# I-589 APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS WITHOUT LAWYERS

**NOTE: THIS IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE. IMMIGRATION LAW IS COMPLEX AND CHANGES FREQUENTLY. ALSO, EVERY CASE IS DIFFERENT. WE ALWAYS RECOMMEND SPEAKING TO AN ATTORNEY BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION, IF POSSIBLE.**

## BEFORE YOU SUBMIT: COMPLETE APPLICATION REVIEW

**Your Personal Statement (Declaration)**

- **IMPORTANT:** Your personal statement explaining why you need asylum MUST be included in **Supplement B** (the continuation pages)
- Do NOT attach additional pages as a separate document; use Supplement B. You can include as many Supplement B pages as needed.

**Answer Every Question Completely**

- If a question doesn't apply to you or you don't know the answer, write "none," "not applicable," or "unknown"
- **IMPORTANT:** Every person applying must submit an individual application (including your spouse and children) and must answer every question fully
  - Your children CANNOT just write "see my mother's application" or "see my father's application"
  - Each person needs to present their own complete answers

## KEY QUESTIONS TO DOUBLE-CHECK

**Part A.I. (Page 1)**

- **Questions 1-15:**
  - Make sure you fill out every box. If a question does not apply to you, it's best to answer with "none" or "not applicable."
- **Questions 16-17:**
  - Be as specific as possible in terms of defining your religion and/or ethnicity.
- **Question 18:**
  - Mark Box B – "I am now in immigration court proceedings" if you are submitting this application to an immigration court judge.
- **Question 19:**
  - **Make sure these dates match the information you provide on pages 5-10**
  - List ALL times you entered the United States, starting with the most recent
- **Questions 20-25:**
  - Make sure you fill out every box. If a question does not apply to you, it's best to answer with "none," "not applicable," or "unknown."

**Part A.II (Pages 2-3)**

In this section, it is better to provide more information than less. If you're not sure, include it anyway.

- If you are unsure whether you and your partner are legally married, you should include them, just in case.
- Include any stepchildren, adopted children, and children from previous relationships.
- Remember that you can use Supplement A to list more children, if needed.

**Part A.III. (Page 4)**

- **Question 1:**
  - List the last place you lived for more than a few nights before coming to the U.S. This might be an address other than your home address in your home country such as a migrant shelter. You should also list the last place you lived in your home country.
  - Be as exact as possible. If you do not know the specific house number or street name, you can write "unknown."

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**Part A.III. (Page 4)**

- **Question 2:**
  - List all the places you've lived over the past 5 years. Start with your current address.
  - **Make sure your addresses match your story.** For example, if you tried to move somewhere else in your home country to avoid your persecutor before deciding to come to the U.S., that address should also be included.
- **Question 3:**
  - Even if you attended university, you MUST also list:
    - ALL elementary/primary schools
    - ALL middle schools
    - ALL high schools/secondary schools
- **Question 4:**
  - Be as specific as possible. If you were not employed, self-employed, or only worked some of the time, be sure you note that. **Again, make sure what you put down is consistent with your story.**
- **Question 5:**
  - Make sure to include your half-siblings, if any.
  - If any family member listed is in the United States, ask them: "Did you ever apply for asylum in the U.S.?" You'll need this information to answer Part C correctly.

**Part B (Pages 5-6)**
Grounds for Asylum

Remember that you can check every box that you think applies to you. However, you should be prepared to explain why you fear persecution on each separate ground in your written responses to the follow-up questions.

Also, note that if you checked the box on the top of Page 1 about seeking relief under the Convention against Torture, you should also check the box on the Torture Convention here and make sure that you answer yes to Part B, Question 4.

- **Question 1.A:**
  **Have you, your family, close friends or colleagues ever experienced harm, mistreatment, or threats?**
  If yes, you must explain in detail:
  1. **WHAT** happened to you, your family, close friends or colleagues;
  2. **WHEN** it happened;
     - Do your best to be specific, but do not put dates that you are unsure of. Ex. If you only remember something happened in June of 2018, but do not remember the exact day, you can put "June of 2018" or "Summer of 2018." Just remember to make sure your dates make sense in your story!
  3. **WHO** caused the harm, mistreatment or threats, and HOW you know it was them; and
     - Do your best to be specific. It is not enough to say "they hurt me." Explain who "they" is and name them as best as you can as well as **how** they hurt you.
  4. **WHY** you believe the harm, mistreatment, or threat happened;
     - Do your best to be specific. **Remember the categories of asylum that you checked off at the beginning of Part B. Explain how that the reason you were harmed relates to those categories you checked off.**

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## KEY QUESTIONS TO DOUBLE-CHECK

- **Question 1.B:**
  **Do you fear harm if you return to your home country?**
  If yes, you must explain in detail:
  1. **WHAT** harm you fear;
  2. **WHO** would harm you; and
  3. **WHY** would they harm you?

  **Question 2:**
  This question is asking about any kind of arrest or detention outside of the United States, including immigration stops in places like Mexico.
  - Note **ANY** time you were held against your will for any period, even if it was just for a few hours, and even you were never charged with a crime.
  - Include any time you were stopped or held by non-governmental actors, including cartels or gang members.
  - If it occurred in your home country, make sure that it is consistent with your story.
  - Remember that this question is asking about **your family members** as well as you.
  - Be as detailed in your response as possible.

