



Pro Se Asylum Guide

FOR APPLICANTS



Pro Se Asylum Guide

Novo Legal has created this “pro se” asylum guide to help people who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. By following the instructions in this guide, you should be able to create an asylum submission that you can feel confident in when you submit it to the Executive Office for Immigration Review [EOIR] (the “immigration court”) or to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS]. (We’ll go over which specific one you should file with later).

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Appendix Overview

Disclaimer

If you are using this guide, it means that you are not represented by Novo Legal in an official capacity, in the preparation of your asylum application. This guide does not constitute legal advice. The information provided in this guide is meant to answer general questions, not to give specific advice related to one specific circumstance. If you have specific questions related to your specific case, we recommend you consult with a lawyer prior to filing.

You, the applicant, are responsible for filing your application on time. You, the applicant, are responsible for telling the truth in your asylum application. If you provide information that is untruthful, you run the risk that your application will be deemed frivolous, resulting in the denial of your application, bars to other immigration benefits, and potentially criminal penalties.

You accept the responsibility of being truthful and the risks associated if you are not. You also accept that the filing of an asylum application may result in placing you in removal proceedings (if you are not already) and potential deportation if your application is denied. By using this guide, you attest that you have a legitimate fear of returning to your country of citizenship or nationality and accept the risks associated with filing an asylum application.

How to Use this Guide

Before you can use this guide, you must fully review and confirm you have fully read, understood, and accept the Disclaimer to the Pro Se Asylum Guide. Any use of this resource demonstrates you have read and accept all the terms of the Disclaimer. This guide is broken up into five helpful sections and a resource appendix. Those sections include:

01

One-year Deadline – You must submit your asylum application within one-year of entering the US unless you meet one of the exceptions.

02

Eligibility Criteria & Bars to Asylum – Requirements you must meet for your application to be approved.

03

Where and how to file your application – Where and how you submit your application will depend on several factors, follow this closely!

04

Review Checklist – Make sure you have reviewed this before you file.

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Companion Guide – A helpful guide to walking you through the questions and filling out the I-589 form.

The back of this guide then contains an appendix of additional resources, should you need them. All of these resources – and this guide itself – are available for download on the Novo Legal website at www.novo-legal.com/pro-se-support/ so head over to that page anytime you have any questions that are not answered by this booklet.

We recommend going through this guide in order, from start to finish, for the best experience. That said, skip to the sections you need most if certain portions do not apply to your case.

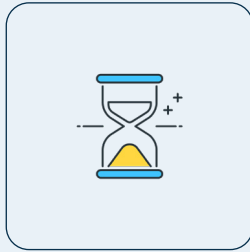


FORM I-589

Quick Explainer

Before we get started, there are four introductory comments that should be made about the asylum application process.

1. Asylum is a humanitarian form of protection from deportation meant for people who are afraid to return to their home country because they believe they will face violence or persecution.
2. "Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal" is the only way to apply for asylum. Unless and until you have filed this form with the government correctly, you have not applied for asylum.
3. The Form I-589 is broken down into three main sections: (A) biographical information about yourself and your family, (B) information about why you are applying for asylum, and (C) other eligibility questions.
4. Form I-589 might be best known as the application for asylum, but it is actually an application for two other types of protection from deportation, too: withholding of removal and protection under the Convention Against Torture. Out of the three, asylum is the best form of protection because it allows you to eventually become a permanent resident of the United States and bring certain family members to the United States – but the other forms of protection are still valuable to save you from having to return to your home country where you are in danger. While the requirements for each vary, the fundamental basis for each form of relief is your fear of returning to your home country.



The One-Year Deadline: File Asylum Within One Year of Arrival

Why this is important:

To ask for asylum in the U.S., you must apply within one year of the last time you entered the country. This means you need to send your asylum application (Form I-589) to the government no later than 365 days after you arrived in the U.S.

If you miss this deadline, the government may reject your case—unless you have a special reason (called an “exception”).

We will explain those reasons below.

