

Green Card Renewal: How to Renew Your Green Card

Once you become a United States lawful permanent resident, you are issued a green card. Your green card is a highly important document; it is proof of your lawful permanent resident status. This document is also evidence of your ability to permanently live and work in the United States.

A green card is typically valid for 10 years. If your green card is close to expiring, or if your green card is lost or stolen, it is very important to apply for a green card renewal or replacement.

In this guide, I'll explain how to renew or replace your green card. If you have any questions, feel free to email me directly at Info@immigrationlawfirmlltd.com. I'm a U.S. immigration lawyer and I would be happy to help you.

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1. What is a Green Card? (Intro)

Once you become a United States lawful permanent resident, you are issued a green card. A green card may also be referred to as a Lawful Permanent Resident Card, a Form I-551, or an Alien Registration Receipt Card (ARC Card).

Your green card is proof of your status as a U.S. lawful permanent resident. Your green card is also proof of your ability to permanently live and work in the United States.

The green card is a rectangular plastic card and contains quite a bit of information about a permanent resident. The front of the green card displays your photo, first and last name, USCIS number, country of birth, signature, fingerprint, date of birth, sex, category of admission to the U.S. and other important details.

A green card is typically issued with a 10-year validity period. At the end of the 10-year period, the green card expires, and you are required to apply for a green card renewal.

2. Why do You Need a Valid Green Card at all Times?

The immigration regulations are very strict about a permanent resident's duty to have a valid green card. The regulations specifically state that every lawful permanent resident 18 years of age or older "shall at all times carry with him and have in his personal possession any certificate of alien registration or alien registration receipt card," which is the green card. [[INA Section 264\(e\)](#); [INA Section 264\(d\)](#); [AFM 51.1](#)].

Failing to comply with the requirement is a misdemeanor and can result in a fine or imprisonment.

For this reason, it is highly important for permanent residents to maintain a valid green card at all times.

3. What are Some Reasons You May Need to Renew or Replace Your Green Card?

- Green card is expired or will expire within 6 months;
- Green card is lost, stolen, or destroyed;
- Green card was issued by USCIS but you never received it;
- Green card is partially damaged;
- Green card has incorrect information on it due to USCIS error;
- Your name or other information on your green card has changed since your last green card was issued;
- You are turning 14 years old (Once a permanent resident child turns 14 years old, they must apply for a new green card);
- You are a permanent resident taking up commuter status (Commuter status is when you are a permanent resident who will live in Canada or Mexico and work in the United States);
- You are a commuter who will move back to the U.S. to establish your residence within the United States.

4. What are the Green Card Renewal Requirements?

i. You Must be a Lawful Permanent Resident

Generally speaking, to apply for a green card renewal, you must be a U.S. lawful permanent resident. Conditional permanent residents (2-year green card holders) must file a petition to get the condition removed from their green card. This is an entirely different process from what we are discussing in this guide.

ii. You Must File a Form I-90 with the Required Supporting Documentation and Fees

To apply for a green card renewal, you are required to file a Form I-90 and submit supporting documentation along with your case along with the appropriate filing fees. This will be discussed in more detail below.

iii. You Must Attend a Biometrics Appointment

In many cases, to renew your green card, you are required to attend a biometrics appointment. The biometrics appointment is where your digital fingerprints are taken.

5. Green Card Renewal Process: How to Renew Your Green Card (Step-by-Step)

Step 1. Identify the Reason You are Renewing Your Green Card

Before filling out any forms, the first step is to clearly understand the reason you are applying for your green card renewal. Did you lose your green card? Is your green card about to expire? Has your name changed since your last green card was issued? The reason you are applying for the renewal will determine your filing fees and the documents you are required to submit in support of your case.

Step 2. File the Form I-90 Along with Supporting Documents and Correct Filing Fee

The next step is to file a Form I-90 with USCIS. The I-90 is also called the Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card. The I-90 can be filled-out and submitted electronically or it can be printed and physically mailed to USCIS.

- [Here is a link to the Form I-90](#)
- [Here's a link to the Form I-90 USCIS Instructions](#)

Step 3. Attend Biometrics

For most green card renewal applicants, you are required to attend a mandatory biometrics appointment to have your fingerprints taken. You are

required to do this even if you have already had your biometrics taken at an earlier time.

6. Green Card Renewal Processing Time

I'll break this answer down into 4 segments:

1. Issuance of USCIS Receipt Notice (1 to 3 Weeks from Filing Date)

Once you apply for your green card renewal or replacement, USCIS will review your application and issue you a receipt notice. The receipt notice is the verification that USCIS has received your application. This receipt notice contains your unique receipt number. You can use your receipt number to track your case using the [USCIS Case Status Checker](#).

2. Issuance of Biometrics Appointment Notice (4 to 6 Weeks from Filing Date)

Following issuance of the receipt notice, USCIS will then issue your biometrics appointment notice. The biometrics appointment notice contains information regarding the location of your biometrics appointment as well as the date of your biometrics appointment. The biometrics appointment notice also provides you with instructions on what to bring to the biometrics appointment. This notice also provides instructions on how to reschedule your appointment in the event that you cannot attend as scheduled.