  **Question 3.A:**
  **Have you or your family belonged to any organizations or groups?**
  - List any affiliation you or any family member had to any group or organization, formal or informal.
  - This includes: political parties, student groups, labor unions, religious organizations, military groups, ethnic groups, human rights groups, press/media
  - If yes, explain for each person including **yourself**:
    - Who was affiliated?
    - Did they have a title or role?
    - Did they hold any leadership positions?
    - How involved were they?
    - What did they do?
    - When did they start?
    - When did they stop?
- **Question 3.B:**
  - Describe **ANY** ongoing involvement you, or your family, has with the listed groups.
  - Even if you are no longer an active member of the group, explain whether you still believe in their work or support their activities.

  **Question 4:**
  If you answered "yes" to Questions 1A or 1B, you should answer "yes" to this question as well. Describe the specific harm you fear.
  - **WHO** would harm you,
  - **WHY** they would harm you, and
  - If you think your government would be willing or able to protect you.

  **Make sure your response is consistent with your answers to Questions 1.A and 1.B.**
  Double check to confirm you checked the related boxes on **Pages 1 and 4.**

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**Part C (Pages 7-8)**

- **Question 1:**
  **Have you, your spouse, children, parents, or siblings ever applied for refugee status, asylum, or withholding of removal from the U.S.?**
  If yes, explain what happened with those applications. Answer this question to the best of your knowledge. Include the full names and A#s of any family member listed (if an A# is unknown, list date of birth).
    - Were you listed in any of your family members' applications? If so, specify who applied for you and what happened.
    - If you don't know, or don't have all the details, it is OK to say so.
- **Question 2:**
  **After leaving your country, did you travel through or live in any other countries before coming to the U.S.?**
  If yes, for **EVERY** country you traveled through or lived in, provide:
    - Name of the country
    - How long you stayed there
    - Your legal status while there (visa type, etc.)
    - Why you left that country
    - Whether you can return there legally
    - Whether you applied for asylum there (if not, explain why not)

  Sample answer [write this out and fill in with appropriate information for **EVERY** country you traveled through]:
    - *After leaving my country of origin, I traveled through **[COUNTRY 1]** for approximately **[LENGTH OF STAY]**. While there, I was in **[STATUS]/did not have any legal status.** I left **[COUNTRY 1]** because **[REASON FOR LEAVING]**. I am not entitled to return for lawful residence purposes. I did not apply for asylum or refugee status while there because **[REASON]**.*
    - Use additional Supplement B pages, if necessary.
- **Question 3:**
    - The answer to this question will almost always be "no."
    - **Remember that it is only asking about you, your spouse, or your children. You DO NOT need to include information about your parents, siblings, or extended family.**
- **Question 4:**
    - Include times that you were deported back to your country.
        - Note: if any of these deportations were from countries other than the United States, that immigration apprehension in another country should be listed in Part B Question 2.
    - If you returned to your country after coming to the U.S. **before** the harm or threats you received began, say so clearly.
    - Explain how long you were there when you returned.
    - Describe any new threats or incidents of harm you experienced.
    - Describe any efforts you took to hide or conceal your identity before you left your country again.

- **Question 5:**
  - If you answer "yes" to this question, be sure to include an explanation.
  - Examples might include:
    - Having some other form of immigration status such as TPS, parole, or a valid visa;
    - Serious illness (including family members);
    - Difficulty remembering specific events due to trauma;
    - Severe economic hardship such as homelessness;
    - Family violence;
    - Lack of information about asylum process.

**Part C (Pages 7-8)**

- **Question 6:**
  This question is asking about arrests that you or your family experienced inside the U.S.
  - This includes civil arrests by immigration authorities.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST**

**REMEMBER:** Any document you submit must be in English. If you are including documents not in English, you must include:

1. A copy of the original document
2. The translated copy;
3. A certification by a qualified translator that includes their signature, printed name, date, and their contact information.

□ **Proof of Payment of Your Asylum Application Fees**
- If you filed your application **on or after October 2024**, include a copy of your filing fee payment receipt.
- Ask the Immigration Judge how much it will be and how you can pay this if you are unsure.

□ **Passport**
- Include copies of **ALL pages** of your passport (even blank pages)
- If you don't have a passport, include a written explanation of why not

□ **Other Identification (if no passport)**
- If you don't have a passport or immigration document, include another form of ID

□ **Evidence of Relationship of Documents**
If you're including your spouse or children in your application:
- **Marriage certificate** (with certified English translation)
- **Birth certificate(s)** for children (with certified English translation)
- If you don't have these documents, include a written explanation of why not

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□ **Evidence Supporting the Statements Made in Your Application**

You should include documents that back up your argument of why you are afraid of returning to your home country and/or countries you're seeking protection from:

1. **Specific facts** that support your asylum claim
2. **General conditions** in the country you're seeking protection from

Examples: news articles, country reports, medical records, police reports, photos, letters from witnesses with a copy of their ID

If you cannot provide these documents, include a written explanation of why they're not available.

**FINAL CHECKLIST BEFORE SUBMITTING**

□ Every question has an answer (or "none"/"not applicable"/"unknown")
□ Dates are consistent throughout the application
□ All required documents are included or explained in writing why they are not available
□ All non-English documents are translated
□ Your personal statement is in Supplement B, and if you need more space to write your entire statement, they are written and included on additional copies of Supplement B
□ If you have children/spouse included, they have their own application with complete answers
□ You've signed and dated Part D
□ You've made copies of everything for your records

**NEED HELP?**

If you're confused about any part of this application, consider:

- Contacting a local immigration non-profit organization
- Hiring and consulting with an immigration attorney if possible
    - AILALawyer.com

**Remember**: It's better to take your time and complete the application carefully than to rush and make mistakes that could result in your case being denied or dismissed.