GovClarity

GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES SIMPLIFIED

US PASSPORT 2027

How to Get or Renew Yours, Step by Step



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Which path is yours: in person, online or by mail
- What to bring and what to mail
- Every current fee and the real wait
- Children under 16 and urgent travel
- Mistakes that cost time and money

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A GovClarity Publication



US Passport 2027: How to Get or Renew Yours

There are three ways to apply for a U.S. passport, and each has its own rules. Pick the wrong one and your application comes back, sometimes weeks later. This guide sorts you into the right path, lists exactly what to bring or mail, and shows the real cost and the real wait.

Key facts at a glance:

- A first adult passport book costs **$165**: $130 to the State Department plus a $35 acceptance fee
- Renewing a book costs **$130**, online or by mail, with no acceptance fee
- Routine processing is **4 to 6 weeks**, expedited is **2 to 3 weeks**, and neither counts mailing time
- Plan on up to **10 weeks door to door** for routine service
- Traveling abroad within **14 days**? You need an urgent appointment at a passport agency
- First passports **cannot** be done online yet. The State Department says that is coming in 2027, with no start date



Book or Card?

The passport book is the travel document for international travel by air, land, and sea. It is also an accepted ID at airport security for domestic flights. REAL ID enforcement began May 7, 2025, so if your driver's license is not REAL ID compliant, a passport book or card works instead.

The passport card is wallet-sized and cheaper. It is **not valid for international air travel**. It only works at land border crossings and seaports when you come back from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean.

	Passport book	Passport card
International flights	Yes	No
Land and sea from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, Caribbean	Yes	Yes
ID at airport security	Yes	Yes
Adult application fee	$130	$30
Adult validity	10 years	10 years

You can apply for both at once. An adult book and card together is $160 in application fees.

When to apply: the State Department says demand runs highest from late winter into summer. Applying in the fall or early winter is the simplest way to avoid paying to expedite.

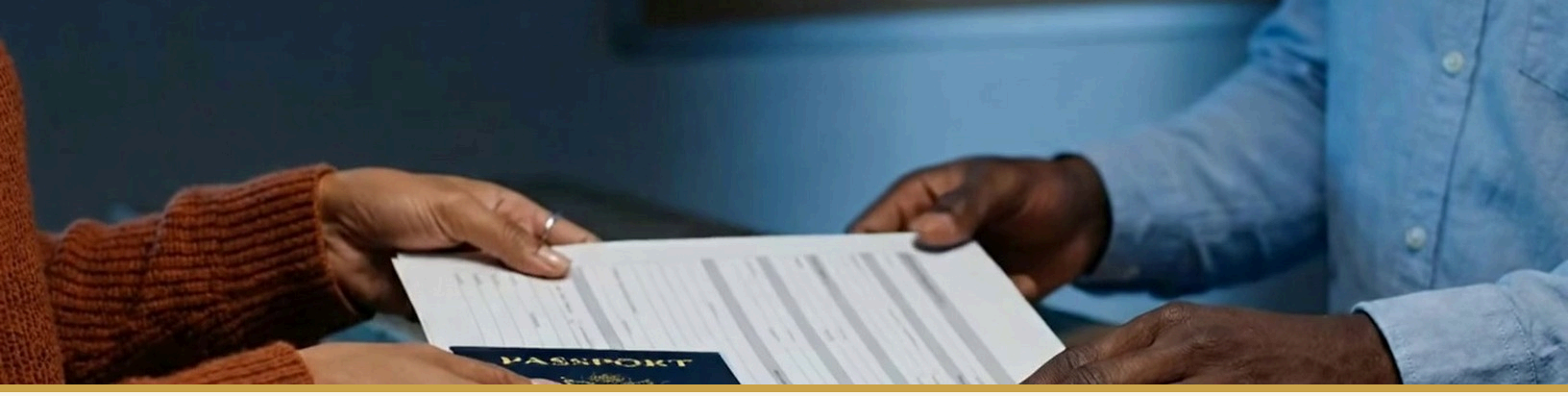


Which Path Are You On?

Answer these in order. The first "yes" is your path.

