

— **FREE CHECKLIST**

NVC Document Checklist

Every civil and financial document the National Visa Center needs, per applicant, with translation rules and common rejection reasons.

Free

Print-ready

Current as of July 2026

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After USCIS approves the petition, the National Visa Center collects fees, the DS-260, and scanned civil and financial documents through the CEAC portal before scheduling the consular interview. This checklist lists every upload per applicant, the I-864 financial set, the translation rules, and the reasons NVC most often rejects documents. Each review cycle takes about 44 days, so getting uploads right the first time saves real months.

First steps in CEAC

- ☐ NVC Welcome Letter with case number and invoice ID — needed to log in at ceac.state.gov
- ☐ Pay the Immigrant Visa fee — \$325 per DS-260 applicant (allow processing time before forms unlock)
- ☐ Pay the Affidavit of Support review fee — \$120
- ☐ Complete Form DS-260 for the principal and each derivative — all addresses since age 16, 10 years of work/education, and 5 years of social-media handles; print each confirmation page
- ☐ Confirm the agent/attorney of record and the correct email on the case — NVC communicates by email

Civil documents — for EACH applicant

- ☐ Passport biographic page — color scan, valid at least 6 months beyond intended entry
- ☐ Birth certificate — long form issued by the civil registry, showing both parents; certified English translation attached in the same file
- ☐ Marriage certificate for the principal applicant (spouse cases) — certified copy plus translation
- ☐ For each prior marriage of the applicant AND the petitioner: divorce decree, annulment, or death certificate, with certified translation
- ☐ Police certificate from the country of nationality and current residence (if lived there 6+ months since age 16), and from every other country lived in 12+ months since age 16 — issued per that country's rules on the reciprocity schedule
- ☐ Police certificates must cover the entire period of residence and be current under the schedule's validity rules — check each country's entry before ordering
- ☐ Court and prison records — certified records for every arrest, charge, or conviction anywhere, regardless of outcome, with translations
- ☐ Military records — service book or discharge record if the applicant served in any country's armed forces, with translation
- ☐ Adoption decree, custody documents, or legitimation records where the relationship depends on them
- ☐ Name-change documents (court order, prior marriage) if any document shows a different name
- ☐ Photograph requirement: two passport-style photos per DOS spec — bring physical copies to the interview even where CEAC takes an upload
- ☐ Certificate of non-availability from the registry plus secondary evidence (baptismal, school, census records; two birth affidavits) for any

unobtainable record — check the reciprocity schedule first; NVC knows which countries genuinely cannot issue

Financial documents — the I-864 set

- ☐ Form I-864 signed by the petitioner — every question answered, household size math correct
- ☐ Most recent federal tax return (complete, with all schedules) or IRS tax transcript — transcript preferred; 3 years recommended, most recent year required
- ☐ W-2s and 1099s for each tax year submitted (not needed if using IRS transcripts)
- ☐ Proof of current income — employment letter on letterhead and pay stubs from the last 2–3 months; self-employed: current-year profit/loss and business registration
- ☐ Sponsor's proof of U.S. citizenship or LPR status
- ☐ Proof of U.S. domicile if the sponsor lives abroad — evidence of maintained or re-established U.S. residence (lease, job offer, voting, bank accounts)
- ☐ If income is short: asset documents (12 months of bank statements, appraisals, titles) meeting the 5× shortfall rule (3× for a U.S. citizen sponsoring a spouse or child)
- ☐ Joint sponsor if used: separate I-864, their proof of status, their tax return/transcript, W-2s, and income proof — a complete parallel set
- ☐ Household member income counted: Form I-864A plus that person's tax return and income proof
- ☐ If the sponsor was not required to file taxes in a year: a written explanation citing the filing-threshold rule

Scanning and translation rules

- ☐ Every non-English document needs a COMPLETE certified English translation — word for word, with the translator's signed certification of competence and accuracy; summaries and partial translations are rejected
- ☐ Scan in color, all pages of a document in one PDF, document and its translation together, under CEAC's file-size limit; text must be fully legible — no cut-off edges, glare, or fingers
- ☐ Upload each document in its own labeled slot — do not combine different document types in one file
- ☐ Scan the original or a certified copy — notarized photocopies of photocopies get rejected

Common NVC rejection reasons — check before you upload

- ☐ Short-form or hospital birth certificate instead of the registry long form naming both parents
- ☐ Missing prior-marriage termination for the PETITIONER (people remember the applicant's divorces and forget the petitioner's)
- ☐ Police certificate missing for a country of past residence, or expired under the reciprocity schedule's validity rule
- ☐ Translation missing, uncertified, or incomplete
- ☐ Tax return uploaded without W-2s (when not using a transcript), or the wrong year after the filing season rolled over
- ☐ I-864 arithmetic errors — household size or income figures that do not match the tax documents
- ☐ Illegible scans and cut-off pages
- ☐ After fixing a rejection, re-upload and re-submit the case for review — the ~44-day review clock restarts each cycle, so fix EVERY flagged item in one pass

Notes: NVC reviews the whole submission and flags all deficiencies at once — respond to every flagged item in a single corrected re-submission, because each cycle costs another review period (~44 days as of mid-2026). Police certificates and country-specific document rules come from the DOS reciprocity schedule — check it for every country before ordering anything. The case is not interview-ready until CEAC shows "Documentarily Complete." Keep every original: the consulate inspects originals at the interview even though NVC only saw scans. 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.
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