How to Count the Deadline:

- Look at the **last date you entered the U.S.**
- If you need help finding out the exact last date you entered, consider looking at any of the following documents (if you have them): Notice to Appear (NTA), parole documents, or the visa stamp in your passport. If your last entry into the United States was unlawful and you cannot remember the exact date, think very hard about the most accurate date possible and then write "approx.." in front of it.
- Count **365 days** from that day
- You must **mail or submit your application before the 365th day**

EXAMPLE:

You entered the U.S. on January 1, 2024

Your deadline is December 31, 2024

Always keep proof of when you mailed your packet (like a postal receipt). This could help if the government says you missed the deadline.

Can You Apply After One Year? Maybe.

You can still apply for asylum after one year if:
Something big changed in your life or your home country after you arrived, or
Something stopped you from applying earlier (like a serious illness, or being a child)

These are called:

- ✓ Changed Circumstances
- ✓ Extraordinary Circumstances

You must also show that you applied as soon as you could after those circumstances happened.

Changed Circumstances: What Changed After You Arrived?

This means something happened after you got to the U.S. that made you more afraid to go back home. The change could be about you or about your country.

EXAMPLE:

Changes in your life:

- You came out as LGBTQ+ after arriving in the U.S.
- You married someone from a different religion.
- You started speaking out against your home government.
- You found out you have a serious illness that exposes you to mistreatment in your home country.

Changes in your country:

A new government took power and now targets people like you.

- A war began or violent group took over.
- A new law punishes people in your religion, political group, or LGBTQ+ identity.

You must explain what changed, and why it puts you in danger now.

You also need to explain why this change did not exist when you first arrived, or how these worsened circumstances place you at a much higher risk of harm than when you left your country.

Extraordinary Circumstances: Why Couldn't You Apply Sooner?

This means you had a very serious reason you couldn't apply on time.

The law gives examples of what counts.

Examples of extraordinary circumstances:

Situation	What it means
Serious illness	You were too sick, injured, or traumatized to apply
You were a child	You were under 18 and didn't have help
Bad legal help	You hired a lawyer who gave you wrong advice, forgot to file your application, or filed your application in the wrong place
TPS or Legal Status	You had Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a visa, parole or other legal status for a while
Your first packet was rejected	You tried to apply on time, but it was sent back and you fixed it quickly
Family or lawyer died	Someone close to you died and that stopped you from applying

You must explain what happened and show you applied within a reasonable time after the problem ended.

If You Missed the One-Year Deadline...

You can still send in your Form I-589, but:

- You **must explain** why you missed the deadline.
- You **should include evidence** related to why you missed the deadline – or evidence that you did, in fact, file on time and the government is wrong - if you have it.
- You **will only be eligible to get “withholding of removal”** or protection under the **Convention Against Torture** if the government doesn't accept your exception.

These other protections are helpful, but they:

- Are more difficult to prove
- Do not give you a green card
- Do not allow you to bring your family later if you end up winning.

What if you didn't know about the one year deadline?

Most of the time, this is not, on its own, a good excuse for not filing your asylum application on time. However, if the one year deadline was never explained to you in a language you understand – for example, when you entered the country or when you had your first hearing at immigration court – then this may help explain your failure to apply. If you didn't know, you should explain that in your application, along with any of the other exceptions that might apply to you.



Who Can Get Asylum in the U.S.?

To win asylum, you must show the U.S. government that:

1. You were harmed in the past or are afraid of being harmed in the future
2. The harm is because of your identity or beliefs
3. You are outside of your home country
4. Your home government cannot or will not protect you

Let's break this down in simple steps.

1. Past Harm or Fear of Future Harm

To qualify for asylum, you must show:

- You were seriously harmed in your home country, **or**
- You are afraid you will be harmed if you go back

This harm is called **persecution**.

What counts as persecution?

Examples of harm severe enough to count as persecution are:

- Being attacked, beaten, or tortured
- Rape or sexual violence
- Being kidnapped
- Death threats
- Serious discrimination or harassment
- Being jailed without reason
- Forced marriage or female genital mutilation (FGM)

You can still qualify even if:

- The harm happened to a family member or someone close to you
- You haven't been harmed yet, but you have a strong reason to believe you will be



Your fear must be real and believable—you will need to explain it and, if possible, show proof.

