FREE RESOURCE

Bona Fide Marriage Evidence Guide for USCIS

Learn about different examples of documents that can help show that your marriage is genuine and was entered into in good faith.

Purpose of this guide

This guide may be useful for marriage-based I-130 petitions, related I-485 adjustment of status applications, and I-751 petitions, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Use the checkboxes to mark the documents you already have and write down what is missing. Not every document is needed for every applicant: each couple gathers the evidence that reflects their own life together.

> Important: The documents in this guide are educational examples, not an official or mandatory USCIS list.

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A. Finances and shared financial responsibilities

- ☐ Joint bank accounts and statements.
- ☐ Credit cards with the spouse as an authorized user.
- ☐ Proof of money transfers between spouses, for example Zelle or Cash App.
- ☐ Mortgage statements and property deed.
- ☐ Applications or offers to buy property.
- ☐ Shared investments, such as stocks or bonds.
- ☐ Shared loans and debts.
- ☐ Jointly filed tax returns.
- ☐ Vehicle titles in both names.
- ☐ Updated marital status in employment records.
- ☐ 401(k), Roth IRA, or IRA documents naming the spouse as beneficiary.
- ☐ Wills and estate documents.
- ☐ Health, auto, or life insurance policies.
- ☐ Enrollment of the spouse as a military dependent in DEERS.
- ☐ Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dependent benefits documents.
- ☐ Receipts and photos of major purchases made together.
- ☐ Utility bills for the shared home, such as electricity, gas, and internet.
- ☐ Shared phone plans.

Notes

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B. Shared residence and address

- ☐ Mortgage statements and home deed.
- ☐ Lease agreement and rent receipts.
- ☐ A document authorizing occupancy of the home, a landlord statement, or a roommate agreement, when there is no lease.
- ☐ If living with relatives, a signed statement from the owner and a copy of proof of ownership.
- ☐ Utility bills showing the same address.
- ☐ Driver's licenses with the same address.
- ☐ Mail received by both spouses at the same address.
- ☐ Amazon or other delivery labels showing the address.
- ☐ USPS change-of-address confirmations.
- ☐ Prescription documents or labels showing the address.
- ☐ Canceled checks showing the same address.

Notes

C. Family integration

- ☐ Children's birth certificates.

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- ☐ Stepchild adoption certificates.
- ☐ Ultrasounds or pregnancy records.
  Optional: only if you wish to use them.
- ☐ Fertility treatment records.
  Optional: only if applicable and you wish to submit them.
- ☐ Pet adoption certificates.
- ☐ Name change documents.
- ☐ Records of religious participation or conversion related to the spouse.
  Optional: only if they exist and you wish to submit them.
- ☐ The spouse listed as emergency contact at work or school.
- ☐ Premarital counseling statements or certificates.
- ☐ Sworn statements from relatives, friends, or other people with personal knowledge of the relationship.
- ☐ Invitations to family events.
- ☐ School or daycare enrollment forms for the children.

> Important: Medical, religious, and other sensitive records are optional examples. They are not essential to show a genuine marriage; each couple decides whether to submit them.

Notes

D. Travel and shared experiences

- ☐ Confirmations of trips taken together.
- ☐ Confirmations of trips to the spouse's home country.

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- [ ] Boarding passes or flight itineraries.
- [ ] Hotel or Airbnb reservations.
- [ ] Passport stamps related to travel.
- [ ] Tickets to concerts, events, or activities.
- [ ] Receipts and photos of wedding expenses, such as the venue, rings, and invitations.
- [ ] Shared memberships, such as a gym, clubs, or subscriptions.
- [ ] Future reservations for trips, events, or activities.

Notes

E. Relationship history and social life

- [ ] Relationship timeline.
- [ ] Personal statement about the couple's history.
- [ ] Photos of the two of you.
- [ ] Photos with family and friends.
- [ ] Call or FaceTime history.
- [ ] Message screenshots.
- [ ] Social media posts or screenshots.
- [ ] Letters and cards sent to each other.

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- ☐ Receipts and photos of gifts.
- ☐ Documents showing you met at school, when applicable.
- ☐ Work documents showing you met at work, such as W-2 forms or pay stubs, when applicable.

Notes

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What USCIS regulations mention

The USCIS regulations for removing conditions on residence (Form I-751, 8 CFR 216.4(a)(5)) mention, as examples of evidence of a good-faith marriage:

- Documents showing joint ownership of property.
- A lease showing joint tenancy of a common residence.
- Documents showing commingling of financial resources.
- Birth certificates of children born to the marriage.
- Affidavits from third parties with personal knowledge of the relationship.
- Other relevant documentation.

The other ideas in this guide are educational examples that can help reflect that life together. Always check the current instructions for the form you are filing.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to submit all of this evidence?

No. USCIS evaluates the relevant evidence according to the application and the circumstances of the marriage. This guide offers examples of documents that could help show the relationship is genuine. There is no general obligation to submit every example included.

What if we do not have joint bank accounts?

The couple may have other documents that reflect their relationship, living together, shared responsibilities, and family life.

Does the evidence have to be from the United States?

Not necessarily. Relevant documents may come from other countries, depending on the history of the relationship and the applicable requirements. If a document is in another language, USCIS requires a complete English translation certified by a translator who states they are competent in both languages (8 CFR 103.2(b)(3)).

Are photos enough?

Photos can be helpful, but they are evaluated together with the other available evidence. By themselves they do not guarantee approval.

Can I use statements from family and friends?

Yes, when they are relevant and meet the applicable requirements. They must reflect truthful information and personal knowledge of the relationship. USCIS regulations ask that each affidavit state the full name, address, date and place of birth of the person signing it, their relationship to the couple, and how they know about the relationship (8 CFR 204.2(a)(1)(iii)(B)).

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Official sources

- USCIS — Form I-130:
  https://www.uscis.gov/i-130
- USCIS — Form I-751:
  https://www.uscis.gov/i-751
- USCIS — Form I-485:
  https://www.uscis.gov/i-485

Notice

> This guide is an educational resource prepared by Ge Chanfon Services LLC. The documents mentioned are examples and are not an official or mandatory USCIS list. The evidence needed depends on the application and individual circumstances. Ge Chanfon Services provides document preparation and administrative assistance; it does not provide legal advice or representation.

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