



ACCESS TO VITAL RECORDS

*Birth, Marriage, Divorce, and Death Certificates
& Police Records*

GHANA

About this document

Introduction

Established in 2018, the Vance Center's Keep Families Together (KFT) initiative connects pro bono lawyers abroad with legal service providers and immigration attorneys in the U.S. representing migrant individuals and families. Through this program, volunteer counsel assists in obtaining vital records, police and medical records, and other official documentation from migrants' countries of origin or transit to support the legal and administrative processes that lead to family reunification and long-term immigration relief.

Today, the KFT initiative collaborates with more than 150 law firms, pro bono clearinghouses, non-profit organizations, bar associations, and university legal clinics across five continents. Together, we have supported the legal representation of more than 500 individuals and families, contributing to numerous reunifications and durable forms of immigration relief.

As the immigration policy landscape in the U.S. continues to shift, legal service providers must adapt to address their clients' needs, and tools that can support overburdened and under-resourced service providers are more important than ever.

In 2025 alone, KFT received more than 186 requests for assistance. Looking ahead, we anticipate sustained demand for these services. As cases have increased, our team has noted that immigration attorneys frequently encounter some of the same questions and procedural barriers, many of them related to the essential vital records their clients need for their cases. These questions include: **how to obtain birth, marriage, and divorce certificates; how to secure death certificates; and how to access police records.**

The relevant information about how to access these documents is often fragmented, difficult to navigate, or not immediately accessible to practitioners, who have limited time to devote to these proceedings. This information gap has critical consequences – we know that delays or uncertainty in obtaining such documentation can materially affect the pace and outcome of immigration proceedings.

In response to this gap, the Vance Center has developed this practical reference tool covering an initial group of 31 jurisdictions for which we frequently receive requests. The guide includes countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The chapters for three countries (Brazil, India, and Mexico) include sub-sections with state-level information for a selection of states. This guide complements the Vance Center's previously published resource, [*Accessing Vital and Official Records in Latin America: A Guide for Immigration Practitioners*](#), published in March 2026. While that guide focused on 14 jurisdictions in Latin America and covered a broader range of procedures related to obtaining and correcting official records, this new version expands the geographic scope significantly and narrows the focus to the official documents most frequently requested in immigration matters.



The Guide covers:

- **Procedures to request and obtain birth, marriage, divorce, and death certificates**
- **Locating and obtaining criminal, police, or arrest records**

Each country chapter includes information about the appropriate authorities or agencies responsible for these records, the processes to request them, timing and associated costs, and other relevant information. When applicable, it also includes information about available digital or remote procedures that can enable practitioners to more efficiently assist migrant clients.

Access to these documents is often essential to ensure immigration processes can move forward. By providing more clarity around cross-border procedures, services, associated costs, and digital options, we hope this Guide will support immigration service providers to offer more timely, informed, and effective legal representation to their clients.

Note

This Guide is based on information compiled in early 2026. This information is for general reference only and is not legal advice. Requirements, fees, and procedures may change over time and may vary within regions of each country. Whenever available, we have included references to official sources so that attorneys may verify and obtain the most up-to-date information directly. Accordingly, this Guide should be used as a general reference tool, with the understanding that local regulations and administrative practices may evolve at any time.

This chapter covers Ghana.

The full Guide with information on all 31 countries is available [here](#).

Acknowledgments

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GHANA

Birth certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Births & Deaths Registry, Ghana, under the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs.
Can the document be obtained online?	No
Please provide the link.	Unclear from available sources.
Please provide a brief description of the process.	Infant registration • The parent must go to the local BDR office in the district where the birth occurred. • Present evidence of the birth (i.e., maternal health record book). • Provide biodata to the birth event, including the name of the child, date and place of birth, and particulars of the mother and father to include evidence of nationality. Late registration • The parent of a minor or the adult him/herself must go to the local BDR office in the district where the birth occurred. • Present evidence of the birth (i.e., weighing card, baptismal certificate up to five years after birth), and provide biodata to the birth event.
Must the application be done in person?	Yes
Can a third party apply on behalf of the person?	Yes
Must the third party be a lawyer or have a notarized power of attorney (POA)?	• The third party may be a parent, next of kin of either parent, occupier of the premises on which the child was born, an adult present at the birth or a caretaker of the child. • An authorized agent (with proper documentation) may apply on behalf of an adult.
What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	• Evidence of birth (i.e., maternal health record book, weighing card) and biodata to the birth event, including name, date and place of birth, particulars of