2. The Harm Must Be “Because Of” a Protected Reason

You must show that you were harmed or fear harm **because of one of these 5 reasons**:

Protected Reason	Examples
Race	Ethnicity, skin color, Indigenous background
Religion	Your beliefs, not having a religion, or converting
Nationality	Your country, tribe, or ethnic group
Political opinion	Speaking out, protesting, being “against” the government
Particular social group	LGBTQ+, women in dangerous societies, victims of abuse, family ties, former jobs (like police or soldiers)

This part is called “**nexus**”—it means there must be a clear connection between the harm and your identity.



IMPORTANT: Even if the persecutor was wrong about who you are, it still counts. If they thought you were gay, for example, and attacked you, that is enough—even if you are not gay.

3. You Must Be Outside of Your Home Country

You cannot apply for asylum while still living in your home country.

You must already be:

- Inside the United States, or
- At a U.S. port of entry (like a border or airport)

4. Your Government Won't Protect You

You must show that your own government cannot or will not help you.

This can mean:

- The government is too weak to stop the people hurting you
- The government is corrupt or working with the people hurting you
- The government is the one hurting you



If you never asked the police for help back home, explain why.

Did you know they wouldn't help? Were you too afraid? That's okay—but tell your story.



What If You're in a "Social Group"?

The fifth category (social group) can be confusing. It's for people who:

- Don't fit into the other four boxes
- Are part of a group that's seen as different, vulnerable, or dangerous in their country

Examples:

- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Survivors of domestic violence or FGM
- People from a targeted family
- People with certain jobs (like journalists, police, or soldiers)

To count, your group must be:

1. Something about you that can't easily change (like gender, family, identity)
2. A group that people in your country recognize as a group
3. Clearly defined (it's easy to tell who's in or out)

If you're not sure, you can describe your group in your own words. The government will decide if it fits.





Who Cannot Get Asylum? (Bars to Asylum)

Even if you meet the main rules for asylum, there are still some things that can disqualify you. These are called “**bars to asylum**.”

If one of these bars applies to you, the government may not let you apply or may deny your case even if you're afraid to go home.

1. You Missed the One-Year Deadline

Even if you meet the main rules for asylum, there are still some things that can disqualify you. These are called “bars to asylum.”

If one of these bars applies to you, the government may not let you apply or may deny your case even if you’re afraid to go home.

2. You Applied Before and Were Denied

You may be barred from applying for asylum again if:

- You **applied in the past**, and
- An **immigration judge or appeals** court gave you a final denial

A denial is final when you 1) have exhausted your available appeals or 2) when you do not file your appeal before the applicable deadline. If USCIS denied your case, an immigration judge will review it before that decision becomes final.



This does not apply if:

- Your asylum case was dismissed or closed without a decision,
- You never had a final ruling on whether you should get asylum
- Circumstances with you or in your home country have changed significantly, and you are now at a higher risk of persecution if you return.



If your old case was dismissed, you can apply again, even using the same facts—just be sure to explain your situation clearly.

3. You Had a Safe Place in Another Country

This bar may apply if:

- You lived in another country before coming to the U.S., and
- You had legal status there (like a visa or residency), and
- You could return to that country safely



This is called “**firm resettlement**.”

If you lived in another country only a short time, or didn't feel safe there either, you can explain why. If you are a citizen of multiple countries, this bar may apply to you unless you are able to establish that you meet the requirements for asylum in each country where you hold citizenship.



4. You Passed Through a “Safe Third Country”

This means you passed through another safe country on your way to the U.S., and that country had an agreement with the U.S. to accept asylum seekers.

Right now, this only applies to **Canada**.

(Other agreements from the past have been canceled—but that could change under new laws.)

5. You Harmed Someone Else

You cannot get asylum if you:

- **Hurt, tortured, or helped hurt** someone else
- Did this **because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group**
- This is sometimes called the “**persecutor bar**.”



If you were forced to help, or were a victim yourself, be sure to explain your situation clearly.

6. You Committed a Serious Crime

You may be barred from asylum if:

- You committed a **serious, non-political crime** (in or outside the U.S.)
- You were **convicted** of a crime in the U.S. that the government believes is dangerous



If you were forced to help, or were a victim yourself, be sure to explain your situation clearly.

