

— FREE CHECKLIST

CR-1/IR-1 Consular Checklist

The spouse-visa checklist: I-130 filing, the NVC document stage, interview prep, and arrival steps including the USCIS Immigrant Fee.

Free

Print-ready

Current as of July 2026

Visa4Love · a service of Usher Law Group, P.C. · (718) 484-7510 · visa4love.com · CR-1/IR-1 Consular Checklist · July 2026 edition

This checklist tracks a spouse case processed through a U.S. consulate, from the I-130 filing through the immigrant's arrival in the U.S. It follows the actual sequence: USCIS petition, then the National Visa Center (NVC), then the consular interview, then port of entry. Every foreign-language document at every stage needs a complete certified English translation.

Stage 1 — I-130 petition to USCIS

- ☐ Form I-130, signed by the U.S. citizen or LPR spouse — fee \$675 paper / \$625 online, electronic payment only
- ☐ Form I-130A, signed by the immigrant spouse (if abroad, the signature requirement still applies; only the signature can be excused when noted per instructions)
- ☐ Petitioner's proof of status — U.S. passport bio page, birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or green card copy (front and back)
- ☐ Certified marriage certificate plus certified English translation if not in English
- ☐ For each prior marriage of either spouse: final divorce decree, annulment, or death certificate, with certified translation

- ☐ One passport-style photo of each spouse per the current spec
- ☐ Bona fide marriage evidence — joint finances, cohabitation records if any, photos across time, communications, travel together (front-load this; it shortens the case)
- ☐ Any legal name-change documents for either spouse
- ☐ Save the I-797 receipt notice — the receipt date is your priority date

Stage 2 — NVC (after I-130 approval) — see the NVC Documents Checklist for the full upload list

- ☐ Welcome letter from NVC with the case number and invoice ID — needed to log in to CEAC
- ☐ Pay the immigrant visa application fee (\$325 DS-260) and the \$120 I-864 review fee in CEAC
- ☐ Complete Form DS-260 online — includes every address since age 16, 10-year work history, and 5 years of social-media handles; print the confirmation page
- ☐ Upload the immigrant's passport bio page (valid 6+ months beyond intended entry)
- ☐ Upload birth certificate — long form, plus certified translation
- ☐ Upload marriage certificate and all prior-marriage termination documents, with translations
- ☐ Upload police certificate from every country where the immigrant lived 12+ months since age 16 (and per the reciprocity schedule for other stays) — check each certificate's validity window
- ☐ Upload court/prison records for any arrest or conviction anywhere, and military records if the immigrant served
- ☐ Upload the complete I-864 package — signed I-864, most recent tax return or IRS transcript (3 years recommended), W-2s/1099s, employment letter, pay stubs; joint sponsor package if needed

- ☐ Two passport-style photos per applicant per the DOS spec (bring physical copies to the interview even if uploaded)
- ☐ Respond to every NVC document rejection message individually — fix and re-upload until the case is marked Documentarily Complete (NVC review runs about 44 days per submission as of mid-2026)

Stage 3 — Interview preparation

- ☐ Interview appointment letter — print it; some posts refuse entry without it
- ☐ Schedule the medical exam with the consulate's designated panel physician so results reach the post before the interview; bring vaccination records; keep the results sealed
- ☐ Bring original (or certified) versions of every civil document uploaded to CEAC — passport, birth, marriage, divorce decrees, police certificates
- ☐ Bring the DS-260 confirmation page and the NVC appointment letter
- ☐ Bring updated I-864 support documents if the tax year rolled over since upload — newest return/transcript, recent pay stubs
- ☐ Bring fresh relationship evidence — recent photos, message samples, records of visits since filing
- ☐ Check the specific consulate's instructions for photo count, courier registration for passport return, and prohibited items (phones, bags)
- ☐ Review your own DS-260 answers — dates, addresses, jobs — so interview answers match the record

Stage 4 — Visa in hand: entry and after arrival

- ☐ Check the visa foil the moment the passport returns — name spelling, birth date, visa category (CR1 if married under 2 years at approval, IR1 if 2+)
- ☐ Pay the USCIS Immigrant Fee — \$235, online, before travel or shortly after entry; the green card is not produced until it is paid

- ☐ Enter the U.S. before the visa expiration date (usually tied to the medical exam validity — often 6 months; do not book travel past it)
- ☐ Do not pack the sealed visa packet (if issued) in checked luggage — carry all immigration documents on your person
- ☐ At the port of entry, the entry stamp in the passport is temporary proof of permanent residence (valid 1 year) — keep the passport safe
- ☐ Confirm your U.S. mailing address is correct in CEAC/with CBP — the green card mails to it within roughly 90 days after entry and fee payment
- ☐ Apply for a Social Security number (or confirm the automatic issuance option chosen on the DS-260 worked) — visit SSA if no card arrives in a few weeks
- ☐ CR-1 entrants: calendar the I-751 window now — file in the 90 days before the 2-year conditional card expires (fee \$750)
- ☐ Update state ID/driver's license, employer I-9, and bank records with the new status

Notes: The I-130 receipt date sets your priority date — for spouses of LPRs, visa availability depends on the Visa Bulletin, so track it monthly. Police certificates and medical results have their own validity windows; sequence them so nothing expires before the interview. The \$235 Immigrant Fee is separate from everything paid earlier and is easy to forget — no fee, no card. Consular route total runs about \$1,355 in government fees (I-130 + DS-260 + I-864 review + Immigrant Fee). Usher Law Group, P.C., (718) 484-7510.

This checklist is general information, not legal advice, and doesn't cover every situation. Fees and rules change — confirm current amounts at [our fee table](#) or [uscis.gov](#) before filing.
© Usher Law Group, P.C.