



# REPLACING IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

By Veronica Garcia

It is important to maintain valid immigration documents. Unfortunately, when unexpected natural disasters such as fires, floods, or earthquakes occur, documents may be destroyed or lost. This can leave you unprotected and vulnerable without a way to travel, verify authorization to work, prove U.S. citizenship, identify yourself, or check on pending applications. Below is information on the process to request replacement documents, what evidence you will need to file, and the associated filing fees.

## I. Documents and Information Needed:

### A. What information will you need to replace your documents?

Usually the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will ask you to provide documentation that proves your identity and your eligibility for a benefit or document. The easiest way to prove these things is to provide USCIS with an immigration approval notice, a copy of the document you are attempting to replace, and/or your Alien Registration Number (A#). The A# is the number given to you by USCIS when they process your application which allows them to easily locate your file.

You can locate your A# on various documents issued by USCIS, such as:

- Permanent resident card (“green card”)
- I-797C, Notice of Action—given as either a receipt number for a pending application or as an approval notice
- Application submitted to USCIS
- Employment Authorization Document (“work permit”)



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

Receipt Number I-797C, Notice of Action

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

USCIS# SRC-09-195	PRECEDENCE Priority Date: June 16, 2009	IMMIGRATION PREVISION FOR MATR NUMBER A#
Category RES	STATUS Immigrant	REGISTRATION AUTHORITY A#
Country of Birth Utopia	DATE July 16, 2009	SECTION TYPE Approval Notice
Date of Birth 01 JAN 1920	SEX M	SECTION: Individ w/Adv Dsg or Exceptional Ability in the National Interest
Card Expires: 08/21/07	RESIDENT SINCE: 08/21/07	



If you do not have one of these documents, you can use the following to prove your identity:

- Government-issued identification, with photograph, date of birth, and name (such as a driver's license, state identification card, or passport) or birth certificate

## B. What if you do not have these documents?

If you do not have any of these documents and cannot remember your A#, there are ways to obtain a copy before you apply. Sometimes, agencies we interact with in our daily lives have copies of our documentation, and you can ask them for a copy. For example:

- Were you working with an organization or attorney when you applied for a work permit, green card, naturalization or other immigration benefit?
- Did you apply for or receive public assistance (Food stamps, Medicaid, etc.)?
- Did you submit a copy of your identification or other documentation to your employer when they first hired you?

You can request a copy of your documents from any of these places and submit them to USCIS with your application.

## II. Filing the Replacement Application:

### A. What will you need to file to replace your documents?

Once you have the required documents and information, you will need to complete the correct replacement application form that corresponds to the document you are replacing. Each document has a different form and filing fee amount and is filed at a different location.

All forms can be found on the USCIS website at:  
<https://www.uscis.gov/forms>.

Check the website before filing any immigration form to ensure you have the correct version of the form and filing fee amount.

### 1. Employment Authorization Document (Work Permit):

If you need to replace your work permit you will need to file Form I-765. Make sure you indicate you are filing for a replacement because your work permit was lost.

#### Application Checklist:

- ✓ Form I-765
  - Check box stating "Replacement (of lost employment authorization document)"
  - **DACA Recipients:** DACA recipients will also need to file Form I-765WS, demonstrating economic need.
- ✓ Copy of previous/current work permit and/or copy of approval notice (Form I-797C) showing your eligibility
  - If you do not have a copy of your current work permit or previously issued work permit, you can submit a copy of a government issued ID, a birth certificate, or passport
- ✓ 2 passport-style photos (in color, white background, taken within 30 days of submission)
- ✓ Filing Fee of \$495 (for the \$410 application fee plus the \$85 biometrics fee)
  - Make check or money order payable to the **US Department of Homeland Security**
  - Not all work permit replacement applications will require the \$85 biometrics fee
    - DACA recipients will always need to pay the \$85 biometrics fee
    - Individuals who applied for their work permit with their Adjustment of Status (under categories (c)(9) or (c)(16)) after June 30, 2007 will not have to pay the \$85 biometrics fee
  - Individuals applying as dependent of certain foreign government, international organization, or NATO personnel ((c)(1), (c)(4) or (c)(7)) will not be required to pay a filing fee

You may be able to apply for your work permit free of cost.

Reference point 5 of this section for details on who is eligible and how to apply without paying the filing fee.

