Part 3: How to File Online

2.5 How Do I File My Benefit Request Online?

The Online Setup Assistant, a USCIS ELIS system tool, will guide you step by step through the entire e-filing process.

For the Form I-539, you will be asked to provide information or answer questions that appear in the following categories:

- About You
- Benefit Request Type
- Eligibility Information
- Beneficiary Information
- Supplemental Biographic Information
- Evidence
- Preparer

Directed by your responses to questions, the Online Setup Assistant will take you to various fields that you must complete.

Once you provide all requested information and evidence, you will be asked to review your request and follow the steps to sign, pay for and submit your benefit request.

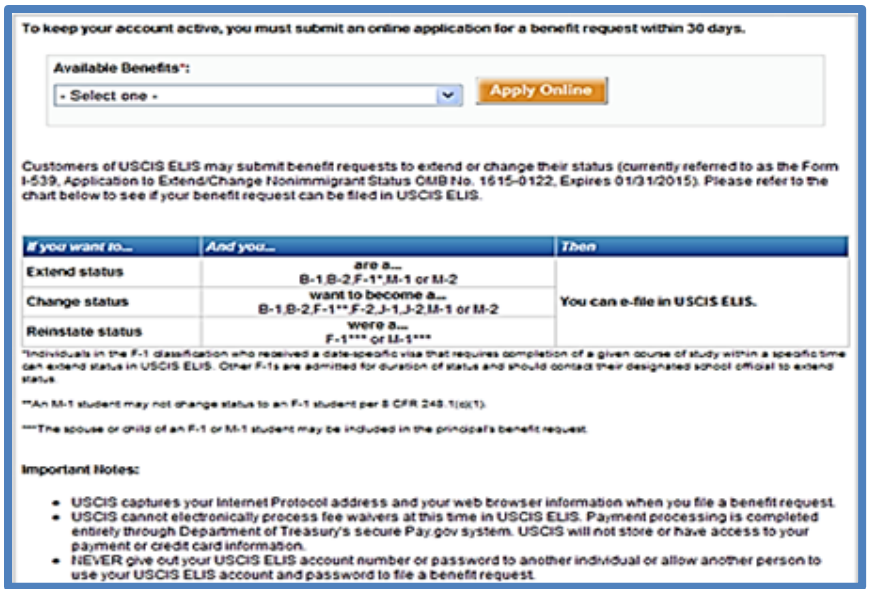
The next chapter provides instructions for completing your I-539 online. These instructions are linked to each pertinent Online Setup Assistant screen. Also, you can access the full instructions at any time, as you complete your request, by visiting www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis.

NOTE: As with the instructions on the paper version of Form I-539, any instructions provided in USCIS ELIS are deemed to be incorporated into the regulations and have the force of law.

3.0 Filing Instructions

3.1 Apply Online

Start the application process by selecting the type of benefit request you are going to file. For Form I-539, select “Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status”.



3.2 About You

In this section, you will be asked to provide information about yourself. This includes your full legal name, current physical address, current mailing address (if different from your physical one), contact preferences, biographic information and a valid identity document.

Please note: You may have an attorney or accredited representative complete this section on your behalf.

3.2.1 USCIS Account Information

1. You should receive a unique USCIS ELIS account number in the mail after you create your account. Enter your 12-digit USCIS ELIS account number (e.g., “0011-2233-4455”) as provided on your USCIS notice.

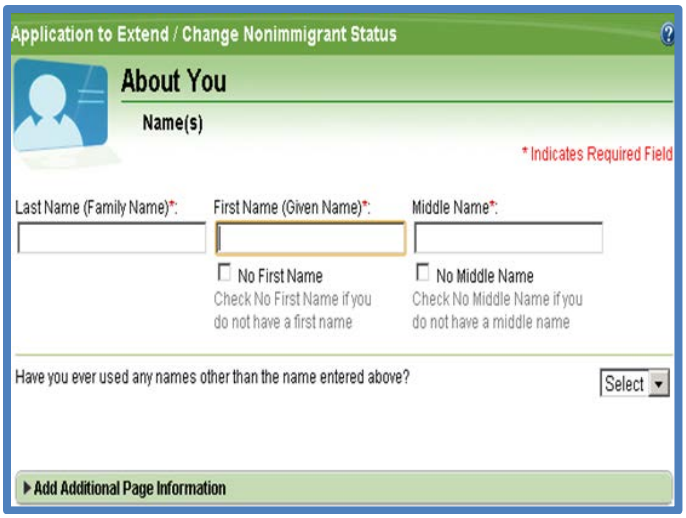
2. If you would like to add additional information that may be relevant to determining your eligibility for the benefit request, provide comments in the additional space provided.

3.2.2 Name(s)

Full Legal Name

1. You must use your full legal name for USCIS records and documents. The name you provide must be the same that appears on your passport, birth certificate or other government-issued identity document.

