

The Bona Fide Marriage Evidence Checklist

What to gather to prove your marriage is real, and why each piece matters

Created by two immigration attorneys who built the Marriage Immigration Method™.

Proving your marriage is genuine is the heart of your green card case. Officers are not looking for perfection. They are looking for a **consistent, well documented shared life**, told across your whole relationship, from friendship and dating to engagement, the wedding, and married life. The reassuring part is that if your marriage is real, you already have most of this. This checklist helps you gather it with intention.

The goal is variety and quality, **not just volume**. A handful of strong categories, your finances, your home, your life together, will always carry more weight than a hundred pages of the same kind of document. Officers are asking a simple question in many different ways: **do these two people actually share a life?** Every piece you include is one more honest answer to that question.



How to use this:

- › Aim for a varied, well rounded set of evidence that covers your whole relationship, from dating to engagement to married life.
- › Submit photocopies of everything, unless a document must be an original. Notarized affidavits from friends and family must be submitted as original signed copies.
- › Do not stop collecting after you file. You can add evidence later and bring updated proof to your interview.
- › Start with the strongest categories, financial and legal, then build outward.
- › Use **Have it / Need it / N/A** columns to track your progress as you gather. Print it and work through it over time.

REQUIRED

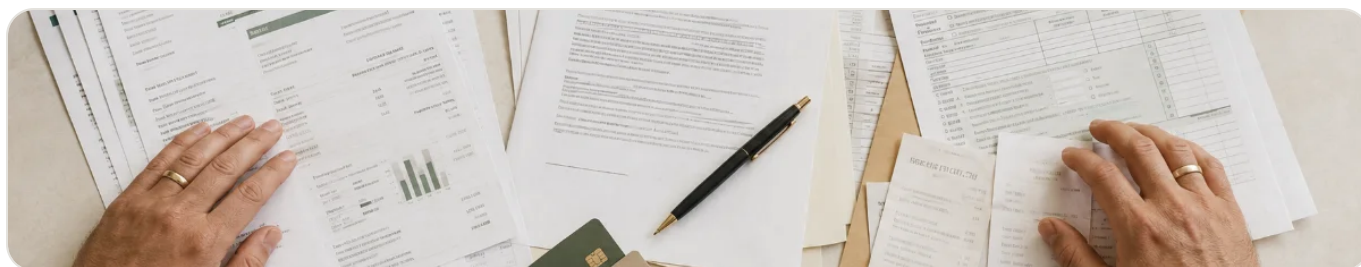
Your Marriage Certificate

This is the official certificate you receive after your ceremony, not the marriage license. Order a few certified copies from the county that issued your license so you always have one on hand.

01 Financial and Legal Evidence (the strongest)

Money is the clearest signal of a shared life.

	HAVE	NEED	N/A
Joint bank account statements. Show real activity: rent, groceries, utilities, shared purchases.	☐	☐	☐
Joint tax returns. Federal and state, filed as Married Filing Jointly. A tax return transcript or a full copy of your 1040 both work.	☐	☐	☐
Joint lease, mortgage, or property title. Anything in both names tying you to one home.	☐	☐	☐
Joint loans, credit cards, or shared accounts. Both names, with history.	☐	☐	☐
Proof of shared expenses. Venmo, Zelle, or CashApp transfers and receipts, no amount is too small.	☐	☐	☐



02 Health, Insurance, and Benefits

Relying on each other for care and security signals a real marriage.

	HAVE	NEED	N/A
Joint health, dental, or car insurance listing both spouses.	☐	☐	☐
Life insurance or retirement plan naming your spouse as beneficiary.	☐	☐	☐
Employer records listing your spouse as emergency contact or covered dependent.	☐	☐	☐

Worth doing today: beneficiary and emergency contact designations cost nothing to update and are easy to forget. If you have not changed yours since marrying, do it now. The updated record becomes evidence on its own.

03 Living Together

Proof of a shared home is critical.

	HAVE	NEED	N/A
Mail to both of you at the same address, from banks, government, insurers, or employers.	☐	☐	☐
Joint household memberships like Costco or Amazon Prime family accounts.	☐	☐	☐
Rent receipts or shared expense transfers for your home.	☐	☐	☐



04 Social, Family, and Community

Show that your marriage is publicly recognized.

	HAVE	NEED	N/A
Children's birth certificates , if you have them, the strongest proof of all.	☐	☐	☐
Photographs together , roughly 30 to 40 spread across your timeline, each with a short caption noting the event, place, and date.	☐	☐	☐
Notarized affidavits from friends and family , three or four people who know your relationship. Submit these as originals.	☐	☐	☐
Joint travel records , flights, hotels, and bookings in both names.	☐	☐	☐
Wedding documents , invitations, venue and catering receipts, ring receipts.	☐	☐	☐

A note on social media: if you post, include 10 to 20 dated posts that show your life together. If you keep your life private, skip it entirely. It will not raise a red flag, and you never need to manufacture a presence for this.

05 Communication and Extra Support

Anything that officially links the two of you helps.

	HAVE	NEED	N/A
Call and text logs or message screenshots showing steady contact over time.	☐	☐	☐
Joint subscriptions like Netflix or Spotify with both names on billing.	☐	☐	☐
Emails, letters, or cards with visible dates.	☐	☐	☐

Special situations

Long distance or not living together yet: lean on visit records, flights, message and call history, money transfers, and a short notarized statement explaining your circumstances and your plan to live together.

How much is enough?

There is no exact number, so submit as much quality evidence as you can. Thin evidence is one of the most common reasons for a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny, so it is worth doing thoroughly the first time. A few reminders: if either of you was married before, include proof it ended. Any document not in English needs a proper translation.

3 quick mistakes to avoid

- **Thin evidence**

Filing with only a few documents is the fastest route to a Request for Evidence.

- **All one type of document**

Fifty bank statements prove one thing once. Spread across categories instead.

- **No translation**

Any document not in English needs a certified translation attached.

NEXT STEP

You know what to gather. Here's the rest of the path.

Evidence is one piece. The forms, the order you file them in, your timeline, and your interview all have to line up too. We walk you through the entire process, step by step, in a free Orientation.

► **Watch the free Orientation**

marriagegreencard.io/startright

Built by two immigration attorneys, refined with every couple we guide.

This checklist is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or an official USCIS document.