	mother and father including evidence of their nationality. For a certified true copy of a birth certificate, affidavits from parents attesting to the birth must be provided as well as GPS address of the applicant.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	- GHS 10 for late registration of birth between one to five years old. - GHS 20 for late registration of birth for five years and up. - GHS 5 for particular search preceding, GHS 5 for certified copy.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	- Four to six weeks for a new application. - Ten working days to convert an old certificate to a certified copy.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	Ideally in person.
Is the issuance centralized at the national level or is it handled locally (e.g., by municipality or state)?	Locally at the BDR office of the district of birth.
Please describe how to identify the appropriate local office.	BDR office of district of birth list: https://bdr.gov.gh/our-offices/
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	- There is limited online access and may be bureaucratic delays. - In June 2025 the BDR was reported to have experienced a shortage of the specialized security paper used to print certificates. Regular printing appears to have resumed shortly after.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	- Online contact form: https://bdr.gov.gh/contact - Email: info@bdr.gov.gh

Please share any additional information that may be helpful.

- Visit nearest Births and Deaths Registry office.
- Complete Form BR1 (available in English and local languages)
- Submit required documents.
- Pay applicable fees.
- Receive collection timeline and receipt.

Third-party applications

- Eligible parties include:
 - Parents/legal guardians.
 - Next of kin of either parent.
 - Premises occupier where birth occurred.
 - Adult witness to birth.
 - Child's caretaker.
 - Legal representatives with court orders.
- No requirement for lawyer or notarized power of attorney. but third parties must provide:
 - Documentation proving relationship to registrant.
 - Personal identification documents.
 - Any court orders. if applicable.

Required documents/information

Infant registration (within 12 months):

- Maternal health record book.
- Parents' biographical information including:
 - Full names.
 - Ages.
 - Occupations.
 - Religions.
 - Nationalities.
 - Educational backgrounds.
 - Identification documents.

Late registration (after 12 months):

- Weighing card or baptismal certificate.
- School records (for children 6+).
- Affidavit from parent (for minors).
- Old birth certificate (if available).
- Parents' ID cards.
- Death certificate if parent deceased.

Practical advice

- Gather all documents before starting application.
- Ensure documents are original or certified copies.
- Have digital copies ready for online applications.
- Consider getting extra copies certified while at government offices.

Fees

- Infant registration (within 12 months): Free
- Standard online/in-person application: GHS 50

- Late registration (1 to 5 years): GHS 10
- Late registration (5+ years): GHS 20
- Express service: Additional GHS 50

Processing

- Online applications: 14 working days.
- Standard in-person: 2 to 4 weeks.
- Express service: 3 to 5 working days.

Payment methods

- Cash (in-person).
- Mobile money (MTN. Vodafone. AirtelTigo).
- Bank transfers.
- Online payments through official website.

Delivery

In-person collection (most common)

- Notification when ready (email/SMS/phone).
- Must present ID and application receipt.
- Sign for collection.

Shipping (for online applications):

- Available through E-Payment Portal.
- Additional fee based on destination.
- Digital Delivery
 - Limited availability.
 - Part of ongoing modernization efforts.
 - May have restrictions on official recognition.
- Regional variations:
 - Urban areas: All delivery methods typically available.
 - Rural areas: Usually limited to in-person collection.