2. You can scan and upload the documents that establish your identity.

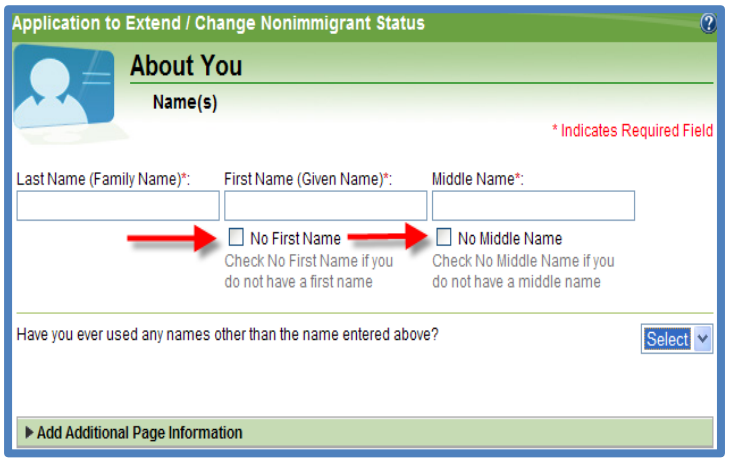


Name Changes

1. If your name has changed due to marriage, divorce, naturalization or adoption, or through a court order, you must submit evidence of the legal name change.

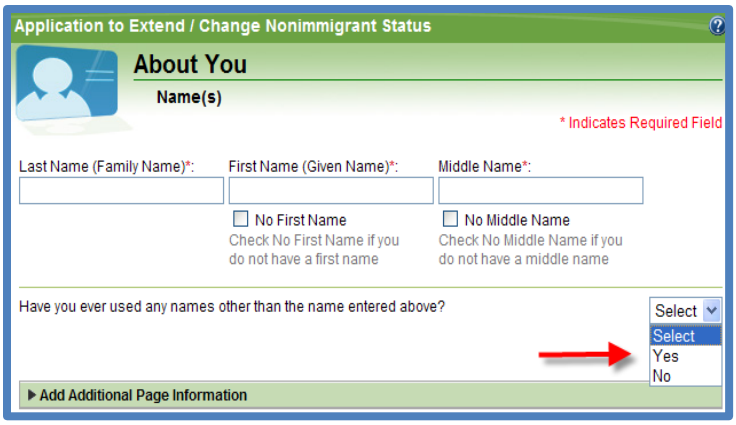
2. The following sets of terms are often used interchangeably:
   (1) “Family name”, “surname”, and “last name”
   (2) “Given name” and “first name”
   (3) “Middle name” and “second name”

3. If you have no first name, select “No first name”. If you have no middle name, select “No middle name”.



Other Names Used

1. If you have ever used any other names, select “Yes”.

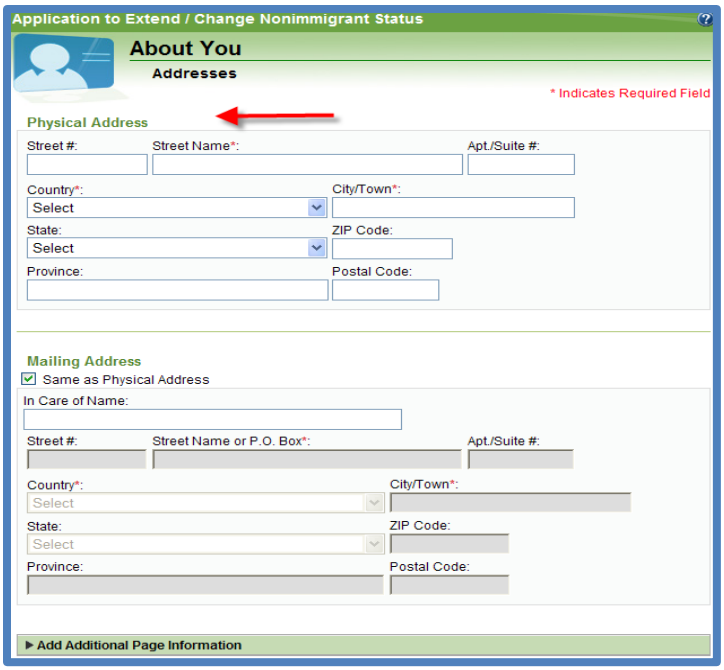


2. You must provide any names you previously used, including nicknames, aliases, maiden name, part of a first or last name, or a shortened or altered version of a legal name. Examples: Kate used in place of Catherine (given name), William used in place of Guillermo (given name), or Rama used in place of Ramachandran (family name).

