



Navigating the I-130

What is it?

- US citizens are allowed to act as **petitioners** in order to **sponsor** their relatives so that they might become permanent residents as well. US citizens are allowed to sponsor their spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Green card holders can only sponsor their spouses and unmarried children.
- That process of “sponsorship” begins here with the **I-130**. The I-130 form is not the application itself--its purpose is to establish the relationship between the petitioner and the sponsor.

How it Works

- Remember, the I-130 is just used to establish a qualifying relationship. The form goes over the history of the petitioner and the sponsor, and is supported by a variety of evidence, including birth certificates, addresses, photos together, etc.
- For spouses, the process can look a little different. The government wants to make sure the relationship between the husband and wife is authentic, and might ask for more supporting documents.

What to do?

- The I-130 is all about the details. When filling out the form, or providing your attorney with the relevant info, you want to be as accurate as possible.
- Be prepared to provide the following:
 - Passport
 - Birth certificate
 - Evidence of your relationship (photos, messages, travel records)
 - Financial support documents
 - Tax returns
 - Utility Bills
 - Address history
 - Employment history

What to expect

- Processing times vary with each application. If the I-130 is approved, spouses, parents, and minor children of U.S. citizens can apply for their green card right away. Other relatives may have to wait longer.
- Applying for green cards is neither a quick or cheap process. However, getting all the details right at the beginning saves time. If the USCIS feels that information is missing, they will send a Request For Evidence, which can cause major delays. So be prepared to go over everything multiple times.