

YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

Define the records you want before making a USCIS FOIA request

How can I describe a USCIS FOIA request without asking the wrong agency for a new legal answer?

Identify existing records, the likely custodian, the subject and the period or document sought before using the current official request route. A records request is different from a benefit application, legal opinion or demand to create a new explanation. Identity and consent questions require careful handling through the appropriate official process.

Check the boxes on screen or by hand. Use the notes area for records to find and questions to ask.

Your preparation checklist

- ☐ Describe an existing record rather than a desired answer.
- ☐ Identify the likely record custodian.
- ☐ Establish whose records are requested.
- ☐ Use the current official submission instructions.
- ☐ Keep scope and processing expectations realistic.

Notes and questions to follow up

Source links and current instructions

Sources checked October 25, 2026. Follow current instructions at the linked institution.

National Archives / OGIS: Using FOIA to access immigration records
<https://www.archives.gov/ogis/resources/foia-ombuds-observer/2023-02>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: How to make FOIA requests
<https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-foia-handbook>

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Source links (continued)

Immigrant Insider: Editorial policy and verification status

<https://immigrantinsider.com/editorial-policy/>

Return to the complete guide

<https://immigrantinsider.com/procedures/foia-request-scope/>

General information

This free organizer is not a government form and does not submit an application, establish eligibility, preserve a deadline or replace individual legal advice. Government filing fees and professional services are separate.