judge or pending case. This page is general information, not legal advice for your case.