7. You're a Security or Terrorism Risk

You cannot get asylum if:

- You are a **threat to U.S. national security**
- You were a **member of a terrorist group**
- You gave **money or support** to a group the U.S. sees as terrorist—even if they forced you



If you gave support because you were threatened or forced, explain that in your application.



What If a Bar Might Apply to You?

If you think one of these bars might apply to you:

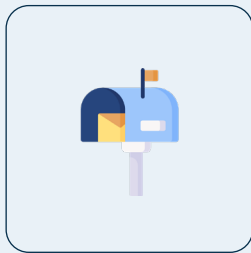
- You can **still send your application**
- But you should **explain your situation** clearly
- If possible, **get help from a lawyer**

Even if you're barred from asylum, you may still be able to ask for other protections like:

- **Withholding of removal** (a different kind of protection, but no green card)
- **Protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT)**

Summary: Bars to Asylum

Bar to Asylum	What It Means	Can You Still Apply?
Missed 1-Year Deadline	You didn't file your asylum application within 1 year of your last arrival in the U.S.	Yes , if you have a good reason (see: extraordinary or changed circumstances)
Previously Denied Asylum	A judge or appeals court gave a final denial on your asylum case	Yes , if something major changed, OR if your last case was dismissed without a decision
Firm Resettlement	You had legal status in another safe country before coming to the U.S.	Maybe — if you can show you weren't truly safe or settled there
Safe Third Country	You passed through a "safe" country that had a special agreement with the U.S. (currently only Canada)	Not if the agreement applies to your case
Harmed Others (Persecutor Bar)	Not if the agreement applies to your case	No — unless you were forced to help or were a victim too
Serious Crime	You were convicted of a serious crime or are seen as a danger to the public	Not eligible for asylum, may still qualify for other protection
Non-Political Crime Abroad	You committed a serious crime outside the U.S. that wasn't for political reasons	Same as above
Security / Terrorism Bar	The government believes you're a security threat or have supported a terrorist group	Not eligible — but explain if you were forced or didn't know



Where and How to File Your Asylum Application

To ask for asylum, you need to fill out and send Form I-589 to the correct government agency.

There are two main places where asylum applications are sent:

1. **The Immigration Court** (called EOIR)
2. **USCIS** (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)

It's very important to send your application to the right place based on your situation. Sending it to the wrong one could delay or harm your case.

First, figure out where your case is

Ask yourself: **Do I already have a case in immigration court?**

You are in immigration court if:

- You were caught by immigration (ICE or Border Patrol), and
- You were given a paper called a Notice to Appear (NTA), and
- That NTA was filed with the court
- You can check your status online using your A-Number at this website:
<https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/>



If your name shows up, and you see a court address listed—then you are in court proceedings. You must file your asylum application with that **immigration court** (*Unaccompanied minors are subject to an exception. See below*)

You are not in immigration court if:

- You've never received an NTA
- You received one, but it was not filed with the court
- You had a case before, but it was dismissed or closed



In these cases, you should file your application with **USCIS**.

If You Are in Immigration Court



File your **Form I-589** with the **immigration court listed in your case**.

What to include in your packet:

- A completed, signed Form I-589
- Any extra pages or evidence you need to explain your answers
- A signed certificate of service (to show you sent a copy to the government lawyer)

You must mail a copy of everything to:

- The court, and
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attorney for your case
- You may also file your application in person at the immigration court. You can do this either at a hearing, or at what is called a “filing window” even when you do not have a hearing scheduled.



You do **not** need to send all your evidence at once.
You'll get more chances to submit evidence later in your court case.

Make sure you keep a copy of your completed, signed application for your own records. If you mail your application, you should confirm with the Court that they have received your application and that there are no problems with its completeness.

You should file a separate application for each member of your family who is in immigration court. Even if your family's claim is based on only one person, the court will require that each person has their own application. This is to make sure everyone remains eligible to receive withholding of removal or CAT protection, if the family does not qualify for asylum.



IMPORTANT: If you are an unaccompanied minor, you must file by mail to USCIS even though your case is with the immigration court.

Who is an unaccompanied minor?

