FREE CHECKLIST

Relationship Evidence Checklist

Bona fide marriage evidence by category — what carries weight, what to skip, and how thin-file couples can still build a strong record.

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USCIS and consular officers decide marriage cases on documentary proof that you share a real life, not on how in love you are. This checklist organizes that proof by category — aim for strong items in at least three or four categories, spread across the whole relationship timeline, not clustered around the filing date. The final section is for couples with a "thin file": long-distance, recently married, or not yet living together.

Joint financial life

- [ ] Joint bank account statements — full statements (not just the first page) showing both names, real activity by both spouses, covering as many months as possible
- [ ] Joint credit card statements or each spouse as authorized user on the other's card
- [ ] Joint federal/state tax returns filed as married (or an explanation if you correctly filed separately)
- [ ] Money transfers between spouses — Zelle/Venmo/wire history with dates
- [ ] Jointly titled property or vehicles — deed, car title, loan documents with both names

- [ ] Joint utility accounts or bills paid from the joint account — electric, gas, internet, phone family plan
- [ ] Joint memberships and subscriptions — gym, warehouse club, streaming family plan

Living together

- [ ] Lease or deed with both names — plus landlord letter confirming joint occupancy if the lease predates the marriage
- [ ] Mail addressed to each spouse at the shared address across different months — bank mail, government mail, packages (keep envelopes)
- [ ] Driver's licenses / state IDs showing the same address
- [ ] Utility bills in each spouse's name at the same address
- [ ] Renter's or homeowner's insurance listing both spouses
- [ ] Voter registration, car registration, or employer records showing the shared address

Insurance and beneficiary designations

- [ ] Health insurance card or enrollment confirmation showing the spouse as dependent
- [ ] Auto insurance policy listing both spouses/vehicles
- [ ] Life insurance naming the spouse as beneficiary — the beneficiary designation page, not just the policy cover
- [ ] 401(k)/pension/IRA beneficiary forms naming the spouse
- [ ] Wills, health care proxies, or powers of attorney naming each other
- [ ] Employer records listing the spouse as emergency contact

Children and family integration

- [ ] Birth certificate of a child together listing both parents, or medical records of a current pregnancy
- [ ] Step-children evidence — school forms, pediatrician records, or insurance listing the step-parent
- [ ] Evidence of meeting each other's families — photos at family events, holiday gatherings, wedding guest list showing both families
- [ ] Religious or cultural ceremony records — church/mosque/temple marriage record, reception contracts, wedding invitations

Affidavits from people who know you

- [ ] 3–5 sworn statements from a mix of people: relatives on both sides, friends, a landlord, clergy, or coworkers who see you as a couple
- [ ] Each affidavit must state: writer's full name, address, phone, immigration/citizenship status is not required but ID helps; how and how long they know each spouse; specific events they personally witnessed (dinners at your home, the wedding, holidays) — signed and dated
- [ ] Specifics beat praise — "I had Thanksgiving 2025 at their apartment on Ocean Avenue" is worth more than a page of "they are truly in love"
- [ ] Attach a copy of the writer's photo ID where they are willing

Communications, photos, and travel over time

- [ ] Photos across the WHOLE relationship — 20–40 printed, dated, captioned with place and who appears; include everyday shots, not only staged events
- [ ] Message/call history samples — first months, engagement period, recent — export with visible dates and names; a phone-carrier call log summary works well
- [ ] Trips together — boarding passes, hotel folios showing both names, itineraries, stamped passport pages from the same dates

- [ ] Cards, letters, and gift receipts exchanged on birthdays/anniversaries
- [ ] Social-media posts announcing the relationship, engagement, wedding — screenshots with dates (remember: consular applicants list 5 years of handles, so posts should match the case)

Thin-file alternatives — long-distance or recently married

- [ ] Long-distance couples: emphasize the communication record — consistent multi-year message/call logs are your core evidence; export monthly samples plus a carrier log
- [ ] Document every visit: flights, passport stamps, photos from each trip, remittances/gifts sent between visits
- [ ] Recently married: open the joint bank account, add each other to insurance and beneficiary forms, and combine phone plans NOW — then let 2–3 months of statements accumulate before filing if timing allows
- [ ] Landlord letter adding the new spouse to the lease, or documented steps toward a joint home (applications, movers' receipts)
- [ ] Wedding evidence in depth — contracts, guest photos with both families, congratulation messages
- [ ] Affidavits carry extra weight in thin files — get them from people who witnessed the relationship develop, and more of them (4–6)
- [ ] A short signed relationship statement from the couple explaining the timeline and why documents are limited (e.g., cultural norms, living with parents, recent arrival) — factual, not sentimental

Notes: Spread evidence across time — twelve documents from the month before filing look staged; the same twelve spread over two years look like a marriage. Never submit anything altered, backdated, or "improved": a marriage-fraud finding under INA 204(c) permanently bars future petitions. Full statements beat first pages — officers look for both spouses actually using the joint account. Keep collecting after you file; you will need updated evidence at the interview and again at the I-751 stage. 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.