Question	If yes
Is this your first U.S. passport?	**Path 1: in person (DS-11)**
Are you under 16?	**Path 1**
Was your last passport issued when you were under 16?	**Path 1**
Was it issued more than 15 years ago?	**Path 1**
Was it lost, stolen, or damaged?	**Path 1** (plus Form DS-64 for lost or stolen)
Do you meet every online renewal rule (next page)?	**Path 2: online renewal**
Do you meet every DS-82 rule?	**Path 3: renew by mail (DS-82)**

If your passport was issued less than a year ago and your name changed less than a year after it was issued, you may be able to use the free Form DS-5504 instead. Our Passport Name Change guide covers that path in detail.



Path 1: Applying in Person (DS-11)

Who must use it: first-time applicants, everyone under 16, anyone whose last passport was issued under age 16 or more than 15 years ago, and anyone whose last passport was lost, stolen, or damaged.

Step by step:

1. **Fill out Form DS-11** online with the form filler or by hand in black ink. **Do not sign it.** The acceptance agent gives you an oath and watches you sign.
2. **Gather your documents:** proof of citizenship, a photocopy of it, your photo ID, a photocopy of the front and back, and one photo. Details are on the next pages.
3. **Find an acceptance facility** with the State Department's search at iafdb.travel.state.gov. Post offices, county clerk offices, and libraries run by a city or county are common.
4. **Check whether it needs an appointment.** Some facilities require one. Check the listing or call ahead.
5. **Bring two payments.** The application fee goes to the U.S. Department of State, by check or money order. The $35 acceptance fee goes to the facility, in whatever form it accepts.
6. **Track your application** at passportstatus.state.gov.

About libraries: starting in late 2025 the State Department told nonprofit (non-government) public libraries to stop accepting passport applications, and as of February 13, 2026 they are no longer authorized. Libraries run by a city or county were not affected. If your usual library is a nonprofit, check the facility search before you go.

What comes back: your passport and your original citizenship document may arrive in separate mailings. Photocopies are not returned.

U.S. Department of State

APPLICATION FOR A U.S. PASSPORT

SECTION D. ATTACHMENTS TO SUBMIT WITH THIS FORM

Once you have completed Application Pages 1 and 2, attach the supporting documents as outlined in this section.

1. **PROOF OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP** Information can be found on travel.state.gov/citizenship.

Applicants Born in the United States	Applicants Born Outside the United States
Your evidence will be returned to you if it is not damaged, altered, or forged. Submit an original or certified copy and a photocopy of the front and back if there is printed information on the back, of	If we determine that you are a U.S. citizen, your lawful permanent resident card submitted with this application will be forwarded to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Proof of Citizenship and ID

Proof of U.S. citizenship (Path 1 only). Bring the original or a certified copy, plus a photocopy. Most people use a U.S. birth certificate, and it must:

- Be issued by the city, county, or state where you were born
- List your full name, date of birth, and place of birth
- List your parents' full names
- Show it was filed with the registrar within one year of your birth
- Carry the registrar's signature and the seal of the issuing office