3.2.3 Addresses

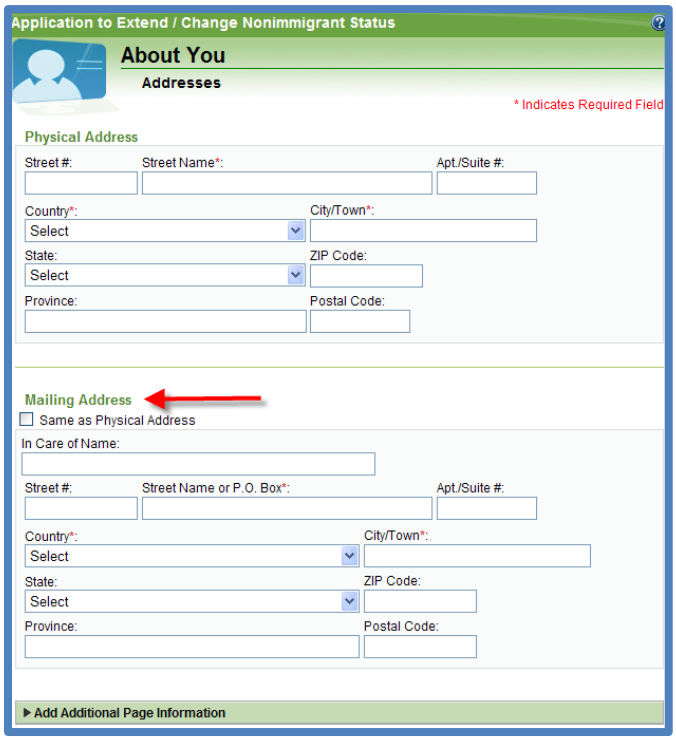
Current Physical Address in the United States

You must provide USCIS with your current physical address in the United States. This physical address may not be a Post Office Box (P.O. Box) or an "in care of" (c/o) address.

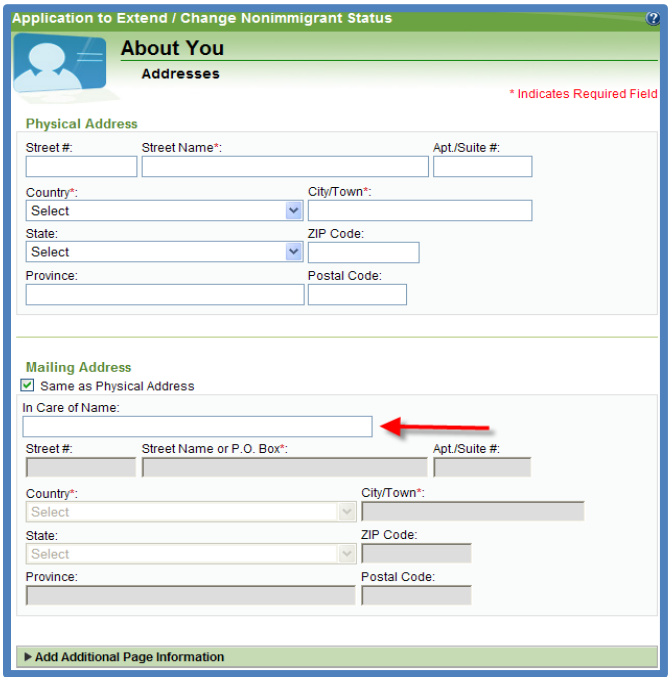


Mailing Address

1. If your U.S. mailing address differs from your current physical address in the United States, please provide your mailing address in the spaces provided. This may be a Post Office Box (P.O. Box) address if that is how you receive your mail.



2. If your mail will be sent to you in care of someone other than yourself, include an “in care of” (c/o) name as part of your mailing address.



Foreign Addresses

USCIS will not mail any notices or decisions to a foreign address. However, you may provide USCIS with your foreign address for informational purposes. In the future, USCIS will expand USCIS ELIS to include electronic filing of benefit requests that may be adjudicated overseas and/or allow USCIS to mail notices or decisions to an applicant’s foreign address. USCIS will notify customers when this feature is available for use.

You can provide your most recent foreign address, if applicable, under the “Supplemental Biographic Information -- Residence History” section of your benefit request. This section requests address information for each place you have lived during the past 5 years, starting with the most recent. If you choose to provide USCIS with your foreign address, please follow the steps below:

1. If your residence was not within the United States or a U.S. territory, provide your address in the address fields.

2. Select your country from a pull-down menu. You must also provide the province and postal code (if applicable). If your country was known by a different name when you resided there (for example, “Soviet Union” in the past, “Kazakhstan” today), include the present name of your country in the space available to type in a country name.

3.2.4 Communication Preferences

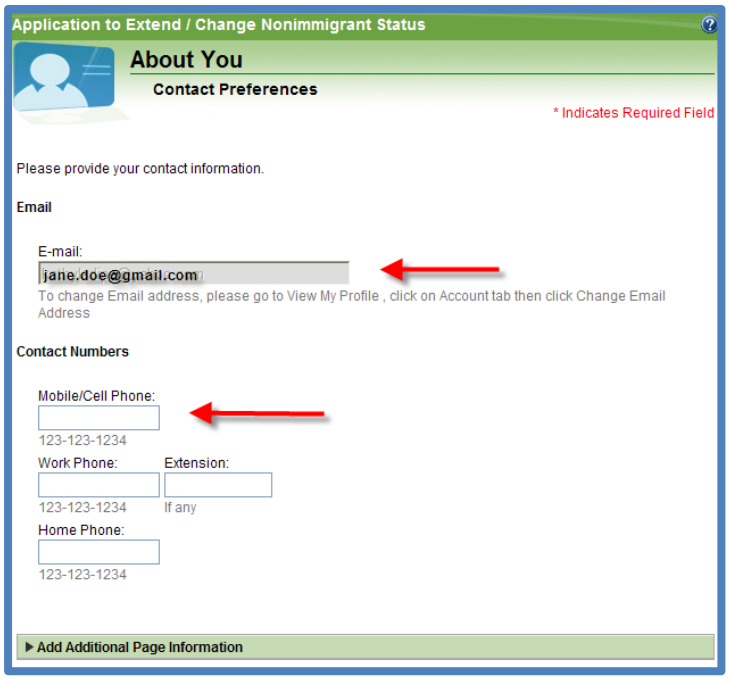
USCIS will send official notices or decisions generated in USCIS ELIS via U.S. postal mail unless you request electronic notification or if you do not provide a physical and/or mailing address in the United States. USCIS notices are official documents from USCIS that require your attention and include your personal information. Examples of USCIS notice include Requests for Evidence, Approval Notices, Account Creation Notices and Denial Notices.