System structure

- National level: Headquarters in Accra.
 - Policy direction and coordination.
- Regional level: Offices in all 16 regions.
 - Regional Registrars oversee operations.
- District level: Local registration offices
 - Primary point of service delivery.
- Community level:
 - Population register initiative.

Local registration

- Contact headquarters for district office locations.
- Visit nearest municipal/district assembly.
- Check official website for updates.

Barriers or challenges

Geographical:

- Urban-rural registration rate disparity (72% vs 55%).
- Limited registration centers (414 vs required 6.000).
- Transportation costs and accessibility.

	Financial: • Late registration fees. • Indirect costs (travel, time off work). • Income-based registration rate disparity. Administrative: • Staff shortages. • Resource constraints. • Processing delays. Technical: • Limited digital infrastructure. • Connectivity issues. • Power supply problems. Additional information • Apply within 12 months to avoid fees. • Use mobile registration when available. • Consider group registration through community initiatives. • Keep copies of all documents. • Start process well before certificate is needed. • Visit offices during off-peak hours. • Bring all required documents in original and copy form. • Keep application reference numbers. • Follow up regularly on application status. • Join community registration drives when available. • Consider express service for urgent needs. • There is a mechanism on the ghana.gov platform to pay for services and online applications. • Applications in practice must be done in person at the local BDR office. Contact information Headquarters: NALAG House, Accra, Ghana. Email: info@bdr.gov.gh. Hours: Monday – Friday. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Overseas applicants: • Contact nearest Ghanaian embassy/consulate. • Check embassy website for specific requirements. • Consider using authorized representatives in Ghana.
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Marriage certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Registrar-General's Department under the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's Department, administered through a
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	Marriage Registry within a relevant metropolitan, municipal or district assembly (MMDA).
Can the document be obtained online?	No
Please provide the link.	Unclear from available sources.
Please provide a brief description of the process.	Unclear from available sources.
Must the application be done in person?	Yes
Can a third party apply on behalf of the person?	No
Must the third party be a lawyer or have a notarized power of attorney (POA)?	Unclear from available sources.
What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	• Applicants must notify the Marriage Registrar in the district where the marriage will occur (note some districts require certain periods of residency before application). • Provide names of parties, occupation of parties, places of residence of parties, condition of parties (single/divorced/widowed) and fathers' names and occupations of parties, alongside photocopies and originals of valid ID cards of parties, a consent letter if a party is not present at the time of the filing, and copy of divorce certificate for party who has been previously married. • The Marriage Registrar will publish a notice of marriage for 21 days. • The applicants must then submit a statutory declaration attesting to statutory requirements such as being 18 years of age and of sound mind. • If no objection is raised during the notice period, a certificate will be issued. • The marriage certificate must then be presented to a licensed marriage officer, and the couple must get married within three months or the certificate becomes void.

	Note that customary marriages are not required to be registered, but may be registered in a similar fashion as stated above.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	Fees may differ by district, but recent fees (2022) for the Accra Metropolitan Assembly include GHS 283.50 for ordinance marriage registration, GHS 101.25 for customary marriage registration, and GHS 81 for a marriage certificate or certified true copy. An online marriage certificate search is GHS 27.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	21 days from notice in a fresh application, though unclear how long for copy.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	By mail or in person.
Is the issuance centralized at the national level or is it handled locally (e.g., by municipality or state)?	Local
Please describe how to identify the appropriate local office.	Marriage Registry of district where the marriage will occur/has occurred.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	There appears to be limited online access for obtaining documents; the process is otherwise generally regarded to be quite simple, provided all documents are in order.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Phone number: (+233) 053-408-1495 Email address - marriage@rgd.gov.gh MMDA contacts differ by district Phone number: (+233) 053-190-2050 Email address: marriage@ama.gov.gh
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	- It is not mandatory that customary marriages be registered, although they may be. - MMDA fee schedules are subject to change year-to-year. - Islamic marriages are treated separately.

