

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Green card document checklist (Form I-485)

A printable list of the documents the official Form I-485 instructions and the USCIS initial-evidence checklist ask for when a family member applies for a green card from inside the United States: identity and civil documents, proof of entry, the family petition, the medical exam, the affidavit of support, criminal records, optional work and travel forms, and the rules on copies and translations.

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

This is a printable checklist. To print it or save it as a PDF, use your browser's Print command (Ctrl+P, or Command+P on a Mac). Tick each box as you gather the document. It covers a family-based green card applied for from inside the United States on Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, and lists only what the official [Form I-485 page and instructions \(https://www.uscis.gov/i-485\)](https://www.uscis.gov/i-485) and the USCIS [Checklist of Required Initial Evidence for Form I-485 \(https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-485-for-informational-purposes-only\)](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-485-for-informational-purposes-only) ask for. USCIS says that checklist is a preparation tool only: do not send it with the application. For help with the whole case, see our [green card lawyer \(https://carlosmaury.law/green-card-lawyer\)](https://carlosmaury.law/green-card-lawyer) page.

Identity and civil documents

- ☐ **Two identical color passport-style photographs**, taken recently, with your name and A-Number (if any) printed lightly in pencil or felt pen on the back — Form I-485 instructions, "Photographs."
- ☐ **Copy of a government-issued photo identity document**, such as a passport (even if expired), driver's license or military ID — Form I-485 instructions, "Government-Issued Identity Document with Photograph."

- ☐ **Copy of your birth certificate** issued by the civil authority of your country of birth, listing at least one parent; if it is unavailable or does not exist, other evidence of birth (church, school or medical records) and proof that it is unavailable — Form I-485 instructions, "Birth Certificate," and 8 CFR 103.2(b)(2). The State Department's reciprocity schedule (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>) explains how to obtain one in each country.

How you entered and your status

- ☐ **Passport page with the admission or parole stamp** from your most recent arrival — Form I-485 instructions, "Evidence of Inspection and Admission or Inspection and Parole."
- ☐ **Passport page with your nonimmigrant visa** — same section of the Form I-485 instructions.
- ☐ **Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record**; a paper copy of an electronic I-94 can be printed from the CBP I-94 website (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>) — same section. Applicants under INA 245(i) and some other categories named in the instructions do not need this evidence.
- ☐ **Form I-485 Supplement A**, only if you are adjusting under INA 245(i) — USCIS initial-evidence checklist.
- ☐ **Proof you have continuously maintained lawful status since arrival** (for example I-797 notices for extensions or changes of status, I-94 records, I-20 or DS-2019 forms), for family *preference* applicants and their spouses and children; immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are not on this list — Form I-485 instructions, item 7, and the USCIS checklist.
- ☐ **J-1 or J-2 documents** (all DS-2019 or IAP-66 forms, visas, I-94s and entry stamps, and proof you complied with or were granted a waiver of the two-year home residence requirement), only if you ever held J status — Form I-485 instructions, item 12.

The family petition and relationship

- ☐ **Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, or a copy of its I-797 receipt or approval notice**. An immediate relative may file the I-130 together with the I-485; otherwise include a copy of the I-797 for the I-130 filed for you — Form I-485 instructions, "Documentation of Your Immigrant Category," and the Form I-130 page (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-130>).

- ☐ **Derivative spouse or child of a preference applicant:** a copy of the marriage certificate, birth certificate or adoption decree showing the relationship to the principal applicant; proof that any prior marriage of either spouse ended (divorce decree or death certificate); a copy of the I-797 for the principal's I-130; and a copy of the I-797 for the principal's I-485 or of the principal's green card, unless you file together with the principal — Form I-485 instructions, items 5 and 6, and the USCIS checklist.
- ☐ **K-1 fiancé(e) or K-2 child:** a copy of the marriage certificate showing the marriage to the U.S. citizen who filed the Form I-129F within 90 days after your K-1 admission — Form I-485 instructions, K-1/K-2 section.

Marriage cases have more to prove than this list; see our [marriage green card lawyer](https://carlosmaury.law/marriage-green-card-lawyer) (<https://carlosmaury.law/marriage-green-card-lawyer>) page.

Medical exam (Form I-693)

- ☐ **Form I-693, Report of Immigration Medical Examination and Vaccination Record,** completed and signed by a USCIS-designated civil surgeon. If you are required to submit a Form I-693 or a partial Form I-693, it must be filed *with* the I-485, or the I-485 may be rejected. When filing by mail, send it in the original sealed envelope from the civil surgeon; when filing online, upload it and keep the original and the envelope until USCIS decides the case — [Form I-693 page](https://www.uscis.gov/i-693) (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-693>) and Form I-485 instructions, item 9.

Affidavit of Support (Form I-864)

- ☐ **Form I-864, Affidavit of Support Under Section 213A of the INA,** signed by the petitioner, or Form I-864EZ where its instructions allow. It is required for most family-based applicants, and failing to submit it when required results in denial of the I-485 — Form I-485 instructions, "Affidavit of Support."
- ☐ **The sponsor's federal income tax return for the most recent tax year:** an IRS transcript or a photocopy from the sponsor's own records. With a photocopy, include every Form W-2 and 1099 that goes with it. Returns for the three most recent years are optional. Do not send state returns — [Form I-864](https://www.uscis.gov/i-864) (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-864>) instructions, Items 15-19.

- ☐ **Proof of the sponsor's U.S. citizenship or permanent residence**, for a joint sponsor (the petitioner does not need to resend it if it was filed with the I-130) — Form I-864 instructions, Item 9.
- ☐ **Form I-864A, Contract Between Sponsor and Household Member**, from each relative whose income the sponsor counts — Form I-864 instructions.