Electronic Notification
When you create your account in USCIS ELIS and include your e-mail address, USCIS will use this information as permission to send an E-notification to you if you do not provide a physical and/or mailing address in the United States. If you choose to be notified electronically, USCIS will notify you via e-mail or Short Message Service (SMS)/text messaging to view your account for recent updates. Examples of USCIS electronic notifications include e-mail messages or text messages sent to the e-mail address you used to create your USCIS ELIS account.

The e-mail notification or text message does not grant any immigration status or benefit. A copy of the e-mail or text message is not evidence the USCIS has granted you any lawful immigration status or benefit and cannot be used as supporting evidence for other immigration benefits.

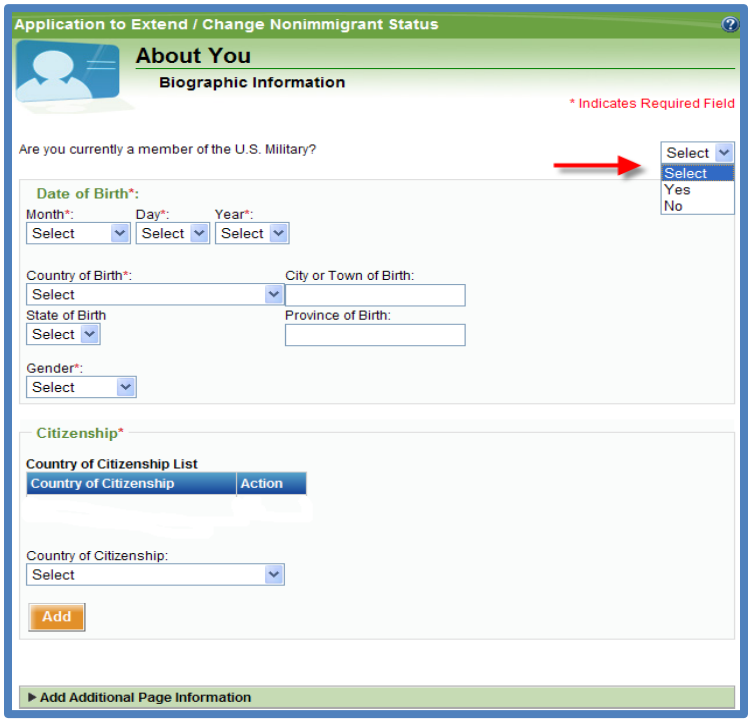
USCIS assumes no legal responsibility for your costs to receive e-mail and/or text messages. USCIS will not reimburse you for any costs related to E-Notification. E-mail or text messages that cannot be delivered will not be retransmitted.

Even if you request electronic notification, USCIS will only send proof of benefit documents through regular U.S. postal mail to a physical or mailing address in the United States. These documents provide evidence of status or employment authorization (for example, a newly issued Form I-94 or employment authorization card). USCIS will notify you when a document is sent via U.S. postal mail.



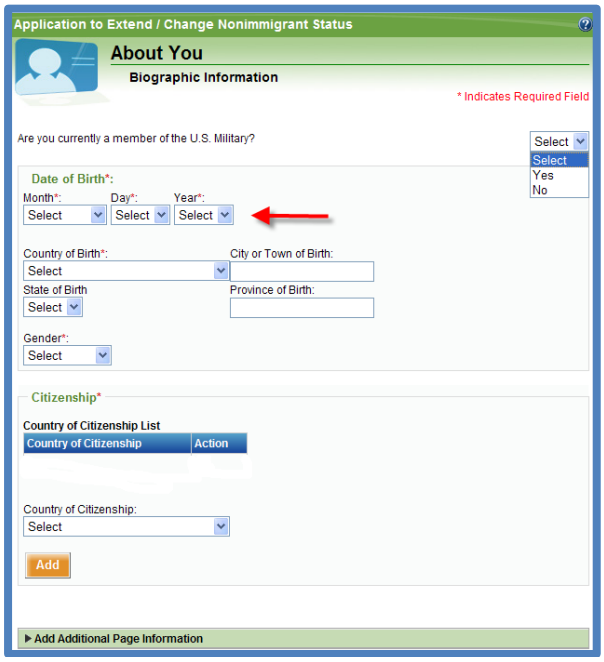
3.2.5 Biographic Information

Current Member of the U.S. Military
Indicate whether you are currently a member of the U.S. military.



