

Title: 10 Green Card Application Mistakes You Should Avoid

Meta Description: Learn the green card application mistakes that could throw all of your efforts down the drain and bring you back right where you started.

10 Green Card Application Mistakes That Can Cost Everything You Worked Hard For

Many immigrants **try to get a green card** as their gateway to a better life, permanent residence, and United States citizenship. However, **finding your way through the green card application process isn't easy**. You need to be patient, precise, and deeply understand the immigration law.

But despite everything, **small mistakes can lead to delays**, requests for more evidence, or an outright denial, setting your application back by months or years. It's important to avoid common pitfalls, whether you're applying to adjust your status or a marriage-based green card.

In this article, let's explore the common mistakes in green card applications and how you can fix them with the help of a [U.S. green card lawyer](#).

Key Takeaways:

- Missing information and documents, sending the documents to the wrong office, and non-disclosure of immigration history can cost you your green card approval.
- Work with an immigration lawyer for legal guidance on your application from start to finish.
- Thoroughly checking your forms is one of the most important steps to ensure your green card application is correct and complete.

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The Green Card Application Process: A Short Overview

Before getting into the errors, let's look at how the application process for a green card usually goes:

Legal Pathways

- Family-based, such as spouse, parent, child, and sibling of a U.S. citizen
- Employment-based
- Diversity visa lottery
- Asylum or refugee adjustment
- Special categories, such as those victims of crime and human trafficking

Key Steps

- Determine eligibility requirements for the green card category.
- File the appropriate forms, like I-130 and I-140.
- Submit Form I-485 (Adjustment of Status) or opt for consular processing in the home country.
- Attend the green card interview.
- Submit all supporting documents, meet financial requirements, and attend a medical exam.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews your application and sets compliance guidelines. Failure to follow these can derail your papers.

Usual Green Card Application Blunders

1. Submitting Incorrect or Incomplete Applications

A complete application is just one of the many factors needed for approval. Leaving blanks on forms, providing false information, and not signing the forms could get you in trouble. The USCIS may delay or reject your application.

Double-check every section of the form before submitting it. Follow all the instructions on the USCIS website. If you need another person to review the forms, **hire an experienced immigration attorney** to go over them and advise you on what to do next.

2. Missing Deadlines

Green card applications have deadlines, and since you're not the only applicant seeking approval, **missing any of them can lead to serious denials** and setbacks.

Keep yourself on track by using a calendar to remind you of submission deadlines. Submit your application as soon as possible to avoid any headaches.

3. Not Providing Sufficient Evidence

Many applicants may be unable to provide sufficient evidence to support their claims, leading to delays that can cost more.

These are some examples of inadequate evidence:

- Missing marriage certificates or birth certificates
- Lack of joint bank accounts for marriage-based applications
- No traces of financial eligibility, such as bank statements, tax returns, and pay stubs

Submit original documents or even certified copies to the USCIS. Supporting evidence such as photos, travel records, and lease agreements is considered important in your application. If you have a joint sponsor, ask them to submit their supporting documentation.

4. Overlooking the Financial Requirements

Green card sponsors must prove they can financially support the applicant. They must submit the following documents:

- Form I-864, Affidavit of Support
- Tax returns for the past three years
- Employment letters, pay stubs, and bank statements

The sponsor should meet the income threshold. With the help of your lawyer, determine your options in this phase of the application.

5. Failure to Disclose Immigration or Criminal History

Some green card applicants hide some of their criminal or immigration history. But all of this hiding is pointless, as **USCIS can access records**. Failing to disclose them can be seen as fraud and may bar you from getting future immigration benefits.

You should be completely honest about your history and submit court records and previous immigration documents. Your immigration attorney can assist you in building a strong case and explain what happened so that the USCIS will consider your application.

6. Sending Missing or Unclear Supporting Documents

Missing supporting documents, such as birth certificates, medical exam records, travel documents, and passport pages, can land you in hot water. To avoid missing anything, **have a checklist of all your required documents** and translate the non-English ones.

Ask your lawyer if there are other documents you may need to prepare. Submit clean and readable copies of your documents to the USCIS.

7. Ignoring Instructions or Using the Wrong Forms

You may end up downloading outdated forms or overlooking special instructions that fit your personal circumstances, which can land you in huge trouble.

Download all forms from the USCIS website and read the instructions carefully. Then, check the website regularly for new form versions and rules to stay updated.

8. Submitting Documents to the Wrong Office or at the Wrong Time

When you send your documents to the wrong office, expect a major delay. To avoid preparing them again, **confirm filing locations on the USCIS website** and keep copies of every item you submit.

9. Not Preparing for the Green Card Interview

This step makes or breaks your application. Unpreparedness can make you nervous and give consistent answers to the immigration officers. This can raise concerns about your application, potentially resulting in a denial.

Always review your application before the interview. Bring all your evidence, such as photos, bank statements, and marriage certificates.

10. Not Getting Professional Legal Help

Your case may be more complicated than others, so you need a seasoned immigration lawyer to help you resolve it. Not working with them can leave your application hanging in the balance.

Hire an attorney when:

- You've had previous visa denials.
- You're at risk of losing your immigration status.
- You're unsure about your eligibility criteria for a specific green card category.
- You need to respond promptly to USCIS's requests.
- You need to rehearse for your green card interview.

An immigration lawyer helps you file all forms correctly, avoid common green card mistakes, and boost your chances of green card approval.

Final Thoughts

Becoming a permanent resident is a long journey, and **there's always a way to fix the mistakes in your application**. You need to **carefully review every form and gather the evidence** you need to submit.

Avoiding green card application mistakes can make a huge difference between building a good life in the U.S. and going back to square one.