An unaccompanied minor is:

- A person who **was under age 18** when they entered the United States, and
- **Did not have a parent or legal guardian** with them at the time

If You Are NOT in Immigration Court (File with USCIS)

If you are not in court, you will file Form I-589 with USCIS.

There are two ways to file:

1. By mail (always an option)
2. Online, using a USCIS account (not available for everyone)

Special Circumstances – File with the Asylum Vetting Center

Some people **must send their packet to a special address** instead of the regular one.

You must file with the **Asylum Vetting Center** if:

Situation	Example
You applied for asylum before and are applying again	You were denied by USCIS or court, and now reapplying
You were on someone else's application and now applying on your own	You were listed as a child or spouse on another person's asylum form
You and your spouse are filing at the same time	Each person sends their own form
You were on a winning asylum case but didn't get benefits	You're now filing for a "nunc pro tunc" asylum claim

If any of these apply to you, check the latest address at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>



Where to Mail Your Application (USCIS)

USCIS has different mailing addresses depending on:

- Which state you live in
- If you're filing regularly or under "special circumstances"

The official USCIS website always has the most up-to-date addresses:

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>

This guide's Appendix also lists addresses, but please note that these are only as up to date as the guide itself. It would be best to double check at the website listed.



Keep Proof of Filing

When you send your application:

- Use certified mail or a mailing service with tracking
- Save the receipt from the mailing service you use
- Make a full copy of everything you send

This protects you in case the government says you didn't file on time.

What to Send with Your Asylum Application

(Supporting Documents & Evidence)

When you send your asylum application, you should also send documents that help prove your case. These documents are called evidence or corroboration.

The rules are different depending on whether you are filing:

- **With the immigration court, or**
- **With USCIS**

If You Are Filing with the Immigration Court (EOIR)

The court works in steps.

At first, you only need to send:

- Your **Form I-589** (completed and signed)
- Any **extra pages or declarations** you wrote
- A **cover page**
- A **certificate of service** (shows you also sent a copy to the government lawyer)



The court will give you deadlines later to submit your evidence

You do not have to send everything at once.

If You Are Filing With USCIS

USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) handles cases **for people who are not in immigration court.**

There are two ways to file:

1. **By mail** (available to everyone)
2. **Online** (available to some, not all)

If you are an **unaccompanied minor**, you **must file by mail**.



Unaccompanied minor means you entered the U.S. while under age 18 and without a parent or legal guardian.

Even if you're now older than 18, you may still count as an unaccompanied minor if that was your situation at the time you arrived.

When to Send Your Evidence (Important!)

USCIS prefers that you send your supporting documents **together with your application**. But if you're not ready, **you can still send more evidence later**.

Just make sure any extra evidence arrives **at least 7 to 10 business days before your interview**.

- If you filed by mail, send the documents to your local asylum office
- If you filed online, upload the documents to your USCIS account



This rule helps make sure your documents are reviewed in time for your interview.

What to Include (USCIS)

Document Type	Example
Proof of Identity	Passport, national ID card, birth certificate, visa, I-94, work permit
Proof of Relationship (if including family)	Marriage certificate, children's birth certificates
Written Declaration	A full story in your own words, typed or written clearly, translated to English
Proof of Past Harm or Fear	Medical records, police reports, photos, letters, death certificates
Country Conditions	News articles, government reports, NGO reports showing the danger in your country
Proof of Changed or Extraordinary Circumstances (if applying after 1 year)	Medical records, TPS approval notices, proof of changed laws, or evidence of status changes

Language Rule: Translations Required

If any document is not in English, you must:

1. Include a full English translation, and
2. Attach a signed certification from the translator that says:

"I certify that I am fluent in English and [your language], and that this is a true and complete translation." (Signed and dated by the translator)



If you send a document in another language without a translation, USCIS will not count it.

Optional but Helpful: Cover Sheet + Index

Create a cover page that lists:

- Your name and A-number
- What's inside the packet (like a table of contents)
- If you're applying late, **mention your reason right at the top**



Also include an evidence index with short descriptions of each item (example: "Photo of scar from 2022 attack")

Final Review Before You Submit Your Asylum Application

You're almost done! But before you send your packet to the government, take a little time to review everything. This can help you catch small mistakes—and avoid big problems.