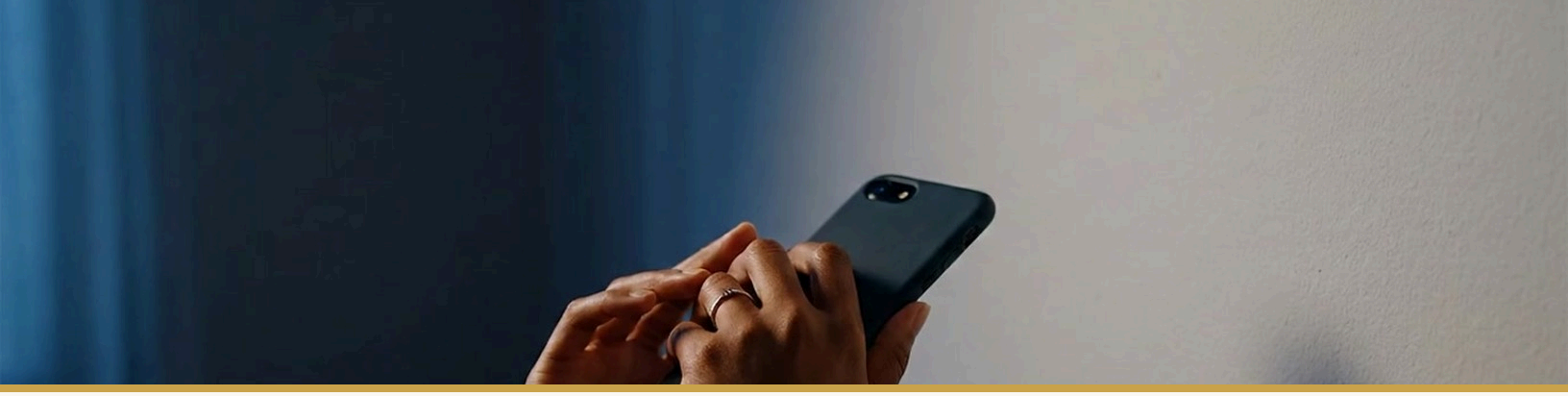
A hospital souvenir certificate is not proof of citizenship on its own. If your state issued a short form that leaves out your parents' names, order the full certified copy from your state vital records office.

Other accepted proof: a fully valid, undamaged U.S. passport (it may be expired), a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or a Certificate of Naturalization or Citizenship. If your birth certificate was filed more than a year after your birth, or no record exists, the DS-11 instructions list secondary records you can combine.

Proof of identity. Bring your original government photo ID, such as a driver's license, a state ID, a military ID, or a naturalization certificate, plus a photocopy of the front and back. Bring the physical card, not a digital or mobile ID. If you apply outside the state that issued your ID, bring a second photo ID.

Photocopy tips: use plain white 8.5 by 11 inch paper, one side only, and do not shrink the document.

Your original citizenship document is mailed back to you separately, and it can arrive up to four weeks after your passport.



Your Passport Photo

Every path needs one photo. For paper applications (DS-11, DS-82) it is printed **2 by 2 inches**. For online renewal it is a digital file you upload.

Requirements:

- In color, taken in the last **six months**
- Plain **white or off-white** background
- Face the camera directly, with your full face in view
- **No glasses**, unless a signed doctor's note explains why you cannot remove them
- No hats or head coverings, except religious or medical ones with a signed statement
- No uniforms, or clothing that looks like one

No editing of any kind. The State Department does not accept photos changed with software, phone apps, beauty filters, or artificial intelligence tools. If a photo has red-eye, take a new one instead of fixing it. When you renew online, the upload tool lets you reposition or crop the photo. Nothing else.

A simple test: take the photo with your phone's plain camera, turn off any beauty or enhance mode, and do not run it through an editing app. Or use a passport photo service that prints to the 2 by 2 inch size.

Sex marker: the State Department's current rule allows only "M" or "F" on applications, matching the applicant's biological sex at birth.



Path 2: Renewing Online

Every one of these must be true:

- You are **25 or older**
- The passport you are renewing was valid for **10 years**
- It **expires within 1 year**, or it **expired less than 5 years ago**
- You are **not changing** your name, sex marker, or other personal information
- You are in a **U.S. state or territory** when you apply
- You are **not traveling abroad for at least 6 weeks**

What you need: a Login.gov account, a digital photo that meets the photo rules, and a credit or debit card.

Step by step:

1. Go to **opr.travel.state.gov**. It is the only official place to renew online.
2. Sign in with Login.gov and answer the eligibility questions.
3. Fill out the application and upload your photo.
4. Pay the $130 book fee (or $30 card, or $160 for both) by card.
5. Watch your email for updates, and track it at passportstatus.state.gov.

The catch: your old passport is canceled once you submit. You cannot travel on it while the new one is in process, which is why the six-week travel rule exists. If a trip is coming sooner, renew by mail with expedited service, or book an urgent appointment.



