



# Instructions for Application for Travel Document (Carrier Documentation)

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS  
**Form I-131A**  
OMB No. 1615-0135  
Expires 02/28/2021

## What Is the Purpose of Form I-131A?

United States laws impose penalties on carriers who bring to the United States an individual who is not in possession of a valid passport and any required visa. If you are a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or conditional permanent resident (conditional LPR) of the United States traveling overseas temporarily, you may ordinarily use your Permanent Resident Card or a Reentry Permit, in place of a visa. If you are not in possession of a valid, unexpired Permanent Resident Card or Reentry Permit (for example, your card or permit was lost, stolen, destroyed, or mutilated), you may experience difficulties when you attempt to return to the United States.

This application allows individuals in this situation to apply for a Travel Document (Transportation Letter or Boarding Foil). If the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determines that the applicant remains an LPR or conditional LPR, DHS may, as a matter of discretion on a case by case basis, provide a Travel Document. The Travel Document may be a foil placed in the applicant's passport or a boarding letter. If DHS provides a Travel Document, the applicant may present the document to the carrier destined for the United States. Generally, a Travel Document is valid for 30 days from the date of issuance.

### Warnings

1. A Travel Document only allows you to demonstrate to the commercial carrier that you are not required to provide a visa at the time that you apply for admission or otherwise seek lawful entry into the United States at a U.S. Port-of-Entry (POE); it is not a guarantee of admission to, or other form of entry into, the United States. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will carry out all the required inspection procedures, including determining admissibility or ability to enter, upon your arrival at a POE.
2. DHS may revoke or terminate your Travel Document at any time, with or without notice. That revocation or termination could have implications for your travel.

### Need to Replace or Renew Permanent Resident Card

If you no longer have your Permanent Resident Card, or it has expired, you must apply for a new Permanent Resident Card. The issuance of a Travel Document does not take the place of obtaining a new Permanent Resident Card. To apply for a replacement or renewal of your Permanent Resident Card, you must file Form I-90, Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Visit the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov/I-90](http://www.uscis.gov/I-90) for more information.

## Who May File Form I-131A?

### You may file Form I-131A to apply for a Travel Document if:

1. You have been lawfully admitted to the United States as a LPR or conditional LPR;
2. You have not lost LPR or conditional LPR status by removal from the United States nor abandoned that status;
3. You have traveled abroad temporarily, and without any intent of abandoning your LPR or conditional LPR status;
4. You wish to return to the United States after your temporary absence of less than a year with a Permanent Resident Card or two years with a Reentry Permit; and

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5. You are not in possession of a valid, unexpired Permanent Resident Card or Reentry Permit (for example, your card or permit was lost, stolen, destroyed, or mutilated) or other authorization to apply for admission to, or otherwise seek lawful entry into, the United States.

### **Who is NOT eligible to receive a Travel Document?**

DHS retains the discretion to determine, on a case by case basis, to whom it is appropriate to provide a Travel Document. Some of the reasons that DHS may decline to provide you with a Travel Document are:

1. You are physically present in the United States;
2. You are no longer a LPR or conditional LPR of the United States; or
3. You were issued a Travel Document and it is still valid, unless the prior document was returned to DHS or was lost, stolen, destroyed, or mutilated.

If you have an expired 1) Permanent Resident Card (with a 10-year expiration date) or 2) Permanent Resident Card (with a two-year expiration date) and valid Form I-797, Notice of Action, indicating that status is extended, you may use these documents to return to the United States, and you do not need to file Form I-131A.

### **Returning Resident Visa**

A Returning Resident (SB-1) visa may be an appropriate avenue to obtain documentation for LPRs or conditional LPRs returning to the United States from a temporary absence. You may contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate, or visit its website to obtain information about seeking a Returning Resident (SB-1) special immigrant visa. If you apply for and receive an SB-1 visa, you do not need to file this application

## **General Instructions**

USCIS provides forms free of charge through the USCIS website. In order to view, print, or fill out our forms, you should use the latest version of Adobe Reader, which you can download for free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Please see our website at [www.uscis.gov/I-131A](http://www.uscis.gov/I-131A) or contact your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate for the most current information about where to file this application.

**Signature.** Each application must be properly signed and filed. For all signatures on this application, USCIS will not accept a stamped or typewritten name in place of a signature. If you are under 14 years of age, your parent or legal guardian may sign the application on your behalf. A legal guardian may also sign for a mentally incompetent person.

**Filing Fee.** Each application must be accompanied by the appropriate filing fee. (See the **What Is the Filing Fee** section of these Instructions.)

**Evidence.** At the time of filing, you must submit all evidence and supporting documentation listed in the **What Evidence Should You Submit** section of these Instructions.