Task	What to Check
Correct Version of the Form	You used the latest Form I-589 from uscis.gov/i-589
Signed the Application	You (and your preparer, if you had one) signed all required pages
All Pages Included	Your packet includes every page of the form, even if some were blank
Extra Pages Are Labeled	Any extra sheets or Supplement B pages say which question they're answering
Translations Are Certified	Every non-English document includes a proper translation and translator's certificate

Task	What to Check
A Copy Was Made	You made a complete copy of everything for your own records
Mailing Address Is Correct	You are sending your packet to the right agency (USCIS or court) and the correct address
You Included Supporting Documents	Your packet includes every page of the form, even if some were blank
Extra Pages Are Labeled	Even if not required, you included as much evidence as possible to help your case
Certificate of Service (if filing in court)	If filing in immigration court, you added a signed certificate of service to show you mailed a copy to lawyer
You Have Proof of Mailing	You plan to use certified mail or a tracked delivery service, and you'll keep the receipt

After You Mail It

Once you send your asylum packet:

- Keep your tracking number
- Save the mailing receipt
- Watch for a receipt notice from USCIS or the immigration court

That receipt proves the government got your application—and that you filed on time.

If you move after you file your asylum application, **you must update your address** with the immigration court or USCIS to ensure you continue receiving any notices or mail associated with your case. If you are in immigration court, you can do this with **Form EOIR-33** (available to file online at <https://respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov/en/forms/eoir33ic/>). If you applied for asylum with USCIS, you can do this with **Form AR-11** (available at <https://www.uscis.gov/ar-11>).



Appendix Overview

Appendix A: Helpful Links & Resources

Topic	Link
Download Form I-589	uscis.gov/i-589
Check asylum eligibility info	uscis.gov/asylum
EOIR Case Status (Court Lookup)	acis.eoir.justice.gov
Find USCIS Asylum Office	egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asy
Address change with USCIS	uscis.gov/addresschange
Help in your language (Form I-589 translations)	uscis.gov/i-589-translations (scroll down to “Form and Instruction Translations”)
Novo Legal Pro Se Hub	www.novo-legal.com/pro-se-support

Appendix B: Mailing Addresses

USCIS Asylum Applications (if NOT in immigration court)

Go to: uscis.gov/i-589 > **Where to File** tab

Mailing addresses depend on the state you live in and whether you’re in a special category (re-filing, UAC, etc.)

Asylum Vetting Center (for special USCIS cases like re-filings):

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
USCIS Asylum Vetting Center
P.O. Box 57100
Atlanta, GA 30308-0509

Immigration Court (if in court proceedings)

Use the EOIR Portal to find your court’s address:
acis.eoir.justice.gov

Appendix C: Important Deadlines

Action	Deadline
File Form I-589	Within 1 year of your last arrival to the U.S. (unless you qualify for an exception)
Submit extra evidence (USCIS cases)	At least 7-10 business days before your interview
Biometrics (fingerprints)	You will get a notice after USCIS receives your application
Court filing evidence deadlines	Will be set by your immigration judge at future hearings

Appendix D: Cover Page & Certificate of Service Templates

These are helpful for immigration court filings.



I-589 Companion Form Guide

How to Fill Out the Asylum Application (Form I-589)

For people applying without a lawyer

Before You Start

- Use the **most recent version** of the form: uscis.gov/i-589
- Type or write clearly in black ink
- If a question doesn't apply to you, write "N/A"
- If you don't know the answer, write "Unknown" (if that's true)
- Every page must be included—even blank ones

Part A – Information About You and Your Family (Pages 1–4)

Page 1: About You

	Question	What it Means/What to Write
	Box at the top	Always check the box for Convention Against Torture
1.	A-Number	Write your A-number (starts with "A") if you have one. If not, write "N/A"
2.	SSN	If you have a real Social Security Number, write it. If not, write "N/A"
3.	USCIS Online Account	If you have one, write the number. If not, write "N/A"
4-6.	Name	Write your full legal name. If no middle name, leave it blank
7.	Other names used	Write other names, including nicknames, maiden names, or aliases
8.	U.S. Address	Where you live right now. This must be in the U.S.
9.	Mailing Address	Where you get mail, if different. Use "In care of" if someone else gets your mail

