

— **FREE CHECKLIST**

Parent Petition Checklist

Documents for sponsoring your parents: proving your citizenship and the relationship, plus the financial package and path choice.

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Use this checklist when a U.S. citizen age 21 or older petitions for a mother or father. The heart of the case is the birth certificate chain proving the parent-child relationship — father cases and step-parent cases need extra documents, listed below. Parents of citizens are "immediate relatives," so there is no visa-number wait, but every document rule still applies.

Petitioner (U.S. citizen son/daughter) documents

- ☐ Form I-130, signed — one petition per parent (petitioning both parents = two separate I-130s, two fees) — \$675 paper / \$625 online, electronic payment only
- ☐ Proof of U.S. citizenship — U.S. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, certificate of citizenship, or U.S. passport bio page
- ☐ Proof petitioner is 21 or older (the birth certificate or passport covers this — verify the math before filing)
- ☐ Petitioner's birth certificate naming the parent being petitioned — long form, with certified English translation if not in English
- ☐ Petitioner's name-change documents if the name differs from the birth certificate — marriage certificate, court order

- ☐ No I-130A is required for a parent case (it is only for spouses)

Proving the relationship — by case type

- ☐ Petitioning your mother: your birth certificate showing her name — usually sufficient by itself
- ☐ Petitioning your father: your birth certificate showing his name PLUS the parents' marriage certificate showing they married before your birth
- ☐ Father, born out of wedlock and later legitimated: evidence of legitimation before you turned 18 (parents' later marriage, court order, or legitimation under local law), with translations
- ☐ Father, born out of wedlock and never legitimated: evidence of a genuine parent-child relationship before you turned 21 — financial support records, letters, photos across childhood, school records naming him, sworn statements
- ☐ Petitioning a step-parent: your birth certificate plus the parent's marriage certificate to the step-parent showing the marriage happened before your 18th birthday, plus termination documents for the natural parents' prior marriages
- ☐ Petitioning an adoptive parent: certified adoption decree showing adoption before age 16, plus evidence of 2 years' legal custody and 2 years' joint residence
- ☐ If any birth certificate is unavailable or late-registered: official "certificate of non-availability" from the civil registry plus secondary evidence (baptismal record, school records, census records) and two affidavits of birth from people with personal knowledge

Parent (beneficiary) documents

- ☐ Parent's passport — bio page copy; valid 6+ months beyond intended U.S. entry for consular cases
- ☐ Parent's birth certificate with certified English translation

- ☐ Parent's marriage certificate and, for each prior marriage, the divorce decree or death certificate — with certified translations
- ☐ One passport-style photo of the parent (and one of the petitioner) per current spec for the I-130 stage
- ☐ Parent's prior U.S. immigration history — copies of any visas, I-94s, overstay, denials, or removal documents (disclose everything; surprises at the interview sink cases)
- ☐ Court/police records for any arrest or conviction anywhere, certified, with translations

Path A — Parent is abroad (consular processing)

- ☐ After I-130 approval, NVC stage: DS-260 (\$325) with 5 years of social-media handles; pay the \$120 I-864 review fee
- ☐ Police certificate from every country where the parent lived 12+ months since age 16, per the reciprocity schedule
- ☐ Upload all civil documents and the I-864 package to CEAC; fix each rejection until Documentarily Complete
- ☐ Panel physician medical exam near the interview date — sealed results, vaccination records in hand
- ☐ After visa issuance: pay the \$235 USCIS Immigrant Fee online before travel so the green card is produced

Path B — Parent is in the U.S. in lawful status (adjustment of status)

- ☐ Confirm eligibility to adjust before filing: lawful entry (I-94, visa stamp) — visitors must beware of preconceived-intent issues if they file soon after arrival; discuss timing with counsel
- ☐ Form I-485 (\$1,440) filed with or after the I-130; add I-765 (\$260) and I-131 (\$630) as needed

- ☐ Most recent I-94 printout plus copies of every passport page with stamps or visas
- ☐ I-693 medical by a civil surgeon — valid only while the I-485 is pending, so schedule against the filing date; sealed envelope
- ☐ Two passport-style photos per the I-485 instructions (plus photos for I-765/I-131 if filed)
- ☐ Parent should not travel abroad after filing until advance parole is granted

Financial support (I-864)

- ☐ Signed I-864 from the petitioning son/daughter — required even if the parent has money; fee \$0 (+\$120 NVC review in consular cases)
- ☐ Most recent federal tax return or IRS transcript (required); 3 years recommended; W-2s/1099s attached
- ☐ Employment letter and recent pay stubs; proof of U.S. domicile if the petitioner lives abroad
- ☐ Household size math: count yourself, dependents, the parent, and anyone on prior I-864s — income must reach 125% of the poverty guidelines (2026 reference ≈ \$27,050 for 2 / \$34,150 for 3 / \$41,250 for 4; check the current I-864P)
- ☐ Shortfall options: assets at 5× the shortfall (the 3× discount applies only to spouses/children of citizens, not parents), or a full joint-sponsor package with the sponsor's proof of status and financial documents

Notes: Each parent needs their own I-130 — a mother's petition does not cover the father. Father and step-parent cases turn on dates: marriage before your birth (father), legitimation before 18, step-marriage before your 18th birthday — verify the dates on the certificates before filing. Siblings cannot ride on a parent's case; a parent's green card gives them no status. The I-864 obligation is real and enforceable, and assets for a parent case must equal 5× any income shortfall. 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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