Date of Birth

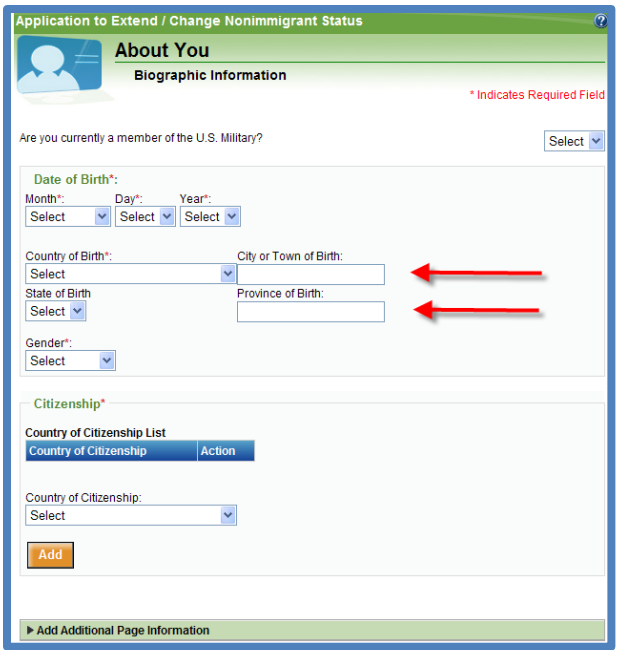
Enter your date of birth using the month-day-year format (mm/dd/yyyy), even if your birth certificate or government-issued identity document uses a different format.



Place of Birth

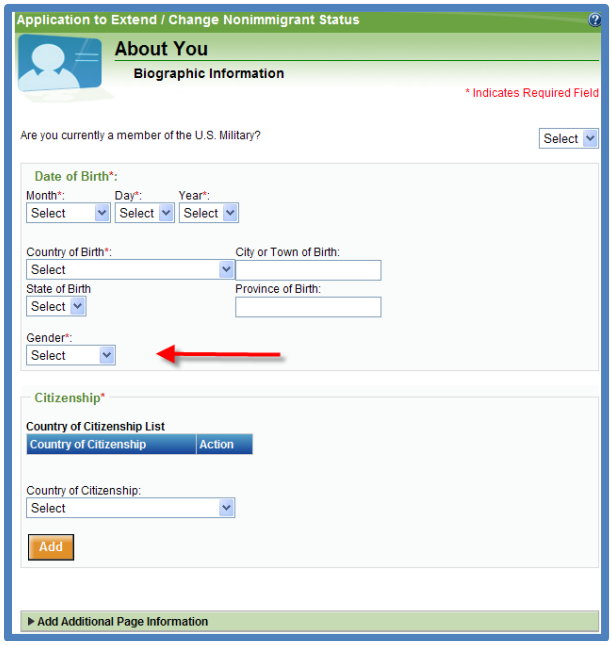
1. Provide your place of birth as it is shown on your birth certificate. Please be sure to include the city, state, county, province, and country of birth in the fields provided.

2. If your country was known by a different name at the time of your birth, select “Other” and insert the name of the country at the time of your birth in the additional space provided.



Gender

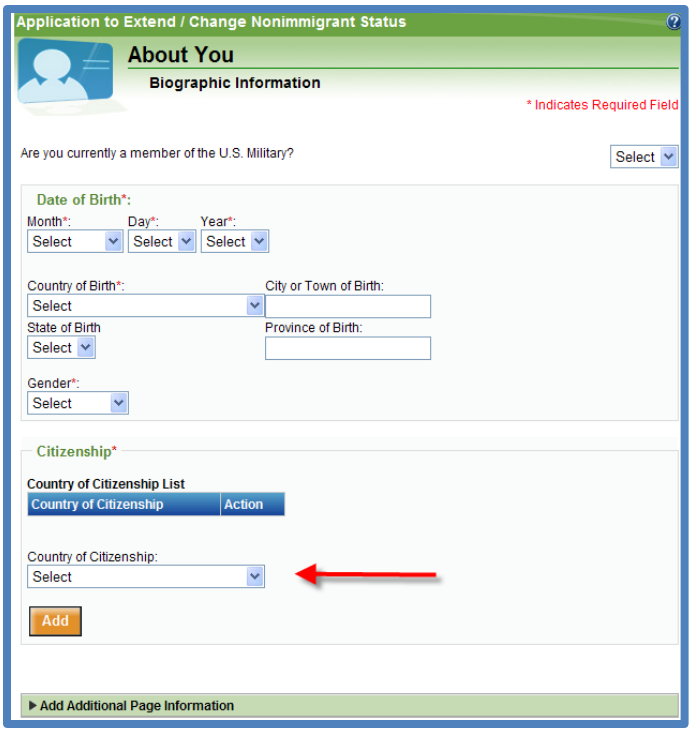
Provide your gender in the space provided (male or female).