Path 3: Renewing by Mail (DS-82)

You can use Form DS-82 if all of these are true:

- You can send in your most recent passport
- You were at least 16 when it was issued
- It was issued less than 15 years ago
- It was never reported lost or stolen
- It is not damaged beyond normal wear
- It was a full 10-year passport (some limited-validity passports can also qualify; check travel.state.gov)
- Your name has not changed, or you can send a certified marriage certificate or court order showing the change

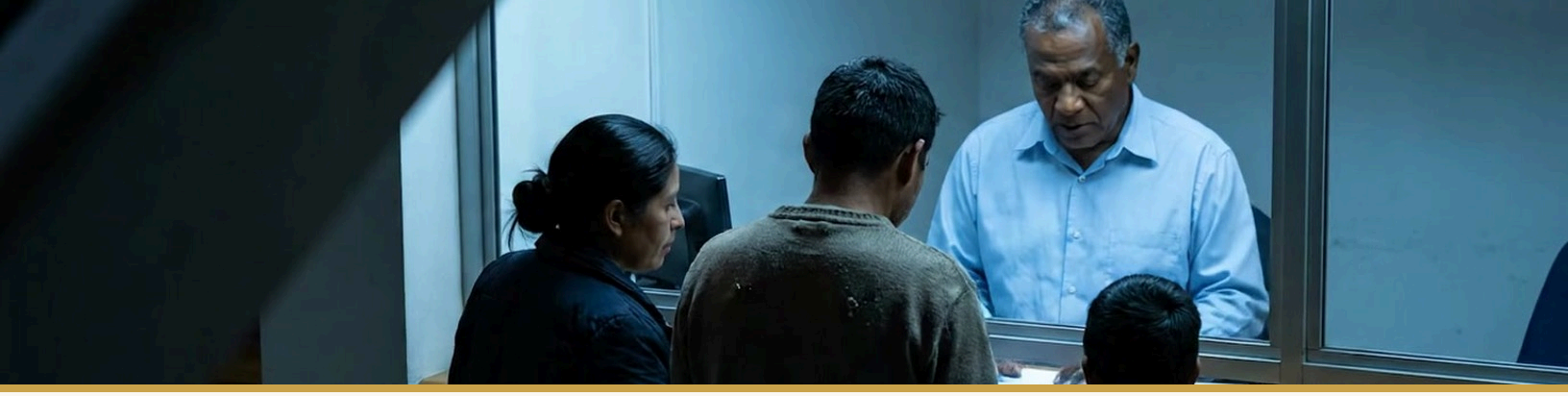
Your package:

1. Form DS-82, filled out and **signed**
2. Your most recent passport
3. One 2 by 2 inch photo
4. A check or money order to the "U.S. Department of State" ($130 book, $30 card, $160 both, plus $60 if expediting and $26.87 for 1 to 3 day return delivery)
5. Your certified name change document, if your name changed

Where to mail it (from the DS-82 instructions):

Service	Who	Address
Routine	You live in CA, FL, IL, MN, NY, or TX	National Passport Processing Center, PO Box 640155, Irving, TX 75064-0155
Routine	You live in any other state	National Passport Processing Center, PO Box 90155, Philadelphia, PA 19190-0155
Expedited	Any state	National Passport Processing Center, PO Box 90955, Philadelphia, PA 19190-0955

Use a mail service with tracking. If you are expediting, write **"Expedite"** on the outside of the envelope. Addresses can change, so confirm them on the current form before you mail.



Children Under 16

Children under 16 always apply in person on Form DS-11, even if they had a passport before.

Both parents or guardians should come. You bring proof of the child's U.S. citizenship, proof of your relationship to the child (a birth certificate listing the parents usually covers both), and each parent's photo ID with a front and back photocopy.

If one parent cannot come, bring one of these:

- That parent's **notarized consent**, on Form DS-3053 or a written statement, with a photocopy of the front and back of their ID. It cannot be more than three months old.
- A **death certificate**, if the other parent has died
- Proof of **sole custody**, such as a court order
- Form **DS-5525** or a sworn statement explaining why the other parent cannot be reached (the State Department reviews these case by case)

Costs: the child book is $100 plus the $35 acceptance fee, $135 in all. A child card is $15 plus $35.

