



7th Army Training Command Legal Assistance Information

## Resident Alien Card (Green Card)

Please note that this Information Paper only provides basic information and is not intended to serve as a substitute for personal consultations with a Legal Assistance Attorney.

### 1. What is a Green Card?

A green card, or a permanent resident card, allows you to live and work permanently in the United States. Depending on your individual situation, the steps taken to get a green card may vary.

### 2. Are you eligible to apply?

The eligibility requirements may vary depending on the immigrant category you are applying under. One common category is:

- **Green Card through Family-** You may be able to apply as an immediate relative of a US citizen if you are the spouse of a US citizen, unmarried child under the age of 21 of a US citizen, or a parent of a US citizen who is at least 21 years old. You may also be eligible to apply as another relative of a US citizen or relative of a lawful permanent resident under the family-based preference categories if you are unmarried son or daughter of a US citizen, and you are 21 years old and older, married son or daughter of a US citizen, sibling of a US citizen or fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen.

For more information about the eligibility categories, please go to <https://uscis.gov> or <https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas/>.

### 3. How do I apply for a Green Card?

The application for a resident alien card is a two-step process with two different agencies: USCIS as part of DHS and Department of State.

The first step is filling out and submitting a petition, consisting of several forms, with USCIS; the most current information for the required forms can be found at <https://uscis.gov>. A Sponsor usually files the petition for you. The most common forms are:

- Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative
- Form I-130A, Supplemental Information for Spouse Beneficiary

The second step is processing the actual immigrant visa with the US Department of State after the petition has been approved by USCIS.

#### **4. Is the person needing the Green Card currently residing inside or outside of the United States?**

You must determine which process to use; either adjustment of status or consular processing. If you are in the United States, you will use the adjustment of status process with USCIS. If you are overseas, you will use the Consular process. All military applicants in Germany petition through the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt.

#### **5. Is the person filing the petition for foreign-born relative's currently residing inside or outside of the United States?**

Once again, you must determine which process to use: If residing in the US, you need to file the petition with USCIS stateside. Upon arrival of the petition (step 1) the application process will be continued with the National Visa Center as part of the Department of State (part 2).

If residing in Germany (i.e. based on military orders), you may file the petition with the USCIS Frankfurt. Upon approval of the petition (step 1) the application process will be continued through the U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt Immigrant Visa Unit, as part of the Department of State (part 2).

#### **6. How does the Consular process work?**

##### **A. File the Immigrant Petition (Step 1)**

When you know what category you believe best fits your situation, you usually will need someone else to file an immigrant petition for you. **Family-based immigrant petition:** If you want to apply for a green card based on your family relationship, a U.S. citizen or

lawful permanent resident relative must file a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative on your behalf.

Although people usually file immigrant petitions with USCIS in the U.S., sometimes they can file a Form I-130 petition for an immediate relative (spouse, child, or parent of a U.S. citizen) with a USCIS branch office located at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. Military petitioners who live in Germany should apply with USCIS Frankfurt. For more information, visit <https://uscis.gov>. Situations where this may be applicable include:

- If the U.S. citizen has been authorized to be continuously residing within the jurisdiction of the consular office for at least the previous 6 months
- Members of the military
- Emergency situations
- Situations involving the health or safety of the petitioner
- When in the national interests of the United States.

It is **important** to note that all supporting documents (birth and marriage certificates) not in English or German must be translated for submission. This may be done at no charge through [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com).

### **B. Wait for a Decision on Your Petition**

USCIS notifies the petitioner of a decision. If USCIS denies the petition, the notice will include the reasons for denying the petition and whether you may appeal the decision. If the petition is approved and you live outside the United States (or live in the United States but want to apply for your immigrant visa abroad), USCIS will then send the approved petition to the Department of State's National Visa Center. If the petition was filed with USCIS Frankfurt and the visa should be processed in Frankfurt as well, the approved petition will be forwarded to the Immigrant Visa Unit, Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt for further processing.

### **C. Wait for Notification from National Visa Center or the Immigrant Visa Unit Processing the Application (Step 2)**

The National Visa Center (NVC) or the Immigrant Visa Unit processing the visa (if the petition was filed overseas) is responsible for collecting visa application fees and supporting documentation. The NVC/Immigrant Visa Unit will notify the petitioner and you (the beneficiary) when the visa petition is received and how to continue the process. They will also notify you when you must submit immigrant visa processing fees (commonly referred to as "fee bills") and supporting documentation. Further information about this process can be found on the following website for NVC Processing:

<https://travel.state.gov/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/the-immigrant-visa-process/after-petition-approved/begin-nat-visa-center.html> and Immigrant Visa Unit processing <https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas/>.

#### **D. Attend Your Scheduled Appointment**

Once a visa is available, the NVC or the consular office will schedule you for an interview. The consular office will process your case and decide if you are eligible for an immigrant visa. The immigrant visa interview usually takes place the U.S. Consulate or Embassy where the beneficiary is located.