Country of Citizenship

1. Provide the present name of the country of your citizenship.

2. If you hold dual citizenship or are a citizen of multiple countries, list all of the countries where you have been (or still are) considered a citizen.



3.2.6 Immigration

Immigration Status

1. Provide the specific immigration status you currently hold.

2. If you are no longer in a valid immigration status because you have stayed past your authorized period of stay, enter the date your authorized period of stay ended in the field provided.

3. If you do not have a valid immigration status because you entered the country without having been inspected and admitted or paroled into the United States at a port of entry, indicate “EWI” (for Entry Without Inspection) in the field provided.

4. If you have a valid and current immigration document that was issued to you by USCIS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection or the Executive Office for Immigration Review at the Department of Justice, provide the immigration status shown on that document.

Entry into the United States

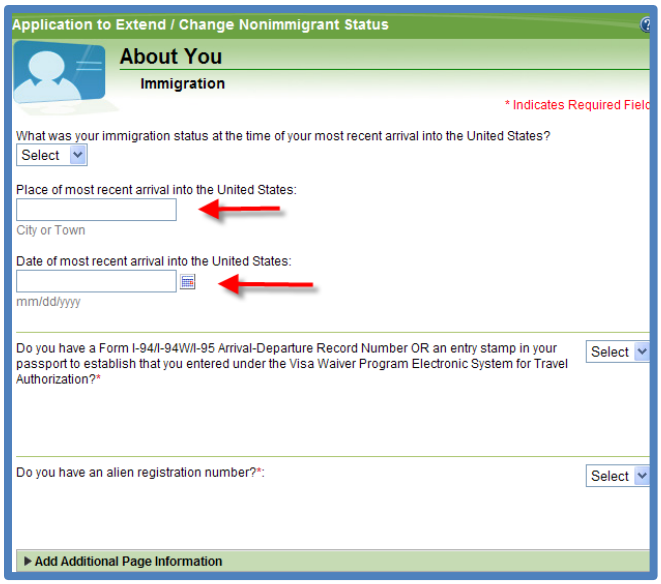
1. Indicate the specific immigration status you obtained when you last entered the United States. If you are not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR) of the United States, your status can usually be found on the Form I-94 issued to you at the U.S. port of entry, if one was provided.

2. If you have been to the United States previously, you must provide the number of times you have entered the U.S. and your immigration status upon each entry. (For example, if you entered the U.S. as a B-2 nonimmigrant visitor twice, in March 1994 and July 2010, at the port of entry in San Ysidro select B-2 from the drop down menu or type “B-2” into the space provided)

3. Provide additional information (such as prior entries and departures) in the additional space provided.

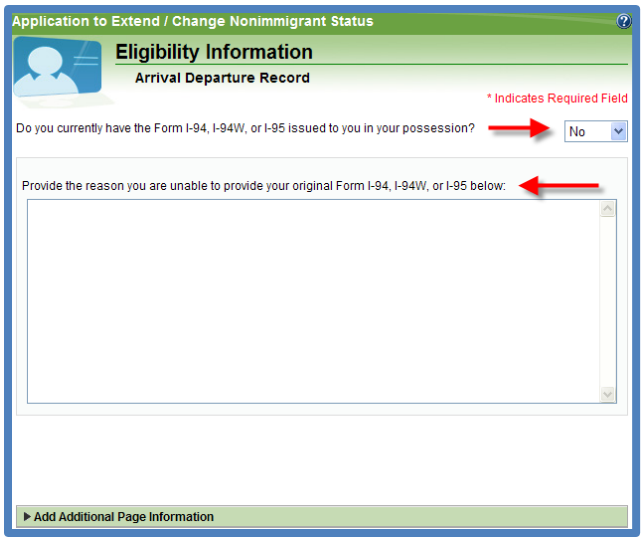
Most Recent Arrival (Arrival-Departure Record)

1. With the exception of Canadian visitors, most nonimmigrants are given a Form I-94, Arrival and Departure Record; a Form I-94W, Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Form; or a Form I-95, Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document, at the time of their admission to the United States and when they change or extend their status.



2. If you were issued a Form I-94, I-94W or I-95 and still have it in your possession, provide your Arrival-Departure Record Number.

3. If you were issued a Form I-94, I-94W or I-95 but are no longer in possession of it due to loss, theft, mutilation or damage, explain why you don't have it.