A child's passport is valid for 5 years, not 10, and it cannot be renewed by mail. Every new child passport is another in-person visit.

Ages 16 and 17: these teens apply in person on DS-11 and get a 10-year adult passport at adult fees. At least one parent should know about the application. A parent's presence, a signed note, or a parent paying the fees usually shows that.

United States Passport Fees

***Passport Cards** are not valid for international air travel. Valid only for travel by land and by sea to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean. Submitting incorrect passport fees could delay the processing of your application.

Payment Instructions: The application fee is paid directly to the Department of State (DoS). The Execution/Acceptance fee is paid directly to the Acceptance Facility. Two separate payments are required.

What It Costs

From the State Department's fee chart, updated October 2026.

Adults (16 and older), first time, in person (DS-11):

Applying for	To the State Department	Acceptance fee	Total
Book	$130	$35	**$165**
Card	$30	$35	**$65**
Book and card	$160	$35	**$195**

Adults renewing (online or DS-82): book $130, card $30, both $160. No acceptance fee.

Children under 16 (DS-11): book $100 + $35 = **$135**; card $15 + $35 = **$50**; both $115 + $35 = **$150**.

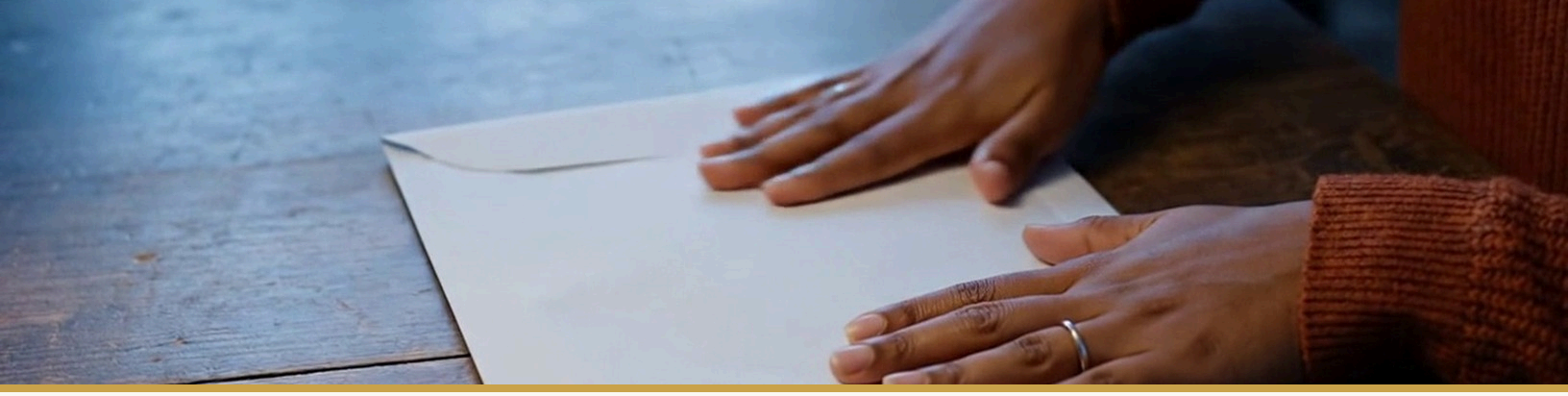
Optional, paid to the State Department:

Option	Fee	Notes
Expedited service	$60	Per application
1 to 3 day return delivery	$26.87	Passport books only, U.S. mailing addresses only
File search	$150	Only in specific cases where you cannot present proof of citizenship; check travel.state.gov before paying it

Worked examples:

- First adult book, routine: $130 + $35 = **$165**
- First adult book, expedited with fast return delivery: $130 + $35 + $60 + $26.87 = **$251.87**
- Adult renewal by mail, expedited: $130 + $60 = **$190**

The application and acceptance fees are non-refundable, even if no passport is issued. The $60 expedite fee may be refunded if the State Department misses its expedited processing time.



How Long It Takes

Service	Processing time
Routine	4 to 6 weeks
Expedited ($60)	2 to 3 weeks

Processing starts when the State Department receives your application, not when you mail it. The State Department says to allow up to 2 weeks for your application to arrive, and up to 2 more weeks for your passport to reach you.

