

## Preparing for your AOS Marriage Interview

The last step of the green card process for couples is the interview. The interviews vary widely based on the officer and the case. We will do our best to get you ready for the toughest interview, while still hoping that it will be relatively short and smooth.

Both spouses must attend the interview, which will be scheduled about 3 to 4 weeks in advance. Once we have the interview notice, we will be in touch to set up an interview prep call or meeting, ask for updated evidence of your financial situation and your relationship, and see if you want to have an attorney at the interview.

A common question is whether you need an attorney at the interview. You can discuss this at the marriage interview prep meeting with your attorney. Having an attorney may make the case more likely to be resolved at the interview, may make the experience a bit easier for you, and may make the officer a bit more likely to be polite. However, we have had many couples go to interviews on their own.

### **Please read the following before your Marriage Interview Preparation with the attorney.**

**When you go to the interview, please bring:**

- interview notice
- identification for each of you (we recommend unexpired passports and driver's licenses if available – if the addresses on your driver's' licenses are different please try to fix this, or let the attorney know).
- your original marriage certificate
- your original birth certificates
- applicant's immigration history. Bring as much as you can. Some officers like to see old passports and visa documents.

We have filed the case with copies of all documents – we ask you to bring the originals because it is possible the officer can ask to see them.

The USCIS Field Office is a secure federal building so you have to go through security as you would in an airport. Try not to bring items that will make this more complicated, such as liquids,

electronics, etc. Arrive to the appointment early (at least 30 minutes before). Prepare to be there several hours. When you get through security, check in at the window, and offer the interview prep package we have sent you so the officer can review it ahead of time.

We suggest sitting in the waiting room near the door where they call people in – that way it is easier to understand the names called. Once you are called in to the interview room, you will remain standing. The officer will ask you to raise your right hand and promise to tell the truth. Then, you will be asked for photo identification.

During your interview, let the Officer lead. Give simple, one sentence answers. Most of the questions will probably be the forms that we have emailed to you. Don't worry if you hear an officer asking you if you have been involved in hijacking, drug dealing, prostitution or gambling. They are supposed to ask everyone these questions.

If the Officer has more questions, he or she will ask. These officers handle about 8-10 of these interviews per day, and can get confused or side-tracked if you give too much information. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know", "I don't remember" or are "unsure" rather than to give a statement and later find out the facts weren't accurate. Just be honest – you may not know every answer or remember every date in the pressure of the interview. For relationship questions in particular, don't worry if you do not know an answer. The officers are looking for honesty and that you clearly know each other.

Try to be aware of how you react in tense situations – if you tend to talk quickly, slow down. If you tend to talk quietly, speak up.

Please make note of your Interviewing Officer's name. This will help if a follow-up is necessary. Keep in mind that these officers may get lied to or yelled at every week – these are front line jobs. If the officer seems grumpy or negative, just be polite and respectful.

**At the end of your interview, there are a few possible outcomes:**

(A) The Officer will tell applicants that the case will be recommended for approval and your Green Card will be mailed in the next few weeks. Be sure to confirm the address on file for sending the green card.

(B) You may be given a written request for more information on Form I-72. Please send us a copy of the notice, and we can figure out together how to respond. We can either send in the information requested, or provide a legal response.

(C) The Officer may say that a decision cannot be made that day. That could happen for many reasons, such as a junior officer who needs to consult a supervisor, the computers are down, or a piece of the file has not arrived yet at the office.

Your case will not be denied at the interview. Even if you leave the interview feeling that it did not go well, talk to us before you assume the worst. Tell us what happened, and send us any paperwork.

If you have been married less than two years at the time the green card is approved, you will get a conditional green card. Near the end of the two years, you must file an application to make the green card permanent. So, even after the interview, keep a running file about your relationship – that will make it easier to prepare the application in two years.

Three years after the initial green card is approved, you may be eligible for US citizenship if you are married to a US citizen. That application will also require some recent evidence of your relationship.

#### For the marriage interview package:

**Please note that not all of the following examples may be applicable to your case. Every couple will have different joint documentation, these are just examples, not requirements. Please prepare as much as possible and mail or email to your legal team as far in advance of your interview.**

#### Examples of Documentation of your marriage:

- Copies of any recent evidence of shared assets or joint financial obligations together (examples: bank statements, credit cards, loans, utility bills, phone bills, etc.)
- Copies of recent documentation showing joint residence (examples: letter from landlord noting both of you are tenants of an apartment, copy of joint rental lease, rent receipts or canceled checks showing rent paid, documentation of mortgage in both of your names)
- Copies of recent documentation regarding jointly held health, life, or auto insurance
- Recent greeting cards, invitations, letters or any other correspondence addressed to both of you at your joint addresses
- Cards, Letters, emails, or written notes to one another throughout your relationship.
- Photographs (about 10) including some from your wedding as well as other events of the two of you together throughout your relationship, including photos of the two of you with other people (Please label photos with names, dates, and places)

- **\*\*Affidavits are not necessary unless you do not have many joint documents, as listed above.**

Affidavits from (2-3) sworn to by people who know both of you and have personal knowledge of your relationship (including family members). The affidavits should contain the name and full address, date and place of birth, as well as the relationship to you or your spouse. Each affidavit must be signed and notarized and should include a color copy of a photo ID. **We will send you a template if you feel you do not have many joint documents**, and we gladly will review them as well.

- Updated financial Information: Copies of the Petitioner's most recent pay statements, most recent Tax Returns (if applicable; please discuss with your legal team if you are unsure).