**Copies.** You should submit legible **photocopies** of documents requested, unless the Instructions specifically state that you must submit an original document. USCIS may request an original document at the time of filing or at any time during processing of an application, petition, or request. If USCIS requests an original document from you, it will be returned to you after USCIS determines it no longer needs your original.

**NOTE:** If you submit original documents when not required or requested by USCIS, **your original documents may be immediately destroyed upon receipt.**

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**Translations.** If you submit a document with information in a foreign language, you must also submit a full English translation. The translator must sign a certification that the English language translation is complete and accurate, and that he or she is competent to translate from the foreign language into English. The certification must include the translator's signature. DHS recommends the certification contain the translator's printed name and the date and the translator's contact information.

## How to Fill Out Form I-131A

1. Type or print legibly in black ink.
2. If you need extra space to complete any item within this application, use the space provided in **Part 7. Additional Information** or attach a separate sheet of paper; type or print your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.
3. Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have never been married and the question asks "Provide the name of your current spouse"), type or print "N/A," unless otherwise directed. If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none (for example, "How many children do you have" or "How many times have you departed the United States"), type or print "None," unless otherwise directed.
4. **USCIS Online Account Number** (if any). If you have previously filed an application, petition, or request using the USCIS online filing system (previously called USCIS Electronic Immigration System (USCIS ELIS)), provide the USCIS Online Account Number you were issued by the system. You can find your USCIS Online Account Number by logging in to your account and going to the profile page. If you previously filed certain applications, petitions, or requests on a paper form via a USCIS Lockbox facility, you may have received a USCIS Online Account Access Notice issuing you a USCIS Online Account Number. If you received such a notice, your USCIS Online Account Number can be found at the top of the notice. If you were issued a USCIS Online Account Number, enter it in the space provided. The USCIS Online Account Number is not the same as an A-Number.
5. **Part 4. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature.** Select the appropriate box to indicate whether you read this application yourself or whether you had an interpreter assist you. If someone assisted you in completing the application, select the box indicating that you used a preparer. Further, you must sign and date your application and provide your daytime telephone number, mobile telephone number (if any), and email address (if any). Every application **MUST** contain the signature of the applicant (or parent or legal guardian, if applicable). A stamped or typewritten name in place of a signature is not acceptable.
6. **Part 5. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature.** If you used anyone as an interpreter to read the Instructions and questions on this application to you in a language in which you are fluent, the interpreter must fill out this section; provide his or her name, the name and address of his or her business or organization (if any), his or her daytime telephone number, his or her mobile telephone number (if any), and his or her email address (if any). The interpreter must sign and date the application.
7. **Part 6. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, if Other Than the Applicant.** This section must contain the signature of the person who completed your application, if other than you, the applicant. If the same individual acted as your interpreter **and** your preparer, that person should complete both **Part 5.** and **Part 6.** If the person who completed this application is associated with a business or organization, that person should complete the business or organization name and address information. Anyone who helped you complete this application **MUST** sign and date the application. A stamped or typewritten name in place of a signature is not acceptable. If the person who helped you prepare your application is an attorney or accredited representative, he or she may also need to submit a completed Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Accredited Representative, or Form G-28I, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney In Matters Outside the Geographical Confines of the United States, along with your application.

- 8. Part 7. Additional Information.** If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space provided in **Part 7. Additional Information**. If you need more space than what is provided in **Part 7.**, you may make copies of **Part 7.** to complete and file with your application, or attach a separate sheet of paper. Include your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

**We recommend that you print or save a copy of your completed application to review in the future and for your records.**

### **What Evidence Should You Submit?**

You must submit all evidence requested in these Instructions with your application. If you fail to submit required evidence, USCIS may reject or deny your application for failure to submit requested evidence or supporting documents in accordance with 8 CFR 103.2(b)(1) and these Instructions.

#### **Your application must include:**

1. Your original passport and one copy of your passport's biographic page (USCIS will return your original passport to you when it is no longer required);
2. Evidence of your LPR or conditional LPR status (if available) (for example, a copy of your Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551), your immigrant visa, or the CBP admission stamp in your passport);
3. A copy of your tickets, itinerary, or any other evidence indicating your last date of departure from the United States and your intended date of return travel to the United States (for example, e-tickets, boarding passes); and
4. You **must** submit one color passport-style photograph of yourself taken within 30 days of filing this application. The photo must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched.

The color passport-style photo must be 2 by 2 inches. The photo must be in color with full face, frontal view on a white to off-white background. Head height should measure 1 to 1 3/8 inches from top of hair to bottom of chin, and eye height is between 1 1/8 to 1 3/8 inches from bottom of photo. Your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious denomination of which you are a member. Using a pencil or felt pen, lightly print your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if any) on the back of the photo.