3. Actual Biometrics Appointment Date (6 to 8 Weeks from Filing Date)

Your biometrics appointment will take place about 2 weeks after USCIS issues your appointment notice. Your biometrics appointment is where you will have your digital fingerprints taken. Be sure to pay close attention to the **location** and **date** of your biometrics appointment. It is also important to make sure you bring the required documents with you to the appointment (as specified on the appointment notice). You will need a valid I.D. as well as the actual appointment notice.

4. Issuance of New Green Card (6 to 10 Months from Filing Date)

After the biometrics appointment is completed, USCIS will continue to process your application and then issue the physical green card. If USCIS has questions about a particular aspect of your application or if you filed the application incorrectly, USCIS may issue a request for additional evidence (RFE). This can delay the overall processing time.

[Here is a link to the current USCIS processing times.](#) You can use this link to find out the current processing time by entering the appropriate form number (I-90) in the space provided.

7. Can I Expedite the Green Card Renewal Process?

Yes, in certain circumstances, USCIS will expedite the processing of a green card renewal application. [Here is a link to the USCIS expedite criteria.](#) USCIS has complete discretion as to whether they will expedite a case or not and these decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. If USCIS expedites your case, your receipt notice, biometrics notice, biometrics appointment, and the

issuance of your new green card will all occur much faster than standard processing times.

Here are some reasons USCIS will expedite a case:

- Emergency situation;
- Severe financial loss to company or person;
- Humanitarian reasons;
- USCIS error;
- Compelling USCIS interest;

8. What Document to Submit with Green Card Renewal Application

The specific documents that you are required to submit with your green card renewal application will depend on your particular case. If you are confused about which documents to submit, contact an immigration lawyer to help you. Submitting the wrong documents or failing to submit required documents can delay your case or may even result in a denial of the case.

Here are some general pointers to help you determine which documents to submit with your case:

Current Green Card

- In most cases, you are required to submit a **copy** of the front and back of your existing green card.
- If you are applying for a green card replacement because your current green card has incorrect information due to USCIS error, **you must submit the original green card with your application**. A copy of the card is not acceptable.
- If your green card was lost or stolen and you do not have a copy of the green card, you may be eligible to submit a copy of another government-issued form of identification, such as a driver's license or the identification page of your passport.

Evidence of Changed Information

- If you are applying for a new green card because the current green card has incorrect information (for example, if you got married and changed your name) you must submit copies of the appropriate legal documentation to reflect the name change.
- Examples of appropriate documents include the following: marriage certificate; divorce decree; adoption decree; other court-issued documentation showing your name was changed.

9. Green Card Renewal Filing Fee

There are generally 2 fees associated with renewing your green card:

- I-90 Filing Fee: \$455
- Biometric Services Fee: \$85

Please note there are multiple situations where an applicant is **not** required to pay one or both of the above fees. You should check the [I-90 instructions](#) to make sure you are paying the appropriate amount. If you make a mistake and fail to issue the necessary payment, your application will not be accepted.

Here are some general pointers:

Situations where both the I-90 filing fee and the Biometric Services Fee are Required:

- Previous green card was lost, stolen, or destroyed
- Existing green card has expired or will expire within 6 months

- Your name or other biographic data has changed since your last green card was issued
- You have turned 14 years old and your existing green card will expire **before** your 16th birthday
- You are a permanent resident taking up commuter status
- You are a commuter who is taking up actual residence in the United States

Situations Where the Biometric Services Fee is Required but the I-90 Filing Fee is Not Required:

- You have turned 14 years old and your existing green card will expire **after** your 16th birthday

Situations Where Neither the Biometric Services Fee or the I-90 Filing Fee are Required:

- Your previous green card was issued but never received (returned to USCIS as undeliverable)
- Existing green card has incorrect data because of Department of Homeland Security Error

10. Green Card Renewal Tips and Pointers

Follow Instructions

This is an obvious tip, but I want to emphasize it in this section. Immigration forms must be very carefully prepared. You should make sure that you are submitting the appropriate evidence with your case and that you are submitting the correct fees. You should also make sure that you have filled out the I-90 correctly. Failure to follow instructions or incorrectly filling out the I-90 can result in a delay or denial of your case.

Have You Been Arrested or Had Trouble with the Law?

If you've been arrested in the past, **even if it did not result in a conviction**, this can have serious implications for your status as a lawful permanent resident. Even if the arrest has not come up as an issue in the past, it may come up as a result of filing for the green card renewal. **If this may apply to you, make sure to contact an immigration lawyer before submitting your application.**

11. Conclusion

Once you become a United States permanent resident, you are issued a green card (also called a Lawful Permanent Resident Card or Form I-551). This card is evidence of your status as a U.S. lawful permanent resident and is highly important.

The green card is usually valid for a 10-year period. At the end of the 10-year period, the green card expires, and you are required to renew the green card. To do this, you must file a Form I-90 with USCIS, submit the appropriate supporting documents, and issue the requirement payment.