	- To authenticate for use abroad, the certificate must first be notarized by a Notary Public in Ghana, certified by the Judicial Service of Ghana, and attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within three months of issue. For a customary marriage or divorce, a verification letter must be obtained from the local registry where the marriage was registered. - For use in the UK, the Ghana High Commission in London must further attest. The applicant must download and complete the attestation form on the Commission's site and email the completed form, copies of the document to be attested and a copy of the biodata page of the applicant's passport. Original documents, two passport-sized photos, proof of payment and a pre-paid self-addressed envelope for return must be submitted in person or by post. Payment of £30 may be made via postal order or card payment at the Commission. Processing takes up to five working days.
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Divorce certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Ordinance marriage: Judicial Service through courts (divorce decree is official divorce document). Customary marriage: Registrar-General's Department under the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's Department, through local Marriage Registries at relevant MMDAs.
Can the document be obtained online?	No
Please provide the link	Unclear from available sources.
Please provide a brief description of the process.	Unclear from available sources.
Must the application be done in person?	Yes
Can a third party apply on behalf of the person?	Yes
Must the third party be a lawyer or have a notarized power of attorney (POA)?	No

What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	- For customary marriage, an applicant must file for dissolution with the relevant MMDA with a statutory declaration indicating the names of parties to the marriage, places of residence at the time of dissolution, date and place of dissolution, signatures of parents of couples or family representatives standing in place thereof, and photocopies of ID cards of parties as well as parents/ representatives attesting to the declaration. - The Marriage Registry will publish a notice for dissolution for 28 days. The dissolution will be registered in the Customary Marriage Register. - For ordinance marriage, divorce proceedings and documents must be obtained through the court process.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	GHS 101.25 for divorce certificate with respect to customary marriage and no information on cost of court decree.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Unclear from available sources.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	By mail or in person.
Is the issuance centralized at the national level or is it handled locally (e.g., by municipality or state)?	Local
Please describe how to identify the appropriate local office.	Note national for ordinance marriage at the High Court/ local office where marriage was registered.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	- Limited online access. - Delays in court system and corruption within Judicial Service.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organisations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Judicial Service of Ghana Address: PO Box GP 119, Accra Phone number: +233 0302-663-952 Relevant MMDA for Accra Email: marriage@ama.gov.gh Phone number: +233 053-190-2050

Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	• To authenticate for use abroad, the certificate must first be notarized by a Notary Public in Ghana, certified by the Judicial Service of Ghana, and attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within three months of issue. For a customary marriage or divorce, a verification letter must be obtained from the local registry where the marriage was registered. • For use in the UK, the Ghana High Commission in London must further attest. The applicant must download and complete the attestation form on the Commission's site and email the completed form, copies of the document to be attested and a copy of the biodata page of the applicant's passport. Original documents, two passport-sized photos, proof of payment and a pre-paid self-addressed envelope for return must be submitted in person or by post. Payment of £30 may be made via postal order or card payment at the Commission. Processing takes up to five working days.
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Death certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Births & Deaths Registry, Ghana, under the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs.
Can the document be obtained online?	Yes
Please provide the link.	https://bdr.gov.gh/birth-registration-2/ Note registration may be done online, but certificate may need to be obtained physically.
Please provide a brief description of the process.	• Deaths occurring at health institutions after 24 hours of admission: ○ A relative of the deceased must go to the BDR office in the district where the death occurred, present an original copy of the medical cause of death certificate, and provide details for the deaths register, including identifying information, place, date and cause of death, and name of the certifying medical practitioner.

