

YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

Illegible source records: clarification before translation

What should I do when a document is too faint or damaged for reliable translation?

Improve the source before asking for interpretation. A translator should flag unreadable text rather than guess; an enhanced image must not alter the underlying record or invent missing information.

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

Your preparation checklist

- ☐ Compare image with the physical record
- ☐ Keep unmodified source files
- ☐ Identify unreadable fields precisely
- ☐ Request issuer clarification or replacement

A little support for your next step.

Eagle Translate has reserved the discount code SUPPORT25 for Immigrant Insider readers, to help immigrants in the United States with document translation costs. Use your reader code when you order. No expiration date. No usage limit.

Reader code: SUPPORT25

<https://eagletranslate.com/>

Check the order total before payment.

Notes and questions to follow up

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Source links and current instructions

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

U.S. Department of State: Scan collected documents

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/the-immigrant-visa-process/step-8-scan-collected-documents.html>

USCIS: Policy Manual: evidence

<https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-e-chapter-6>

Return to the complete guide

<https://immigrantinsider.com/documents/illegible-source-records/>

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.