10 steps to help you prepare for your marriage-based green card interview



We get green cards for you and your loved ones



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Hello!

I am excited to provide this workbook to help you on your marriage-based green card journey. I am eager to share the knowledge and experience that I have gained in 18 years of immigration practice. In my career as an immigration attorney, I have worked with individuals and families from countless countries, races. educational socioeconomic and backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, and family statuses. I strive to help them achieve their life goals and to provide an excellent client experience in our work together.

-Ellen

How to use this workbook

At Cambridge Immigration Law, we have represented many types of couples at their marriage-based green card interviews. We prepare our clients for all sorts of questions and we update evidence before an interview. Since fewer cases are being interviewed, we have to identify-- and prepare for the issues that caused your case to be scheduled for an interview.

By the time our couples get to the interview, they feel confident knowing they have our attorneys by their side. Use this guide to understand the steps necessary to be successful and get your green card!

QUESTIONS?

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1 Plan your trip to your local USCIS Field Office

You can find the (likely) location of your interview by finding your USCIS Field Office using this link and scrolling to the bottom of the page to enter your zip code. As soon as you get your Interview Notice, put the date, time, and location into your calendar. If your application is based on marriage to a US citizen, your spouse must attend with you, so get the appointment on your spouse's calendar too. If you have not yet received your interview notice. Before the day of your interview, plan your trip to the local Field Office and plan time for traffic, parking, walking to Field Office, and checking in the through security at the USCIS building.

2 Update USCIS if you move

If you move after you file your "green card" application, you must notify USCIS using the online change of address tool at this <u>link</u>. At our firm, we will notify the USCIS Field Office of the address change so do not forget to let our legal team know of your move. If you move out of the geographic area for your local Field Office, USCIS may NOT be able to conduct your Interview at that location, even if they schedule you for an interview there.

3 Talk with your spouse about your relationship history

At the interview, USCIS will ask you tell the story of your relationship with your US citizen spouse. Most of the time, the officer asks how you met, how you started dating, how you decided to get marriage. what vour marriage celebration entailed, and how you live your lives together. Even for married couples who have lived together for years, we conduct a thorough mockinterview to help the couple loosen up and become confident that they can *auestions* about their answer relationship. Sometimes the mockclients interview helps remember things they forgot and sometimes come to an agreement about facts that they seem to remember differently. Do not underestimate the importance practicing answering even basic questions like your full name, address, and place of birth.

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Here are some common questions that are asked during a marriage-based green card interview:

How did you meet your spouse?

Can you describe your wedding ceremony?

Who were the witnesses at your wedding?

Do you have any joint bank accounts or credit cards?

Can you describe a typical day in your life together?

What are your spouse's hobbies or interests?

Can you name your spouse's siblings or parents?

Have you traveled together? If so, where and when?

Where does your spouse work and what is her work schedule?

Does your spouse have any medical issues?

What is the layout of your home?

What did you do for dinner last night?

What kind of car does your spouse drive?

4 Hire an interpreter

At the interview, you will need to speak in English or have an interpreter to help you. Do not rely on your spouse or attorney to translate; in fact, that will most likely not be allowed. Do not rely on a friend. Hire a professional interpreter who will interpret, not answer questions for you. You must bring Form G-1256, Declaration for Interpreted USCIS Interview, filled out by the interpreter, to the interview.

USCIS may say that it can offer interpreters, but I advise clients to never rely on USCIS. If USCIS does not have a translator on the day of your interview, your interview will be canceled and rescheduled. Bring your own interpreter!