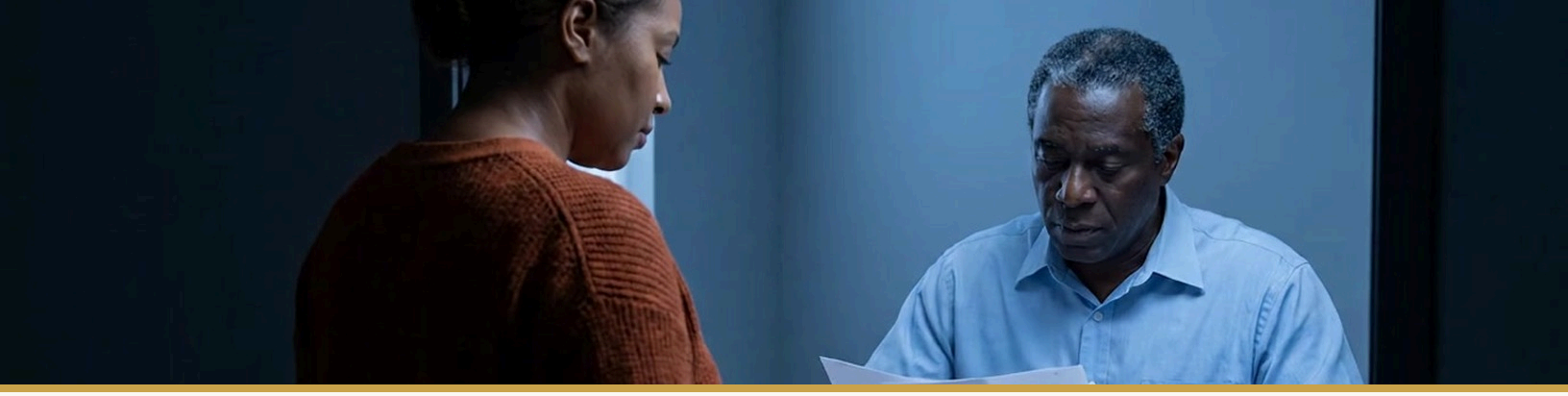
Real door-to-door estimate:

- Routine: up to about **10 weeks**
- Expedited: up to about **7 weeks** (less if you pay for fast return delivery and mail your application with overnight service)

Count back from your trip:

Line	Your date
A. Your departure date	_____
B. Line A minus 10 weeks: apply by this date for routine service	_____
C. Line A minus 7 weeks: apply by this date for expedited service	_____
D. If today is after line C, see Urgent Travel	

If the country you are visiting requires six months of validity (next section), count back from the date your passport needs to be valid, not just your departure.



Urgent Travel and Emergencies

Traveling abroad within 14 days? Mail processing is unlikely to get your passport back in time. Book an **urgent travel appointment at a passport agency** once you are within 14 calendar days of your international trip (or 28 days, if you need a foreign visa first). Bring proof of travel, such as an itinerary or ticket, plus everything a regular application needs, and pay the expedite fee.

If you have not applied yet, book online through the State Department's appointment system. If you already applied and your trip is now within 14 days, call **1-877-487-2778**. Appointments go fast. Check back if none are open.

Life-or-death emergency. If an immediate family member outside the United States has died, is dying, or has a life-threatening illness or injury, and you must travel within 14 days, you may get an emergency appointment. Bring proof, such as a death certificate, a mortuary statement, or a signed hospital letter, plus proof of travel. Immediate family means parents, children, spouses, siblings, and grandparents; aunts, uncles, and cousins do not qualify.

What Changed in 2026, and What Is Coming

Changed in 2026:

- **Nonprofit libraries stopped accepting applications.** The State Department began notifying them in late 2025, and they were no longer authorized as of February 13, 2026; some stopped earlier. Libraries run by a city or county still accept them. Bills in Congress would let nonprofit libraries return; none had become law as of November 1, 2026.
- **Photos:** edited, filtered, or AI-altered photos are not accepted.
- **Sex marker:** applications allow only "M" or "F," matching biological sex at birth.
- **Fees:** the October 2026 chart raised 1 to 3 day return delivery to $26.87.

