Administrative Errors That Cause U.S. Immigration Rejections, Request for Evidence



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Key takeaways

- Incorrect fees, missing signatures and outdated form editions can cause USCIS to reject an immigration application before an officer ever reviews it.
- Inconsistent information can lead to a USCIS Request for Evidence, and a USPS change of address does not update your address with USCIS.
- Errors on government-issued documents such as 1-94 records and approval notices can often be fixed through a correction procedure rather than a new application.

Immigration applications require more than proof of eligibility. They also depend on accurate forms, complete supporting documents, correct payments and timely responses. In the United States, an administrative mistake can lead to a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rejection or create additional work before an officer can make a decision on it. USCIS specifically warns that incorrect fees, missing signatures and unacceptable form editions can lead to rejection. Accuracy is, therefore, an essential part of protecting an immigration case - not simply

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a matter of tidy paperwork.

Why does USCIS reject an immigration application?

Small filing mistakes can stop a case before it even gets to review, as immigration file problems begin at the intake stage. With acceptable form editions changing constantly and not on any defined time frame, an applicant might easily inadvertently submit an outdated form, accidentally combine pages from different editions, overlook a signature or authorize an incorrect payment. USCIS states that the most common reason for rejection is not submitting the correct fee amount. Even when the underlying immigration request is legitimate, these defects can prevent USCIS from accepting the filing.

USCIS rejection vs. denial: What is the difference?

A USCIS rejection is different from a denial. A rejected filing has not cleared the agency's submission requirements, while a denial involves an adverse decision on the request. USCIS generally permits applicants to correct and resubmit rejected filings, but the new submission must still satisfy applicable filing deadlines. Consequently, discovering an error shortly before a deadline can leave little time to repair it.

How inconsistent information can lead to a Request for Evidence

Inconsistent information and innocent errors can also create questions and result in higher scrutiny. A mistyped birthdate, an incomplete address history or conflicting employment dates may make an application harder to evaluate. Such discrepancies do not necessarily mean someone is ineligible, but they can leave important facts unclear or insufficiently supported.

When the evidence does not establish eligibility, USCIS may request additional documentation through a USCIS Request for Evidence, commonly called an RFE. The agency's policy requires these notices to identify a response deadline. An applicant must then gather and submit the requested material, adding another procedural step before the case can be resolved. Careful comparison of forms and supporting records before filing can help prevent avoidable inconsistencies and the resulting delays.

Address Errors and the USCIS Change of Address Requirement

Another common mistake - address errors - can easily disrupt critical communication. An otherwise well-prepared application can encounter problems when contact information is inaccurate or outdated. Applicants need reliable access to agency correspondence so they can receive notices and respond when necessary. Leaving off a suite or apartment number on an application can mean an applicant or petitioner doesn't get a critical RFE, or even that approval notices or green cards are undeliverable.

A particularly important distinction is that updating an address with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) does not update it with USCIS, and USPS will not forward mail from USCIS. The agency instructs applicants to notify both organizations separately. Its online guidance also explains that a USCIS address update must cover the relevant pending applications, petitions or requests. Treating mail forwarding as a substitute for an immigration address update can therefore leave a case connected to an old address.

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How to Correct Errors on 1-94 Records and USCIS Approval Notices

Not every administrative mistake originates with the applicant or petitioner, as government-issued documents can contain errors too. For example, an approval notice can list incorrect dates, or names might be misspelled. USCIS maintains procedures for correcting, updating or replacing documents, and the appropriate process depends on the document and the nature of the problem. We commonly see 1-94 Arrival/Departure records that show that applicants for admission to the U.S. have been admitted in the wrong status, such as "visitor," when they have a separate, work-authorized status.

A correction request may require an explanation, supporting evidence showing the accurate information, or both. Some clear typographical errors may be addressed through a service request. Applicants should therefore check newly issued documents promptly and follow the applicable correction procedure rather than assuming that every mistake requires a completely new immigration application.

How to avoid common immigration application mistakes

An ounce of prevention is still worth a pound of cure. The best way to prevent a problem is to get help when you need it, and maintain a consistent and stringent review process. Most immigration professionals maintain a "second set of eyes" principle on all filings before they go to the government, so there are multiple layers of protection for the applicant or petitioner before the filing ever leaves their desk or the "submit" button is hit online. Check the current form instructions, verify the accepted edition, confirm the payment requirements, review signatures, ensure that every required page is present, and always check the correct filing address immediately before filing (as these change frequently and without public announcement).

Administrative errors are not all equally serious, and a correctable mistake does not automatically end an immigration case. Nevertheless, each error can create another obstacle between filing and resolution. Understanding the difference between a rejected submission, a request for additional evidence and a document correction helps applicants respond through the right process - and makes careful preparation especially valuable.

If you would like assistance with preparing an immigration filing or have questions on whether or how to do so yourself, please feel free to reach out to Elizabeth M. Klarin (eklarin@lippes.com) or Eileen M. Martin (emartin@lippes.com) of the Lippes Mathias LLP immigration practice team for support.

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