You can download Form G-1256 here

6		partment of Homeland Security Citizenship and Immigration Services	Form G-1256 Internal Use
Int	erviewee's Name		
Int	terviewee's Alien Registration Number	A-	
Int	erviewee's Native Language(s)		
Int	erpreter's Name		
Int	erpreter's Address		
Int	erpreter's Telephone Number		
Co	py of Interpreter's Identity Document Attached	Yes No	
La	nguages Used by Interpreter	English and	
In	terviewee's Declaration		
A.	I authorize the interpreter named above to act on my behalf as my interpreter during my interview with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).		
B.	I fully understand that this interpreter's participation in the interview may result in him/her learning of my personal information related to my benefit request, and I consent to this disclosure.		
C.	I have communicated with this interpreter, and I am satisfied that the interpreter has the ability to speak and understand a language that I speak.		
D.	I understand that my interpreter must be fluent in English and a language I understand, competent to interpret in accordance with USCIS guidance, and impartial and unbiased throughout the interview.		
E.	I understand that USCIS, at its discretion, may determine at any point before or during my interview that this interpreter may no longer serve as an interpreter for the entire interview or portions of the interview.		
F.	My interpreter is at least 18 years of age and is not a witness in my case. If my interpreter is 14 through 17 years of age or is a witness in my case, I understand I must show good cause for an exception to USCIS policy in order for my interpreter to serve.		
G.	I understand that my attorney or accredited representative cannot serve simultaneously as my interpreter during the interview.		
H.	The interpreter has interpreted this entire form to me and I fully understand the contents of this document.		
Inte	erviewee's Signature		
In	terpreter's Declaration		
Α.	I am appearing today at the request of the indi-	vidual whose name and Alien-number appear above ("the int	terviewee").
	I speak and understand both English and the non-English language indicated above fluently, and know from speaking with the individual that we understand each other.		
C.	I agree to interpret accurately, literally and fully the questions asked by the officer and the answers given by the interviewee during the interview.		
D.	I understand that I must be fluent in both English and a language that the interviewee named above understands, competent to interpret in accordance with the guidance provided by the USCIS officer, and impartial and unbiased throughout the interview.		
E.	I agree not to disclose any personal information about the interviewee or any other information that I may learn in the interview.		
	I understand that USCIS may choose to collect, retain, and verify the identity information I have provided.		

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5 Review your I-485 Application

As soon as you receive your Interview Notice, review your I-485 Application, your related application I-130 Petition, all other related applications (Form I-864, Form I-693, Form I-765, and Form I-131), and all past USCIS and Embassy applications. If there are any mistakes or updates on any of your immigration applications, you should make a list of corrections/updates and be prepared to explain the corrections/updates at the start of your Interview. Also, review your applications so that you are familiar with the content of the application. Know your past addresses and employers. Know your immediate family's birth dates, anniversary dates, and addresses. Review the somewhat confusing language of the eligibility questions on pages 10 to 16 of the Form I-485 Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status. If you found mistakes on your prior applications, you should talk with an experienced immigration attorney about how to go about updating the application. If you answered "yes" to any questions on pages 10 to 16 of the I-485 Application, do not go to the interview without first consulting with an attorney.

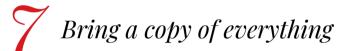
Here are some eligibility questions:

Have you EVER pled guilty to or been convicted of a crime or offense (even if the violation was subsequently expunged or sealed by a court, or if you were granted a pardon, amnesty, a rehabilitation decree, or other act of clemency)?

Have you ever received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or State, Tribal, territorial, or local, cash benefit programs for income maintenance (often called "General Assistance" in the State context, but which also exist under other names)?



When you go to the Interview, you will bring the original Interview Notice, your original passport/s, your original birth certificate with translation, your original marriage and divorce certificates for all past marriages and divorces, birth certificates for your children, original criminal dockets and all original USCIS/US immigration documents (EADs, visa, approval notices, etc.). Gather and neatly organize these documents so that you can easily access them and show them to the USCIS officer when you are at the Interview.



Bring a copy of your application and all original documents to the interview. Sometimes the USCIS officer cannot find something in the file (even though it's there), and it is helpful to give the officer a copy of what seems to be missing from the file. Make sure to keep a copy of everything for yourself.

8 Dress "appropriately"

Plan to wear a "business casual" outfit to the interview. This means that you should wear clothing that is somewhat formal or special and that shows your respect for the importance of the event. If you go with a spouse, try to dress in similar levels of formal dress so that you look like you go together.

G Be flexible with travel plans

If you do not have Advance Parole, an H1B visa, or an L visa, do not leave the US without first consulting with an attorney. You may not be eligible to re-enter the US if you leave before your I-485 Application is approved. If you are eligible to travel and you plan to travel outside the US around the time that your interview could be scheduled, plan to be flexible with your plans. I always advise clients to prioritize attending the Interview over everything else, and I advise clients to change travel plans if at all possible so that they can be at the Interview. Also, if you plan to travel soon after your Interview, you may need to request special proof of your LPR status before your LPR card (I-551/green card) arrives in the mail.

10 Consult with an experienced immigration attorney

Before you attend your I-485 Interview, talk to an experienced immigration attorney. If you found any errors in past applications or you answered "yes" to any questions on pages 10-16 on Form I-485, discuss those issues with an experienced immigration attorney. As of October 2022, USCIS plans to approve most marriage-based green card cases without an interview. If you've been scheduled for an interview, there is likely to be some issue in your case that needs special attention and you should not attend the interview without consulting with an experienced immigration attorney.



Congratulations

YOU ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO ACHIEVING
YOUR IMMIGRATION GOALS!

Preparing for the marriage-based green card interview can be a very stressful process. You don't want to make a mistake or forget any required documents.

Let us handle the work. You get your green card.

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