4. If you are a Canadian citizen who entered the United States as a visitor for business or pleasure, select “B1/B2”.

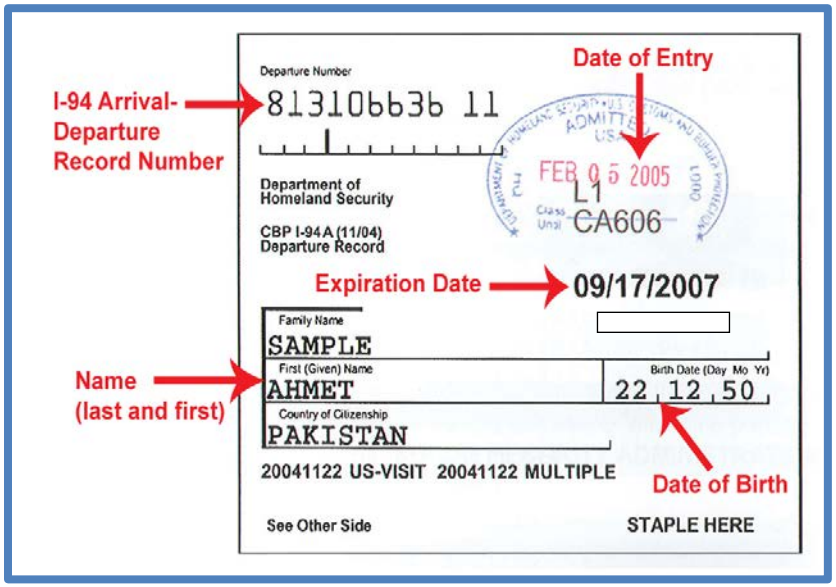
5. If you entered the country without being admitted to the United States at a port of entry (without inspection, admission or parole), indicate “EWI” (Entered Without Inspection) in the field provided.

6. When filing your benefit request, submit a scanned copy of the Form I-94, I-94W or I-95 as evidence of your status.

Expiration of the Period of Admission

1. Enter the expiration date using the month-day-year format (mm/dd/yyyy).

The picture below shows where you can find the expiration date on your Form I-94.



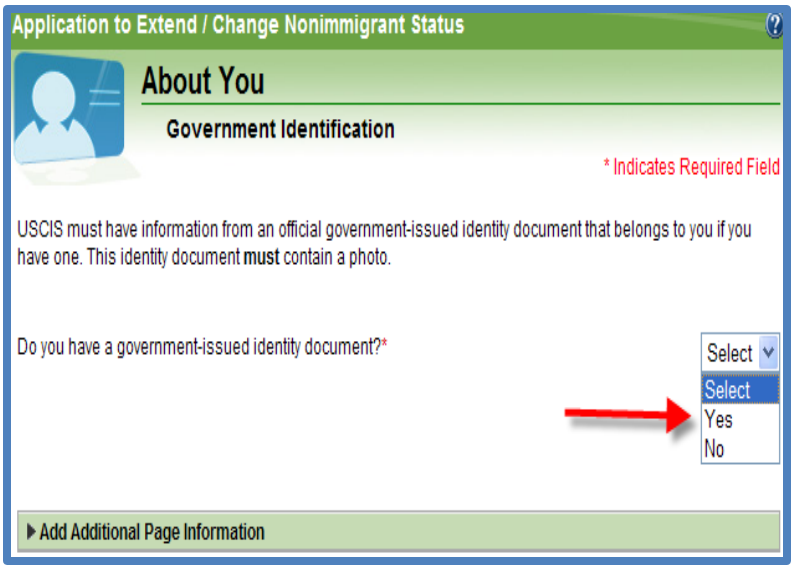
2. If you entered the United States as a student, you were probably admitted for "duration of status (D/S). If so, select D/S and then enter the date you were admitted into the United States for D/S, but leave the expiration date blank.

3. If you entered the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and you were admitted via the VWP Electronic System for Travel Authorization, your passport should contain a U.S. admission stamp with your class of admission ("WT/WB") and expiration date. Enter the date in the space provided.

3.2.7 Government Identification

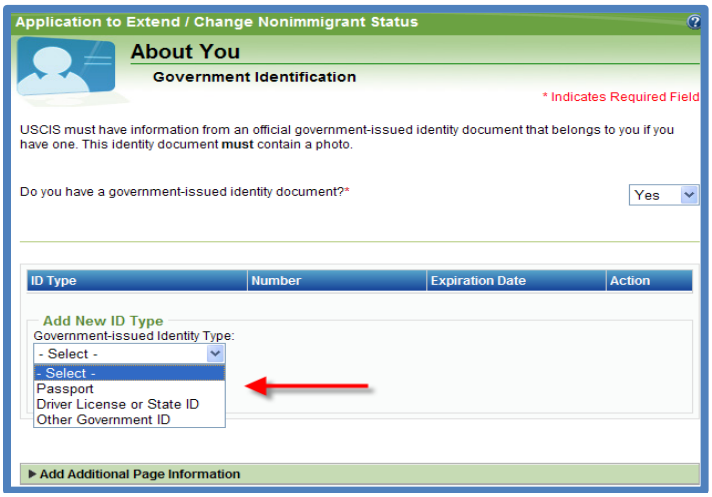
U.S. Government-Issued Identity Card or Document

1. If you have an identity card or document issued by the U.S. government, select "Yes". This identity card or document must contain your photograph.