	Question	What it Means/What to Write
10.	Gender	Choose one. If your gender is not listed, explain in an attachment
11.	Marital Status	Single, married, divorced, or widowed
12.	Date of Birth	MM/DD/YYYY format
13.	Place of Birth	City and country
14.	Citizenship	Country you are a citizen of
15.	Nationality at Birth	What your citizenship was when you were born
16.	Race/Ethnic Group	Example: Black, Indigenous, Garifuna, Tutsi, Quechua, etc.
17.	Religion	Be specific (e.g. Catholic, Sunni Muslim, atheist). If none, write "None"
18.	Court Status	A – Not in court, B – Currently in court, C – Was in court before
19a.	Last Left Country	Date you last departed your home country
19b.	I-94 Number	If you received one upon entry, list it. If not, write "N/A"
19c.	Entry Info	For every time you entered the U.S.: list the date, place, and visa type or "no status"
20-22	Passport Info	Country, number, expiration date. If you don't know write "Unknown"
23.	Native Language	Your first/best language
24.	Fluent in English?	Only check "Yes" if you're fully fluent
25.	Other Fluent Languages	List any others you speak fluently

Pages 2–3: Spouse and Children

Only fill these pages out if:

- You are married, or
- You have children anywhere in the world

If you do not have children, write “0” on the question, and skip the boxes below For Each Person	What to Include
Full name, A-number, passport number, DOB	If known. If not, write “Unknown”
City/Country of birth, citizenship, race, gender	Be specific—especially if identity matters to your case
Are they in the U.S.?	If yes, you must include more info about how/when they entered
Immigration court case?	If yes, mark it. If no, or unknown, write “No”
Include them in your asylum case?	Mark “Yes” only if they are in the U.S. and need protection too

Page 4: Background Info

You’ll write:

- Your last address before coming to the U.S.
- Every address you’ve lived at for the past 5 years
- Your education history
- Your job history for the last 5 years (including noting any periods of unemployment)
 - Include in this list places you worked even if you did not have work authorization at the time at the time you worked there.
- Names, birthplaces, and current location of your parents and siblings

Part B – Your Asylum Claim (Pages 5–6)

This is where you tell your story.

	Question	What to Do
	Check the boxes	Check every reason that applies to your case—and always check “Torture Convention”
1A.	Past Harm	If you were harmed before, describe who did it, what they did, and why
1B	Fear of Future Harm	If you’re afraid of going back, explain why, who will harm you, and what might happen
2.	Arrests Outside the U.S.	If you or your family were ever arrested in another country, explain here
3A	Groups/Orgs	If you or your family were members of political, religious, student, or military groups, write about it
3B	Still active?	Say if you’re still part of those groups today
4	Fear of Torture	If you believe you would be tortured, explain who would do it and why



TIPS:

- Write clearly and with detail
- Include dates, names, and what happened
- If you need more space, attach a Supplement B or your full declaration

Part C – Other Information (Pages 6–8)

This section is about extra rules that could affect your eligibility.

	Question	What to Say
1.	Previous asylum cases	If you or family members ever applied before, explain what happened
2A	Countries you passed through	List where you stopped before entering the U.S., even if you were only there for a day before moving on.
2B	Status in other countries?	Did you live somewhere else legally or get asylum there?
3	Harmed others?	Say “NO” unless you were forced to help. If “Yes” explain completely
4.	Returned home after harm?	If yes, explain why you returned, how long you were back before leaving again, and whether you experienced any harm in that time you were back. This can hurt your case without a good reason.
5.	Filed late?	If you are filing after 1 year in the U.S., explain why and what exception applies in your case.
6.	Arrests in the U.S.?	List immigration or criminal history, and explain each one. Be honest. Be prepared to present evidence of these charges, and whether/how they have been resolved.

Part D & E – Signatures (Pages 9–10)

Section	What to Do
Part D – Applicant Signature	You must sign your form! If under 14, a parent/guardian signs for you
Part E – Preparer Info	If someone helped you complete the form, they must fill out and sign this section
Pages 11–12	Sign even if they are blank pages (to confirm you reviewed everything)