Please be aware that you do need to have a medical examination done with one of the panel physicians located in the country where your immigrant visa gets processed. Information about the medical examination in Germany can be found here: <https://de.usembassy.gov/immigrant-visas/medical-examination>.

#### **E. Notify the National Visa Center of Any Changes**

You do not need to contact the National Visa Center or the Immigrant Visa Unit about your petition; they will contact you for the information they need. You should, however, contact the NVC or the Immigrant Visa Unit if:

- You change your address,
- You were under 21 but have now reached the age of 21, or
- You change your marital status

These changes may affect your eligibility or visa availability.

#### **F. After Visa is Granted**

If your immigrant visa is approved, you will be sent a "Visa Packet." Do not open this packet. This is your ticket into the United States. If you open it, your ticket is invalid. If you were issued a paperless immigrant visa, you will only receive your passport with the visa foil inside along with the associated instructions.

You will need to pay a USCIS Immigrant Fee. USCIS uses this fee to process your immigrant visa packet and produce your green card. You should pay the fee online after you receive your visa packet and before you depart for the United States.

When you arrive in the United States, you should give your Visa Packet to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry. The CBP officer will inspect you and determine whether to admit you into the United States as a lawful permanent resident. If the CBP officer admits you, you will then have lawful permanent resident status and be able to live and work in the United States permanently. For further information please view the following website links:

<https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas/family-based-immigration/after-the-interview/>

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/the-immigrant-visa-process/interview/after-the-interview.html>

### **G. Receive Your Green Card**

You will be sent information about going to a local USCIS office for an interview and biometrics appointment. If you do not receive this information within 45 days of your arrival, please check your Case Status on <https://uscis.gov> for the most up-to-date information.

### **H. How to Renew Your Green Card if Outside of The United States**

If you are outside of the United States and your green card will expire within 6 months it may be possible to renew it on-line. However, if your green card will expire within 6 months, and you will return to the United States within one year you may be able to travel with the expired card and military orders, or may travel under a “travel letter” issued by the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt and then file for your renewal card after you return to the United States. You should contact the Consulate at [uscis.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:uscis.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov) to inquire about your options before traveling to the United States. For information about renewals, please visit <https://uscis.gov>.

### **I. Contact Information**

The most important number for your military immigration questions is the military help line. USCIS has established a toll-free military help line, 877-CIS-4MIL (877-247-4645), and e-mail address at [militaryinfo@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:militaryinfo@uscis.dhs.gov) exclusively for current members of the military, veterans, and family members: <https://www.uscis.gov/military/military-help-line>.

All client inquiries for visas should be directed to [FrankfurtVisaInquiries@state.gov](mailto:FrankfurtVisaInquiries@state.gov)

All client inquiries for immigration and citizenship should be directed to:  
[USCIS.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:USCIS.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov)

For a checklist of forms and supporting documentation if filing in Frankfurt go to:

<https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/international-offices/germany-frankfurt-field-office>.

## Checking the Status of Your Cases (if filed with USCIS Stateside)

On the Customer Home Page of USCIS.gov, you can review your receipt number, check the status of your case, read your status messages, and review your case documents.

Follow the instructions below to log in to your account to check the case status and case documents.

**Step 1:** Enter your **Email Address** and **Password**. **Step 2:** Select the **Sign In** button.

**Step 3:** In the **Recent Cases** section, open the case you want to review by selecting the **View Case Details** button at the bottom to review the case information and document links.

### Recent Cases

<b>Receipt Number:</b> N/A	<b>Receipt Number:</b> IOE0394518688
<b>Request Type:</b> Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card	<b>Request Type:</b> Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card
<b>Draft Created Date:</b> 02/25/2015	<b>Case Received Date:</b> 02/25/2015
<b>Received As:</b> EFile	<b>Received As:</b> EFile
<b>Status:</b> Draft	<b>Status:</b> In Process
<b>Status Message:</b> In Process	<b>Status Message:</b> Your benefit request has been accepted and is under review.
<b>Pending Action:</b> None	<b>Pending Action:</b> None
<b>Draft Expiration Date:</b> 03/28/2015	
<a href="#">Continue Draft</a>	<a href="#">View Case Details for IOE0394518688</a>

**Note:** You may see more than one case if you previously filed an application, petition or request online. Otherwise, you will only see the application, petition or request you recently filed. Write down the receipt number for your case to use later.