However, unfortunately, applicants filing under category (c)(33), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), always have to pay the filing fee.

**Where to File:**

There are various locations that process work permit applications. If you are not sure where to file, please visit [www.uscis.gov/I-765](http://www.uscis.gov/I-765) for a list of where to file or contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 for the most current information. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call 1-800-767-1833.

**2. Legal Permanent Resident Card (Green Card):**

If you need to replace your Legal Permanent Resident Card (“Green Card”) you will need to file Form I-90. Make sure you indicate you are applying for a replacement because your card was “lost, stolen, or mutilated.”

**Application Checklist:**

- ✓ Form I-90
  - To indicate you are replacing your green card:
    - Check box 2a “Previous card was lost, stolen, or destroyed” or
    - Check box 2c “My existing card has been mutilated (or partially destroyed)” or
    - Check 3a or 3c if you are replacing a Conditional Resident Card (2-year card)
- ✓ Copy of your previous green card (front and back) or approval notice demonstrating your eligibility for a green card
  - If you do not have a copy of your green card, you can submit a government issued form of identification that contains name, date of birth, photograph and signature (like a passport, driver’s license, state identification card or military identification document).
- ✓ Filing fee of \$540 (for \$455 filing fee plus \$85 biometrics fee). Make check or money order payable to **US Department of Homeland Security**.

**Tip:** If you do not have your A# or a copy of green card, you can include a cover letter explaining you were the victim of a natural disaster and provide evidence of the disaster.

**Where to File:** Paper applications can be mailed to

**U.S. Postal Service:**

USCIS  
P.O. Box 21262  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

**FedEx, UPS, and DHL:**

USCIS  
Attention: I-90  
1820 E. Skyharbor, Circle S, Floor 1  
Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 850

You may be able to apply for your green card replacement free of cost.  
Reference point 5 of this section for details on who is eligible and how to apply without paying the filing fee.

**3. Naturalization Certificate:**

To replace a naturalization certificate, you will need to file Form N-565. If you have a U.S. passport you can decide to not replace your certificate of U.S. citizenship since a passport is also proof of U.S. citizenship.

**Application Checklist:**

- ✓ Form N-565

- This form can be used to replace your certificate of naturalization or your certificate of citizenship
- ✓ Two passport-style photos taken within 30 days with your name printed on the back in pen or pencil
- ✓ Filing fee of \$555. Make check or money order payable to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

**You may be able to apply for your certificate replacement free of cost. Reference point 5 of this section for details on who is eligible and how to apply without paying the filing fee.**

**Note:** If you still have your document but it was damaged, you can include it in the application. If you do not have a copy of your certificate, you will need to include a statement stating what happened. You should also include documentation of the disaster such as newspaper articles, insurance claims, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) application for assistance, and/or photographs of disaster.

#### Where to File:

Please visit USCIS website at [www.uscis.gov/N-565](http://www.uscis.gov/N-565) or call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 for the most current information about where to file this application. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call 1-800-767-1883.

#### 4. U.S. Passport:

To apply for a new U.S. passport that has been destroyed or lost, you must apply in person and use Form DS-11.

#### Application Checklist:

- ✓ Form DS-11 and DS-64
  - DS-11 is the form you will need to fill out to replace your passport
  - DS-64 if the form you will need to fill out stating your passport was lost/damaged/stolen
- ✓ Proof of U.S. citizenship—Original or a certified copy. Photocopies and notarized copies are not acceptable
  - U.S. Birth Certificate
  - Consular support of birth abroad or certification of birth
  - Certificate of Naturalization
  - Certificate of Citizenship
- ✓ Proof of Identity
  - Documents must contain your signature and your photograph, such as a military identification, federal, state or municipal government employee identification, In-state driver's license, current foreign passport (not expired), matricula consular (Mexican consular identification)
    - If you do not have any of the above, you can use a combination of any of the following: In-state identification (non-driver ID), Social Security card, Student ID, temporary driver's permit, voter registration card, employee ID, Medicare or other health card, expired driver's license.
  - Submit a copy of the front and back of each identification you use in your application.
- ✓ Color photograph, taken within the last 6 months, photograph must be clear, with full front view of your face.
- ✓ There will be a \$110 fee for applying for a U.S. passport, plus a \$25 execution fee. The fee for children 15 years and younger is \$80 plus a \$25 execution fee. The passport fee can be paid with a check, money order, or credit card. Make a check or money order payable to **U.S. Department of State**
  - **Note:** The application fee and the execution fee are paid separately
- ✓ DO NOT SIGN THE APPLICATION UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE ACCEPTANCE AGENT AT THE AGENCY YOU VISIT

**U.S. passport applications and details can be found on the U.S. Department of State website:**

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html/>

**There is always a filing fee cost for U.S. Passport**

**Where to File:**

You must submit your completed application, including proof of U.S. citizenship, photocopy of ID, and fees, in person at a passport acceptance facility.

