



Spain Family Residence

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST FOR U.S. SPOUSES OF SPANISH CITIZENS

A practical planning guide for couples living in the United States and relocating together to Spain.

Before you gather documents: confirm which Spanish consulate serves your legal place of residence, then use that consulate's current visa guidance page. Requirements, accepted evidence, fees, translations, validity windows and payment methods can differ by district. GuiriGuru can put you in touch with a Spain Immigration Lawyer to review your visa options and get a final document checklist.

1 APPLICATION ROUTE, FORMS & IDENTITY

	Confirm the competent Spanish consulate Apply through the Spanish consular office serving the applicant's legal U.S. residence. Filing procedures, appointments, copies and return-mail instructions can differ by district.
	Form EX-24 Complete and sign the application for initial temporary residence as the family member of a Spanish citizen. Select initial residence and spouse. Complete Annex I, including the declaration concerning any other spouse or partner in Spain.
	National visa application form Include a completed and signed national visa form if required by the assigned consulate. Follow that office's instructions for whether the residence authorization and visa are processed together or in stages.
	Passport photograph Provide a recent passport-size color photograph meeting the consulate's specifications.
	U.S. spouse's passport Original valid passport plus the copies requested by the consulate. Some offices require copies of every page, not only the biographical page.
	Spanish spouse's identification Copy of the Spanish spouse's valid DNI and/or Spanish passport.
	Proof of residence in the consular district Provide the applicant's valid driver's license, state identification or other evidence accepted by the assigned consulate.
	Existing NIE, if already assigned Include a copy of the NIE certificate. An NIE is an identification number only; it does not by itself confer residence or replace the residence authorization and TIE.

Prepare originals and the number of copies requested. The consulate may request additional evidence or an interview. If the couple departs before consular approval, obtain professional advice on whether to continue that filing or submit the permitted in-Spain application instead.

2 MARRIAGE, BACKGROUND & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

	Proof of marriage Preferably provide a recent literal marriage certificate from the Spanish Civil Registry if the marriage is registered in Spain. If relying on a U.S. marriage certificate, use a certified copy, obtain the apostille from the issuing state and arrange an official Spanish sworn translation.
	FBI criminal-record certificate The U.S. spouse should obtain an FBI Identity History Summary based on fingerprints, covering the applicable five-year background requirement. Obtain the U.S. Department of State federal apostille and an official Spanish sworn translation. Confirm the consulate's validity window before ordering.
	Other countries of residence Provide criminal-record certificates from any other country where the applicant resided during the preceding five years, legalized or apostilled as applicable and officially translated into Spanish.
	Previous marriages If either spouse was previously married, provide the divorce judgment, annulment or former spouse's death certificate. Foreign public documents generally require legalization/apostille and an official Spanish translation.
	Intention to establish residence together in Spain Include practical evidence such as a planned Spanish address, lease or property deed, relocation itinerary, moving arrangements, or a signed statement explaining when and where the couple will establish their home.
	Proof of the continuing relationship The marriage certificate is the principal evidence. The consulate may request additional documents if it needs to verify that the relationship remains genuine and that the spouses intend to live together in Spain.
	Medical certificate - confirm locally For a consular filing, follow the assigned consulate's current checklist and prescribed wording. Spain's national guidance states that a medical certificate is not required when the qualifying family member submits the residence application while already in Spain.
	Consulate-specific documents Bring the appointment confirmation, any consular cover sheet, prepaid return envelope and payment method requested by the assigned office. The residence-authorization procedure itself is free, although related consular or service charges may apply.

Private health insurance and proof of income are not standard statutory requirements for this category. They are requirements associated with routes such as the Non-Lucrative Visa, not the current residence authorization for the spouse of a Spanish citizen. Always follow a specific written request from the reviewing authority.

Timing matters. FBI records, apostilles, civil-status records and translations can take weeks. Do not detach an apostille from its underlying document, and confirm validity periods before ordering documents.

3 ARRIVAL IN SPAIN & THE RESIDENCE CARD

	Keep proof of lawful entry Retain the passport entry stamp and travel records. A U.S. citizen may enter Spain visa-free for a short stay, but visa-free entry is not itself residence authorization.
	Register the household address After securing accommodation, register both spouses at the local town hall (empadronamiento). A joint padrón is commonly useful evidence that the couple lives together.
	If applying after arrival Current rules allow a spouse of a Spanish citizen to submit Form EX-24 while both spouses are in Spain. File through the competent Oficina de Extranjería or permitted electronic channel and keep the filing receipt.
	Provisional status while an in-Spain application is pending A properly submitted qualifying application allows the spouse to remain provisionally while it is decided. The current rules also provide provisional work authorization for spouses, subject to the eventual decision.
	Resolution period The published administrative decision period is two months. Silence after that period is treated as a denial, although actual processing and notification practices vary.
	Apply for the TIE After approval - or after entry when the authorization was granted from abroad - book fingerprints with Policía Nacional and apply personally for the Foreigner Identity Card within one month. The TIE is the physical proof of residence and displays the NIE.
	Work authorization The granted family residence authorization permits the spouse to work in Spain as an employee or as self-employed without a separate work permit. The authorization is generally granted for five years, unless a shorter period applies.

Important distinction: NIE = identification number. Residence authorization = legal permission to live and work in Spain. TIE = the physical residence card. Obtaining an NIE at a consulate does not complete the immigration process.

OFFICIAL SPANISH SWORN TRANSLATIONS

English-language public documents that must be filed in Spanish should be translated by an official Spanish sworn translator (traductor-intérprete jurado) appointed by Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When an apostille is required, obtain it before translation. Contact GuiriGuru for official sworn translation services.

**Need a
consulate-specific
document review?**

Ask GuiriGuru for a complimentary 30-minute consultation with a licensed Spanish immigration lawyer.

Important: This checklist is provided for general informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Requirements can change and may differ by consular district and personal circumstances. Contact the assigned Spanish consulate for the authoritative list, or use GuiriGuru's complimentary consultation to obtain guidance from a licensed Spanish immigration lawyer.

Official sources used

Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration - Information Sheet 18: Temporary residence authorization for family members of Spanish citizens (updated April 2026)

Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs - U.S. consular guidance for residence visas for family members of Spanish citizens
Form EX-24 - Initial temporary residence authorization for family members of Spanish citizens