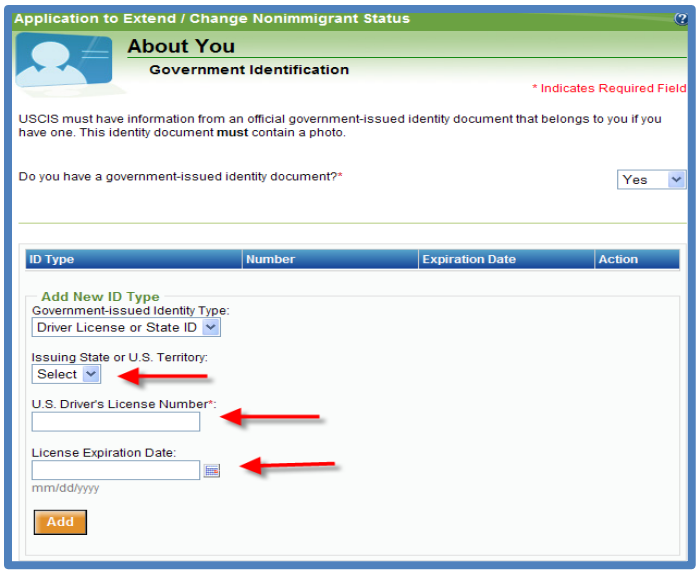


2. Provide information from at least one of the documents listed. You will be required to scan and upload a copy of the document(s) into USCIS ELIS.

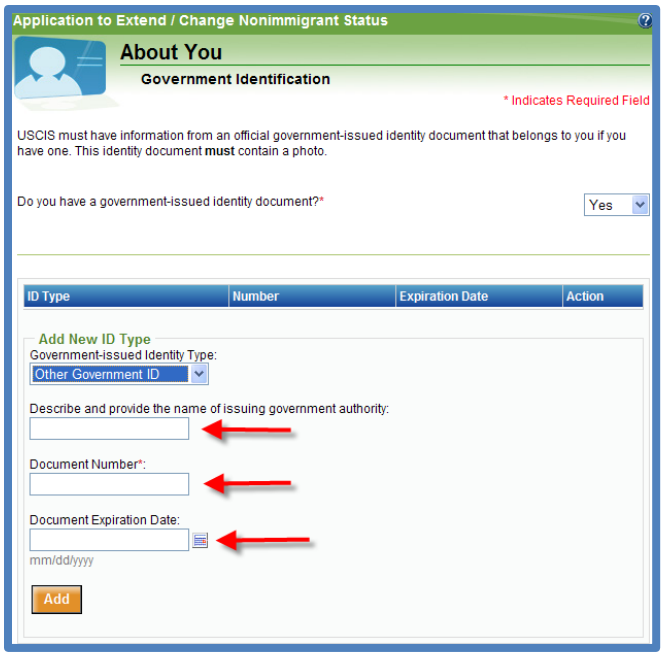
3. If you have a U.S.-issued passport, select “Passport” and provide the name of the issuing country (United States), passport number and expiration date of the document in the spaces provided.



4. If you have a driver's license issued by a U.S. state or territory, select "U.S. Driver's License" and provide the name of the issuing U.S. state or territory, driver's license number and the expiration date in the spaces provided.



5. If you have any other U.S. government-issued photo identification document, select “Other Government-Issued Photo ID” and describe the type of document. Provide any available document number and the expiration date in the space provided.



Foreign Government-Issued Identity Card or Document

1. If you have an identity card or document issued by a foreign government, select "Other Government-Issued Photo ID." This identity card or document must contain a photo of you.

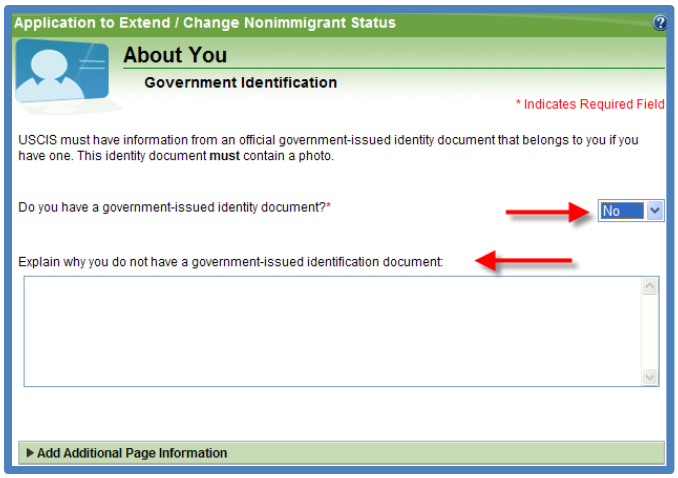
2. If the foreign identity card or document has an ID number, enter the number in the space provided.

3. If the foreign identity card or document has an expiration date, enter the date in the space provided.

4. If you have a passport issued by a foreign government, select "Passport" and provide the name of the issuing country, passport number and expiration date of the document in the spaces provided.

No Identification Card Available

1. If you do not have a government-issued identity card or document, select "No."
2. In the space provided, explain why you do not have an identity document.


Application to Extend / Change Nonimmigrant Status
About You
Government Identification
* Indicates Required Field
USCIS must have information from an official government-issued identity document that belongs to you if you have one. This identity document must contain a photo.
Do you have a government-issued identity document?*
No
Explain why you do not have a government-issued identification document:
Add Additional Page Information