Coming:

- **First passports online.** The State Department announced in September 2026 that first-time applicants will be able to apply online starting in 2027. There was no start date as of November 1, 2026. If you need a passport in the next few months, apply in person now.
- **A redesigned passport book**, expected in 2028. A valid passport you already hold stays valid.



Mistakes That Cost the Most

Paying a look-alike website. Every form is free from travel.state.gov. Sites that charge to "process" or "prepare" your form are not the government, and they still send you to a facility in person.

Signing DS-11 at home. Sign only in front of the acceptance agent. A form signed early has to be filled out again.

Sending a photocopy as proof of citizenship. Send the original or a certified copy, plus the photocopy.

Using an edited photo. Filters, beauty mode, and AI touch-ups get photos rejected.

Renewing online with a trip coming. Your old passport is canceled once you submit.

Checking only the expiration date. Some countries require your passport to be valid for six months past your trip, and airlines can refuse boarding. Look up your destination on travel.state.gov.

Bringing one parent for a child's passport, with no paperwork. See the Children Under 16 page for what the absent parent must provide.

Waiting for the new online system. It has no start date. Apply the way it works today.



Your Checklist

Path 1, in person (DS-11):

- ☐ DS-11, filled out, **not signed**
- ☐ Proof of citizenship (original or certified) + photocopy
- ☐ Photo ID + front and back photocopy
- ☐ One 2 by 2 inch photo, no edits, no glasses
- ☐ Check or money order to "U.S. Department of State"
- ☐ Separate payment for the $35 acceptance fee
- ☐ Appointment, if the facility requires one
- ☐ For a child: both parents, or the absent parent's paperwork

Path 2, online:

- ☐ Meets all six eligibility rules
- ☐ No international travel for 6 weeks
- ☐ Login.gov account
- ☐ Digital photo, unedited
- ☐ Credit or debit card

Path 3, by mail (DS-82):

- ☐ DS-82, filled out and **signed**
- ☐ Most recent passport
- ☐ One 2 by 2 inch photo
- ☐ Check or money order to "U.S. Department of State"
- ☐ Certified name change document, if needed
- ☐ Tracked mail; "Expedite" on the envelope if expediting

U.S. Department of State

OMB Control No. 1405-0020
Expiration Date: 06/30/2028
Estimated Burden: 40 Minutes

U.S. PASSPORT RENEWAL APPLICATION FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS

Please print legibly using black ink only. If you make an error, complete a new form. Do not correct or white out.
For information or questions, visit travel.state.gov or contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at 1-877-487-2778 (TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793) or NPIC@state.gov.

SECTION A. ELIGIBILITY TO USE THIS FORM

This form is used by U.S. passport holders to renew their current or recently expired U.S. passport book and/or card (a travel document attesting to one's identity and issued to U.S. citizens or non-citizen U.S. nationals). This form can be submitted by mail

Official Resources

U.S. passports (State Department)
travel.state.gov/passports

Find an acceptance facility
iafdb.travel.state.gov

Renew online (the only official site)
opr.travel.state.gov

Check your application status
passportstatus.state.gov

Passport fees
travel.state.gov/passportfees

Forms DS-11, DS-82, DS-3053, DS-5525, DS-64, DS-5504
Free at travel.state.gov. Never pay a third-party site for a government form.

National Passport Information Center
1-877-487-2778
TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793
Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern; closed federal holidays
For status questions and urgent travel appointments.

Entry requirements by country (six-month validity, visas)
travel.state.gov, Country Information

TSA acceptable IDs and REAL ID
tsa.gov/real-id

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About This Guide

GovClarity is an independent publisher. We are not affiliated with the U.S. Department of State or any government agency. The facts in this guide were checked against travel.state.gov, the State Department's October 2026 fee chart, and the current DS-11 and DS-82 form instructions through November 1, 2026. Fees, processing times, and mailing addresses change. Confirm them on the official pages listed in this guide before you apply.

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