Arrests, charges and convictions

- ☐ **Certified police and court records for any arrest, detention, charge or conviction, anywhere in the world, even as a minor**: an original or certified copy of the complete arrest report, certified copies of the charging document and the final disposition, any plea agreement, and proof of completing probation or any program. For a record that was vacated, sealed or expunged, also a certified copy of that court order — Form I-485 instructions, item 10. Traffic incidents with no arrest that ended only in a small fine or license points generally need no records unless they involved criminal charges, alcohol, drugs or injury (the instructions set the limit).
- ☐ **If a record cannot be obtained**: a letter on government letterhead from the record keeper explaining why, your own written explanation, and any secondary evidence of the outcome — same item.
- ☐ **Form I-601 (waiver of inadmissibility) or Form I-212 (permission to reapply after removal)**, only if one applies to you — Form I-485 instructions, item 11, and the USCIS checklist.

Optional: work permit and travel permission

- ☐ **Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization**, if you want a work permit while the I-485 is pending; it may be filed together with the I-485 — Form I-485 page (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>), "Filing Form I-765 and Form I-131 with Form I-485."
- ☐ **Form I-131 for an advance parole document**, if you may need to travel. Leaving the United States without advance parole while the I-485 is pending generally makes USCIS treat the application as abandoned, with narrow exceptions — Form I-485 instructions, "If You Leave the United States While Your Application Is Pending."
- ☐ **A copy of your I-485 receipt notice (Form I-797C)**, if you file the I-765 or I-131 later rather than with the I-485 — Form I-485 page.

Copies, originals and translations

- ☐ **Legible photocopies** of each document, unless the instructions ask for an original (as they do for some criminal records and the sealed I-693). Originals sent when not required or requested may be destroyed; USCIS can ask to see an original at any time — Form I-485 instructions, "Copies," and 8 CFR 103.2(b)(4) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2>).
- ☐ **A full English translation of every foreign-language document**, with the translator's signed certification that the translation is complete and accurate and that the translator is competent to translate into English, plus the translator's printed name, signature date and contact information — 8 CFR 103.2(b)(3) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2>) and Form I-485 instructions, "Translations."
- ☐ **In immigration court**, if you are in removal proceedings and file the I-485 with the court, every foreign-language document needs an English translation with the translator's certification of competence and accuracy — 8 CFR 1003.33 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.33>). The I-485 instructions explain that the DHS attorney gives pre-order instructions for biometrics.

Before you file

Forms and instructions change, sometimes without a grace period. Before filing, open the official Form I-485 page (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>) and check that you are using the current edition of every form and its current instructions, and that all pages come from the same edition. This checklist does not replace those instructions, and some categories need more. Have an attorney review the full packet before it is filed: a missing document can lead to rejection or a request for evidence, and some documents, like arrest records, raise legal questions of their own.

Frequently asked questions

Do I have to send the I-693 medical exam with the I-485?

Yes, if you are required to submit a Form I-693 or a partial Form I-693. USCIS says it must be submitted with the Form I-485, or the I-485 may be rejected. By mail it goes in the civil surgeon's original sealed envelope; when filing online you upload it and keep the original and the envelope.

Should I send original documents?

Generally no. The Form I-485 instructions ask for legible photocopies unless they specifically ask for an original, as they do for some criminal records. Originals sent when not required or requested may be destroyed, and USCIS can ask to see an original at any time.

What tax documents does the sponsor need for Form I-864?

An IRS transcript or a photocopy of the sponsor's federal income tax return for the most recent tax year. If a photocopy is used, every W-2 and 1099 that goes with it must be included. Returns for the three most recent years are optional, and state returns should not be sent.

Do my documents in Spanish need to be translated?

Yes. Under 8 CFR 103.2(b)(3), any foreign-language document sent to USCIS needs a full English translation with the translator's certification that it is complete and accurate and that the translator is competent to translate into English. In immigration court, 8 CFR 1003.33 has a similar rule.

Do I need court records if my case was dismissed or expunged?

Yes. The Form I-485 instructions ask for certified records of any arrest, charge or conviction anywhere in the world, whatever the outcome, including the arrest report and final disposition, and for a sealed or expunged record also a certified copy of the court order.

Can I apply for a work permit and travel permission at the same time?

Yes. USCIS says Form I-765 for employment authorization and Form I-131 for advance parole may be filed together with Form I-485. If you file them later, include a copy of your I-485 receipt notice. Traveling abroad without advance parole while the I-485 is pending generally causes the application to be treated as abandoned.

Official sources

Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status — USCIS (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>)

Instructions for Form I-485 (PDF) — USCIS (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-485instr.pdf>)

[Checklist of Required Initial Evidence for Form I-485 — USCIS \(https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-485-for-informational-purposes-only\)](https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-485-for-informational-purposes-only)

[Form I-864, Affidavit of Support, and its instructions — USCIS \(https://www.uscis.gov/i-864\)](https://www.uscis.gov/i-864)

[Form I-693, Report of Immigration Medical Examination and Vaccination Record — USCIS \(https://www.uscis.gov/i-693\)](https://www.uscis.gov/i-693)

[Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative — USCIS \(https://www.uscis.gov/i-130\)](https://www.uscis.gov/i-130)

[8 CFR 103.2, Submission and adjudication of benefit requests — eCFR \(https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-103.2)

[8 CFR 1003.33, Translation of documents — eCFR \(https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.33\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/section-1003.33)

[Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record — U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/\)](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)

Responsible attorney: [Carlos Maury \(https://carlosmaury.law/about\)](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.