**Military Help Line**

Tel.: 877-CIS-4MIL (877-247-4645)  
[militaryinfo@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:militaryinfo@uscis.dhs.gov)

**U.S Consulate General Frankfurt am Main**  
*Gießener Straße 30, 60435 Frankfurt am Main*  
<https://de.usembassy.gov>

**Visa (Nonimmigrant/Immigrant)**

Visa Service Provider  
[http://ustraveldocs.com/de/  
frankfurtvisainquiries@state.gov](http://ustraveldocs.com/de/frankfurtvisainquiries@state.gov)

**American Citizen Services**

Tel.: 069-7535-2102  
Fax: 069-7535-2252  
[GermanyACS@state.gov](mailto:GermanyACS@state.gov)

**Federal Benefits Unit**

Tel.: 069-905-551100 (M-Fr 00:00-11:00) / Fax: 069-749-352  
[https://de.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/  
FBU.Frankfurt@ssa.gov](https://de.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/FBU.Frankfurt@ssa.gov)

**U.S. Citizenship + Immigration Services**

Tel.: 069-7535-2233  
<https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/uscis-frankfurt>  
<http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/international-offices/germany-frankfurt-field-office>  
[USCIS.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov](mailto:USCIS.frankfurt@uscis.dhs.gov)

**U.S. Passport Service**

Tel.: 069-7535-2100  
(M-F 2:00-4:00 PM)  
[FrankfurtPassports@state.gov](mailto:FrankfurtPassports@state.gov)  
[FrankfurtBirth@state.gov](mailto:FrankfurtBirth@state.gov)  
[Renunciations@state.gov](mailto:Renunciations@state.gov)

**Important Links**

IRS: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and  
<https://de.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/internal-revenue-service-u-s-taxes>

Travel: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

STEP: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Voting: <https://de.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/voting/>

ESTA: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/esta.html>

CBP: [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) and  
<https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/customs-and-border-protection/>



U.S. Department of State  
Immigrant Visa Unit  
American Consulate General  
Giessener Str 30  
60435 Frankfurt, Germany

## CHECKLIST FOR MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130) filed for a spouse

### Preparing the Form I-130

- All sections of the Form I-130 have been completed to the best of your ability. (Printed Legibly or Typed) *Note: If a section is not applicable, write "not applicable" or "N/A"*
- Dates are listed in Month/Day/Year format (**Example:** May 1, 1991)
- Petitioner has signed and dated Section 6a.
- Section 62c on page 8 must be completed and list where your relative will apply for the immigrant visa.

### Supplemental Information for Spouse Beneficiary (Form I-130A)

- Beneficiary has completed all blocks and signed his or her form. (*Note: If a section is not applicable, write "not applicable" or "N/A"*)

### Supporting Documentation

*Note: Submit photocopies of the requested documents. Original documents will not be returned and may remain a part of the record.*

- Passport-style color photograph of the petitioner and a passport-style color photograph of the beneficiary (taken within 30 days). Lightly print name on back of each photograph using pen/pencil.
- Proof of petitioner's U.S. Citizenship in the form of a valid U.S. Passport; Birth Certificate; or Naturalization Certificate).
- Proof of petitioner's German residency such as *Residence Permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis)* or *Registration (Anmeldebestätigung)*, U.S. Military Orders (if stationed in Germany), or other verifiable evidence of German residency.
- Marriage Certificate* registered/issued by a competent authority.
- Evidence of a *bona fide marital relationship* with the beneficiary such as shared residence, finances, and familial experiences with beneficiary. (**Examples:** joint bank accounts, dependent on military/employment documents, apartment leases, shared bills, health/life insurance designations, birth certificates of children born to the marriage)
- English translations have been provided for all foreign language documents.** Translations do not have to be certified. The translator must verify that he or she is competent to translate from the foreign to English language and the translation is complete and accurate.

### Additional Supporting Documentation - If Applicable:

- Divorce Certificate(s)* (Absolute or Final) or *Death Certificate(s)* as proof of the legal termination of all previous marriages for petitioner and beneficiary. (**Note:** All pages of the divorce or death certificate must be submitted. Ensure final divorce judgment has been entered with the court. )
- Legally valid *Record of Name Change* if another name has appeared on any identification document and explanation for use of any alias.
- If a *Proxy Marriage Certificate* is submitted, there is evidence of the petitioner and beneficiary being physically present in the same place at the same time after the marriage. (**Examples:** hotel receipts with both names, passport stamps, date-stamped photographs, and signed/sworn affidavits from people with knowledge of the marriage)
- Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative (Form G-28)*.
- Filing Fee of \$535**

U.S. Cashier's Check issued by an American bank in U.S. Dollars payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" (*Barscheck ausgestellt durch eine amerikanische Bank auf den Namen "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."*) OR:

Bank Check or Counter Check issued by a German bank in U.S. Dollars drawn on a U.S. bank. (*Bankscheck ausgestellt von einer deutschen Bank bezogen auf eine U.S. Bank in U.S. Dollars auf den Namen "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."*) OR:

U.S. Dollar Money Order made payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." (Print your name and address on money order)

Cash, Credit/Debit Cards, Personal Checks, Travelers Checks **ARE NOT** accepted.

### Where to File

- Mail petition to U.S. Consulate General, Attn: IV, Giessener Str. 30, 60435 Frankfurt or use the diplomatic pouch address: U.S. Department of State, Attn: IV, 7900 Frankfurt Place, Washington, DC 20521-7900 **\*Please note that items mailed with diplomatic pouch take considerably longer to be delivered.**

**NOTE: The Form I-130 will be rejected if Section 6A is not signed, incorrect payment is received, or petitioner does not meet the Germany residence requirement. Processing delays are also possible if all of the required evidence is not submitted.**