	- Deaths occurring outside health facilities or before 24 hours in a health facility: - A relative of the deceased must report the death at the nearest police station; the police will investigate and issue an inquest to the nearest Court of Justice, which will then issue a coroner's report. The relative must present the original coroner's report to the nearest BDR office in the district where the death occurred and provide details for the deaths register. - For deaths registered after burial or after 12 months of occurrence: - A relative of the deceased must go to the BDR office in the district where the death occurred, present attestations (exclusive attestation by head of family and supporting national ID, exclusive attestation by next-of-kin and supporting national ID and joint attestation by two members of deceased's family), present evidence of death (i.e., receipts from morgue, obituary, picture from tombstone, program for funeral event, etc.), and provide details for deaths register, after which registrar will investigate, validate and secure completion from the national BDR office to complete registration.
Must the application be done in person?	Unclear from available sources.
Can a third party apply on behalf of the person?	Yes
Must the third party be a lawyer or have a notarized power of attorney (POA)?	No
What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	See process above, including particulars of death, attestations, evidence of death.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes

How much is the fee?	• GHS 30 for late death registration. • GHS 6 for verification of death records.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Unclear from available sources.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	By mail or in person.
Is the issuance centralized at the national level or is it handled locally (e.g., by municipality or state)?	Local
Please describe how to identify the appropriate local office.	BDR office of district where death occurred, as authorized by the national office.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	• Limited online access for actual certificate, though application for registration may be done online. • Cost of actual certificate is unclear from available sources.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Online contact form: https://bdr.gov.gh/contact/ Email: - info@bdr.gov.gh Phone number: +233(0)303-941-222
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	To authenticate for use abroad, the certificate must first be notarized by a Notary Public in Ghana, certified by the Judicial Service of Ghana and attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within three months of issue. For a customary marriage or divorce, a verification letter must be obtained from the local registry where the marriage was registered.

Police record

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Ghana Police Service under the Ministry of the Interior.
Can the document be obtained online?	Yes
Please provide the link.	https://eservices.police.gov.gh/login

	Note that only nominal vetting applications for a police clearance certificate may be done entirely online; all others, as indicated in the description of process, require an in-person appointment at the CID Headquarters even after completing application online.
Please provide a brief description of the process.	Nominal vetting (non-resident): - Applicants living outside Ghana must upload their passport information page alongside an application form filled out online. Ordinary vetting (resident): - Ghanaians and foreigners who have a resident permit and have stayed in Ghana for more than three months after staying outside Ghana for more than six months must present their passport to the Application Center alongside an application form. Ordinary vetting (non-resident): - Ghanaians and foreigners who do not have a resident permit and have stayed in Ghana for less than three months after staying outside Ghana for more than six months must present their passport to the Application Center alongside an application form. Employment vetting: - Applicants must present a letter from their employer, and any valid Ghanaian issued ID to the Application Center alongside an application form.
Must the application be done in person?	Unclear from available sources.
Can a third party apply on behalf of the person?	Yes
Must the third party be a lawyer or have a notarized power of attorney (POA)?	Yes
What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	- Passport. basic parental, educational and residential information. - Employment letter for employment vetting. - Two passport-sized photos for ordinary vetting.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes

How much is the fee?	- Nominal vetting (non-resident): GHS 1380 - Ordinary vetting (resident): GHS 115 - Ordinary vetting (non-resident): Unclear from available sources. - Employment vetting: GHS 50.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Typically, up to ten working days.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	By mail or in person.
Is the issuance centralized at the national level or is it handled locally (e.g., by municipality or state)?	National
Please describe how to identify the appropriate local office.	Unclear from available sources.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	- Limited online access for anything beyond nominal vetting. - Bureaucratic delays. - Political influence. - Corruption in the police service.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Phone number: +233 302 773906 Email: hq.pro@police.gov.gh
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	- To authenticate for use abroad, the certificate must first be notarized by a Notary Public in Ghana, certified by the Judicial Service of Ghana and attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within three months of issue. For a customary marriage or divorce, a verification letter must be obtained from the local registry where the marriage was registered. - For use in the UK, the Ghana High Commission in London must further attest. The applicant must download and complete the attestation form on the Commission's site and email the completed form,

copies of the document to be attested and a copy of the biodata page of the applicant's passport. Original documents, two passport-sized photos, proof of payment, and a pre-paid self-addressed envelope for return must be submitted in person or by post. Payment of £30 may be made via postal order or card payment at the Commission. Processing takes up to five working days.