### **What Is the Filing Fee?**

The filing fee for Form I-131A is **\$575**. No biometric services fee is required for Travel Document (Carrier Documentation) applicants. The fee for this application must be paid online via the USCIS online filing system at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), by selecting "FORMS," and navigating to Form I-131A. The fee may be paid via credit card, debit card or U.S. bank account via Automated Clearing House (ACH) payment system.

**NOTE:** The filing fee is not refundable, regardless of any action USCIS takes on this application.

There is no waiver of the filing fee for Form I-131A.

#### **How To Check If the Fees Are Correct**

Form I-131A's filing fee is current as of the edition date in the lower left corner of this page. However, because USCIS fees change periodically, you can verify that the fees are correct by visiting the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), select "FORMS," and check the appropriate fee.

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## Where to File?

Prior to appearing at a U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate to file your Form I-131A, you must submit your filing fee through the USCIS online filing system on the USCIS website (see the What Is the Filing Fee section above). You must bring evidence of payment with you when you appear in person at your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate to file Form I-131A. Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate, or visit its website for instructions on how to file.

## Processing Information

USCIS will reject any Form I-131A that is not signed or accompanied by the correct filing fee. You may correct the deficiency and resubmit Form I-131A. Form I-131A is not considered properly filed until accepted by a U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate.

**Initial Processing.** Once USCIS accepts your application we will check it for completeness. If you do not completely fill out this application, you will not establish a basis for your eligibility and USCIS may reject or deny your application.

**Requests for More Information.** We may request that you provide more information or evidence to support your application. We may also request that you provide the originals of any copies you submit. If USCIS requests an original document from you, it will be returned to you after USCIS determines it no longer needs your original.

**Requests for Interview.** We may request that you appear at a U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate for an interview based on your application. At the time of any interview or other appearance at a U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate, we may require that you provide your fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature to verify your identity and/or update background and security checks.

**Decision.** The decision on Form I-131A involves a determination of whether you have established eligibility for the immigration benefit you are seeking. The U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate where you filed will notify you that the decision has been made by contacting you at the contact information you have provided on the Form I-131A. The decision on Form I-131A is discretionary and you may not appeal it.

## USCIS Forms and Information

To ensure you are using the latest version of this application, visit the USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) where you can obtain the latest USCIS forms and immigration-related information. Please see our website at [www.uscis.gov/I-131A](http://www.uscis.gov/I-131A) or contact your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate for the most current information about where to file this application.

If you would like to ask for information in person, please visit [www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/international-immigration-offices](http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/international-immigration-offices) for contact information regarding the USCIS office in the country where you are located. If there is no USCIS office in the country where you are located, please visit the website of the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate in your area to find the appropriate contact and appointment information.

Instead of waiting in line for assistance at your local USCIS office, you can schedule an appointment online at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). Select “Schedule an Appointment” and follow the screen prompts to set up your appointment. Once you finish scheduling an appointment, the system will generate an appointment notice for you.

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## Penalties

If you knowingly and willfully falsify or conceal a material fact or submit a false document with your Form I-131A, we will deny your Form I-131A and may deny any other immigration benefit. In addition, you will face severe penalties provided by law and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

## DHS Privacy Notice

**AUTHORITIES:** The information requested on this application, and the associated evidence, is collected under the Immigration and Nationality Act sections 1103, 1158, 1182, 1203, and 1204.

**PURPOSE:** The primary purpose for providing the requested information on this application is to apply for Carrier Documentation with either USCIS or the Department of State within one year of your departure from the United States, which will allow you to board a vessel or aircraft, travel to the United States, and present yourself at a U.S. port-of-entry for inspection as a returning lawful permanent resident. DHS uses the information to determine your eligibility for the requested travel document.

**DISCLOSURE:** The information you provide is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information, including your Social Security number (if applicable), and any requested evidence, may delay a final decision or result in denial of your request.

**ROUTINE USES:** DHS may share the information you provide on this application and any additional requested evidence with other Federal, state, local, and foreign government agencies and authorized organizations. DHS follows approved routine uses described in the associated published system of records notices [DHS/USCIS-001 - Alien File, Index, and National File Tracking System of Records, DHS/USCIS-007 - Benefits Information System, and STATE-39 Visa Records] and the published privacy impact assessments [DHS/USCIS/PIA-016a Computer Linked Application Information Management System and Associated Systems, DHS/USCIS/PIA-051 Case and Activity Management for International Operations, and DOS Non-Immigrant Visa System PIA] which you can find at [www.dhs.gov/privacy](http://www.dhs.gov/privacy) or [www.state.gov/privacy](http://www.state.gov/privacy). DHS may also share this information, as appropriate, for law enforcement purposes or in the interest of national security.

## Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 55 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering the required documentation and information, completing the application, attaching necessary documentation, and submitting the application. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Coordination Division, Office of Policy and Strategy, 20 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20529-2140; OMB No. 1615-0135. **Do not mail your completed Form I-131A to this address.**