- ✓ Traveling within 2 weeks of completing the passport application: Make an appointment with a Passport Agency. A list of Passport Agencies can be found at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/where-to-apply.html>
- ✓ Not traveling within 2 weeks of submitting your application: Make an appointment to apply at an authorized passport acceptance facility to replace your passport. A list of passport acceptance facilities can be found at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/where-to-apply.html>

**5. Fee Waivers:**

USCIS allows certain people to apply for services such as replacement documents free of cost. To be considered, a person must:

1. Submit a form that qualifies for a fee waiver (like I-765, N-565, or I-90) AND
2. Be experiencing economic hardship or receiving a means tested benefit

**Application Checklist:**

- ✓ Form I-912
  - **Note:** Individuals affected by a natural disaster should indicate they are experiencing economic hardship and include documentation of disaster, such as insurance claims (if available), to support their fee waiver filing
- ✓ Evidence should be personalized to show either economic hardship or receipt of a means tested benefit (you do not have to show both)
- ✓ There is no filing fee for Form I-912

Examples of Evidence to Support a Fee Waiver	
Economic Hardship	Means Tested Benefit:
Documentation can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or insurance claims</li> <li>➤ Natural disaster report</li> <li>➤ Map of residency</li> <li>➤ News articles</li> <li>➤ USCIS natural disaster notice</li> <li>➤ Pay stubs, unemployment documents, income taxes</li> <li>➤ Employer letter showing change in salary, hourly rate, hours worked.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Documentation must show you are currently receiving a means tested benefit</li> <li>➤ Documentation must include name, name of agency, type of benefit, indication that the benefit is currently being received. For example, Medicaid, food stamps, welfare, etc.</li> </ul>

**Where to File:**

Mail your I-912, along with your completed USCIS application or petition, and all supporting documentation according to the “Where to File” section of the instructions for the application for which you are requesting a fee waiver.

### III. Additional Resources

#### A. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):

Individuals who do not have a copy of their immigration documents can request a copy by filing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. You can submit this request with USCIS or the Immigration Court if you ever had a hearing before an immigration judge.

This process can take several months, and the request can ask for a lot of information. If you want to file a FOIA, we recommend you consult a trusted immigration service provider for assistance. See F. below for more information.

#### B. Change of Address:

It is important to file a change of address form with USCIS, either before or simultaneously with your application. USCIS policy requires individuals, subject to registration requirements, to report a change of address within 10 days of the change. If you have not done so, please complete Form AR-11 and file it with USCIS as soon as possible. Failure to report a change of address is punishable by fine or imprisonment.

#### C. Replacing Social Security cards, driver's licenses, other identifications:

Each document will need to be replaced with their department (such as the Department of Motor Vehicle, Social Security Administration, health provider agency, etc). For a list of locations and procedures please visit: <https://www.usa.gov/replace-vital-documents>.

#### D. USCIS Disaster Announcement:

USCIS announced help to people affected by unforeseen circumstances, like a natural disaster. These services would be available on a case-by-case basis upon request, could potentially speed up your application process, and could allow you to apply free of cost. For more information visit the page: <https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/immigration-help-available-those-affected-natural-disasters>

#### E. California Specific Aid:

The California Government has developed a site with recovery resources for victims recently affected by wildfires in the state. For more information on services, visit the page: <http://immigrantguide.ca.gov/en/DisasterRelief/>.

#### F. Legal Assistance:

To locate trusted immigration legal service providers in your area, visit the page: <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>.

### IV. Conclusion

It is impossible to predict when a natural disaster will affect our lives but there are steps we can take to prepare for them. It is important to know what documents will be required to replace lost or damaged immigration documents. The information provided above can be a starting point for creating a plan to safeguard your documents by making copies and finding a secure location to store originals.