



Immigration Attorneys — Temple Terrace, FL

Family-Based Petition (Form I-130)

A Plain-Language Document Checklist

If a family member is petitioning for you — or you're petitioning for a family member — USCIS will ask for a lot of paperwork to prove the relationship and eligibility. This checklist walks you through what you'll typically need to gather, in plain English.

This is general information, not legal advice. Your case may need more (or fewer) documents depending on your relationship and situation — that's exactly what a consultation is for.

Petitioner's Status Documents

- ☐ Proof of U.S. citizenship (birth certificate, U.S. passport, or naturalization certificate) — if the petitioner is a citizen
- ☐ Green card (Permanent Resident Card) — if the petitioner is a lawful permanent resident
- ☐ Government-issued photo ID

Identity Documents (Petitioner and Beneficiary)

- ☐ Birth certificate (certified copy; translated into English if needed)
- ☐ Valid passport — copy of every page, including visa stamps
- ☐ Legal name change documents, if either party has changed their name

Proof of Relationship

- ☐ Marriage certificate, if petitioning for a spouse
- ☐ Divorce decree(s) from any previous marriages — yours and your spouse's
- ☐ Birth certificate showing the parent-child relationship, if petitioning for a child or parent
- ☐ Birth certificates showing a common parent, if petitioning for a sibling

Evidence of a Genuine Marriage (spousal petitions only)

- ☐ Joint lease, mortgage, or utility bills showing you live together
- ☐ Joint bank account statements
- ☐ Photos together over the course of your relationship

The more consistent evidence you provide, the less likely USCIS is to request more (a Request for Evidence).

Beneficiary's Documents

- ☐ Recent passport-style photo
- ☐ Passport or other government-issued ID
- ☐ Police clearance certificate, if available

If Filing for Adjustment of Status at the Same Time

- ☐ Affidavit of Support (Form I-864) from the petitioner
- ☐ Petitioner's tax returns for the last 3 years
- ☐ Petitioner's recent pay stubs and W-2 forms

A Simple Timeline

60 days before filing: Start gathering identity and relationship documents for both petitioner and beneficiary.

30 days before filing: Collect evidence of your relationship — photos, joint documents, or affidavits from people who know you.

14 days before filing: Final review of all documents; get any required signatures notarized.

Filing day: Submit your complete I-130 package to USCIS.

After filing: Watch for your receipt notice (Form I-797); processing time varies widely by relationship category.

A note from Ahmad

Family-based petitions can take anywhere from several months to several years, depending on your relationship to the petitioner and where you live. I personally review every case at our firm to make sure it's filed in the strongest way possible from day one.

Ready to talk about your case?

Schedule a consultation at americandreamlawoffice.com

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