Identity and Employment Authorization Documents

The following information comes from the Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form), published by the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services as document M-274 (Rev. 04/03/09) N. This Handbook provides guidance on how to properly complete Form I-9, and answers frequently asked questions about the law as it relates to Form I-9.

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The following pages show the most recent versions and/or representative images of some of the various acceptable documents on the list, which can assist you in judging the validity of a document presented to you. These pages are not, however, comprehensive because, in some cases, many variations of a particular document exist and new versions may be published subsequent to the publication date of this Handbook. Keep in mind that, because USCIS does not expect you to be a document expert, you are only expected to reject documents that do not reasonably appear to be genuine or to relate to the person presenting them.

**U.S. PASSPORT**

A UNITED STATES PASSPORT is a document issued by the U.S. Department of State to U.S. citizens and nationals. There are a small number of versions still in circulation that vary from the main versions shown here.
NOTE: There are approximately fifteen different versions of the U.S. passport that are presently valid.
which vary from the versions illustrated above.

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U.S. PASSPORT CARD

A UNITED STATES PASSPORT CARD is a document the U.S. Department of State began producing in July 2008. The passport card is a wallet-size card that can only be used for land and sea travel between the United States and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

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PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD (Form I-551)

The PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD, Form I-551, shows the DHS seal and contains a detailed hologram on the front of the card. Each card is personalized with an etching showing the bearer's photo, name, fingerprint, date of birth, alien registration number, card expiration date, and card number. Also in circulation are older Resident Alien cards, issued by the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, which do not have expiration dates and are valid indefinitely. These cards are peach and show the Department of Justice seal, and the bearer's fingerprint and photograph. Current version Permanent Resident (Form I-551) Card Current Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551) front and back.
USCIS uses either a I-551 stamp or a temporary I-551 printed notation on a machine-readable immigrant visa (MRIV) to denote temporary evidence of lawful permanent residency. Reverify the employee when the stamp or MRIV expires, or 1 year after the issuance date if the stamp or statement does not include an expiration date.
EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (I-766)

USCIS issues the Employment Authorization Document to aliens granted temporary employment authorization in the United States. The card contains the bearer's photograph, fingerprint, card number, Alien number, birthdate, and signature, along with a holographic film and the DHS seal. The expiration date is located at the bottom of the card.

FORM I-94/I-94A ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD

CBP issues an arrival-departure record to nonimmigrant aliens and other alien categories. This document indicates the bearer's immigration status, the date that the status was granted, and when the status expires. The immigration status notation within the stamp on the card varies according to the status granted, e.g., L-1, F-1, J-1. The Form I-94 has a handwritten date and status, and the Form I-94A has a computer-generated date and status. Both may be presented with documents that Form I-9 specifies are valid only when Form I-94 or I-94A also is presented, such as the foreign passport, Form DS-2019, or Form I-20.
Form I-9 provides space for you to record the document number and expiration date for both the passport and Form I-94 or I-94A.

PASSPORTS OF MICRONESIA AND MARSHALL ISLANDS

In 2003, Compacts of Free Association (CFA) between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) were amended to allow citizens of these countries to work in the United States without obtaining an Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766).

For Form I-9 purposes, citizens of these countries may present their passports accompanied by a Form I-94 or Islands I-94A indicating nonimmigrant admission under the CFA. The exact notation on the Form I-94 or I-94A may vary and is subject to change, but as of early 2009 typically states "CFA/MIS" for an RMI citizen, and "CFA/FSM" for an FSM citizen.
STATE-ISSUED DRIVER'S LICENSE

A driver's license can be issued by any State or territory of the United States (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or by a Canadian government authority, and is acceptable if it contains a photograph or other identifying information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, color of eyes, and address.

STATE-ISSUED ID CARD

An ID card can be issued by any State (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S.,
Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or by a local government, and is acceptable if it contains a photograph or other identifying information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, color of eyes, and address.

**SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBER CARD**

The U.S. Social Security account number card is issued by the Social Security Administration (older versions were issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and can be presented as a List C document unless the card specifies that it does not authorize employment in the United States. Metal or plastic reproductions are not acceptable.

**CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH ABROAD ISSUED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

These documents may vary in color and paper used. All will include a raised seal of the office that issued the document, and may contain a watermark and raised printing.
BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Only an original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state, county, municipal authority, or outlying possession of the United States that bears an official seal. Versions will vary by state and year of birth.
U.S. CITIZEN IDENTIFICATION CARD (Form I-197)

Form I-197 was issued by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to naturalized U.S. citizens. Although this card is no longer issued, it is valid indefinitely.
IDENTIFICATION CARD FOR RESIDENT CITIZEN IN THE UNITED STATES (Form I-179)

Form I-179 was issued by INS to U.S. citizens who are residents of the United States. Although this card is no longer issued, it is valid indefinitely.

FORM I-20 CERTIFICATE ACCOMPANIED BY FORM I-94 or I-94A

Form I-94 or I-94A for F-1 nonimmigrant students must be accompanied by a Form I-20 Student ID endorsed with employment authorization by the Designated School Official for off-campus employment or curricular practical training. USCIS will issue an Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766) to all students (F-1 and M-1) authorized for a post-completion practical training period.
Nonimmigrant exchange visitors (J-1) must have a Form I-94 or I-94A accompanied by an unexpired Form DS-2019, issued by the U.S. Department of State, that specifies the sponsor. J-1 exchange visitors working outside the program indicated on the Form DS-2019 also need a letter from their responsible school officer.
Form DS-2019 Accompanied by Form I-94 or I-94A