



ACCESS TO VITAL RECORDS

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

NIGERIA

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 Nigeria.

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

Acknowledgments

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NIGERIA

Birth certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	National Population Commission.
Can the document be obtained online?	Yes
Please provide the link	Birth certificate reprint: https://d3likt8r53z2fo.cloudfront.net/ https://reissuance.nationalpopulation.gov.ng/
Please provide a brief description of the process.	Follow link instructions. Official birth certificate reprints must be physically obtained at an NPC office. A non-official copy can be downloaded from the website.
Must the application be done in person?	Unclear from available sources. There is a process available online, but it is possible it is not optimized. In person processes are almost always available.
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 a third party, a letter of authorization is needed from the person or parent or guardian if a minor. • For in-person collection of a certificate: ○ A form of ID (passport, etc.). ○ Proof of previous registration (copy of previous, or ID). ○ An affidavit of loss may also be required.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee	US\$20
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	• Standard: three to five working days • Express: one to two working days

Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	Digitally 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.	Local hospitals are usually the first points of contact for birth certificates (assuming the child was born in that hospital). If not, contact the local National Population Commission offices, available in almost every state in Nigeria. Please see link to local offices: https://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/our-offices
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	Banner link is broken, use the drop-down “services” menu to access the appropriate link via the website.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Visit NPC local offices. Office directory, search by state: https://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/our-offices
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	• A self-serve reprint copy of the original can be obtained. However, if there is no registration of birth in the system, or errors require correction, then a re-issuance is needed. • Much of the information for Nigeria is not readily available online. As a general note, even when an online system exists, applications may still need to be processed manually, or the manual method may be the only option on the ground. Systems and processes in Nigeria are rarely fully automated, so many procedures require in-person applications. • Timelines are also difficult to verify, as processing times can vary significantly depending on the local office, the level of bureaucracy and the sophistication of the state in which the application is made. As

Nigeria is still developing many of these systems, they remain a work in progress.

Marriage certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Ministry of Interior.
Can the document be obtained online?	Yes
Please provide the link.	https://candb.interior.gov.ng/marriage/
Please provide a brief description of the process.	• Create an online account and log in. • Request is submitted online. • Pick up is in person at a local Ministry of Interior office.
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?	• Form of ID (birth certificate, passport, etc.). • Copy of ID if a third party is applying.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	NGN 75,000 / US\$50.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Five to seven working days.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	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)?	Risk of fraudulent web links that claim online documents are available. Physical documents are the only accepted type.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Address: Ministry of Interior, Room 104 & 123, Block F, Old Federal Secretariat, Area 1, Garki-Abuja Telephone: +2349133490670 Email: info@interior.gov.ng support@interior.gov.ng
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	• Islamic marriage. Registered typically at local Islamic authority, Sharia courts in the states where Sharia law is practiced. • Much of the information for Nigeria is not readily available online. As a general note, even when an online system exists, applications may still need to be processed manually, or the manual method may be the only option on the ground. Systems and processes in Nigeria are rarely fully automated, so many procedures require in-person applications. • Timelines are also difficult to verify, as processing times can vary significantly depending on the local office, the level of bureaucracy, and the sophistication of the state in which the application is made. As Nigeria is still developing many of these systems, they remain a work in progress.

Divorce certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Traditional marriage: High Court of the State Customary Court. Islamic marriage: Sharia Court.
Can the document be obtained online?	No
Please provide the link.	Unclear from available sources.

Please provide a brief description of the process.	- Divorce proceedings begin with the filing of a petition by the petitioner (the party seeking divorce) in the High Court of any Nigerian state. - The respondent (the other spouse) is served the petition and must reply within a set timeframe. - The petition outlines the grounds for divorce, details of the marriage and the petitioner's requests (such as custody, maintenance or property). - After the respondent's reply, the court hears the case, considering evidence and witness testimony, especially if the petition is contested. - If the court is satisfied with the petitioner's evidence, it issues a Decree Nisi, indicating the marriage has broken down irretrievably but not yet ending it. Either party may appeal this decree within three months. - If no appeal is made, the Decree Nisi becomes a Decree Absolute (divorce certificate), officially dissolving the marriage and allowing either party to remarry. - The court also decides on related matters such as damages, maintenance and child custody during judgment. - Source: https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=bb616837-3358-486b-930b-509095d07c8b
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)?	Yes
What are the typical documents or information required to request this certificate?	If a third-party is applying, letter of authorization is needed from one of the divorce parties that clearly states the purpose of the request.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	NGN 2,000 to 5,000 (unverified).

	Different courts around the country have different rates for obtaining divorce certificates or certified true copies of documents. These amounts are not readily available online.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Seven to fourteen working days (unverified). Timing will depend on the individual court.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	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.	Depends on the type of marriage. The court authority associated with the marriage controls the divorce.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	Depends on location. Processes in rural areas may be delayed. Processes may also be delayed in locations where records have not been digitized.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	High Court of the State-dependent.
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	• Formal request needs to be submitted in person to collect a certified copy. • Much of the information for Nigeria is not readily available online. As a general note, even when an online system exists, applications may still need to be processed manually, or the manual method may be the only option on the ground. Systems and processes in Nigeria are rarely fully automated, so many procedures require in-person applications. • Timelines are also difficult to verify, as processing times can vary significantly depending on the local office, the

level of bureaucracy and the sophistication of the state in which the application is made. As Nigeria is still developing many of these systems, they remain a work in progress.

Death certificate

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	The National Population Commission is the body responsible for issuing the death certificate. However, it may also be obtained through local hospitals in some cases.
Can the document be obtained online?	Information available online indicates that the death certificate can be obtained online from the National Population Commission. (Note that this process may not actually be available online, as many processes in Nigeria operate manually.)
Please provide the link.	https://vitalreg-selfservice.nationalpopulation.gov.ng/login
Please provide a brief description of the process.	• Visit the National Population Commission website at https://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/ and navigate to the Death Notification (self-service) section under the 'Services' menu. • Read the guidelines carefully and check the box indicating 'I have read and clearly understood the above guidelines,' then select 'Start Application' to begin. • Provide the details of the deceased, including the cause of death, and select a registration center. • Enter the particulars of informant, including the relationship with the deceased, and sign the application. • Upload the required documents, including proof of death. • Review information and submit the application. • After successful registration, an email with a digital copy of the certificate will be sent.
Must the application be done in person?	No
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?	• Letter of authorization needed from next of kin. • If death is recent, cause of death verification may be needed.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	US\$20.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Five to ten working days (unverified) depending on age of record, local office digitization, etc.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	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.	There are local NPC offices in every state in Nigeria. Please see website (http://2023census.gov.ng/pages/our-offices)
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	• Be wary of unofficial processing fees, these should not apply. • Hasty burials may result in cause of death verification, which is needed for the process.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	The best point of contact will likely be in person at any of the local NPC offices in this link: https://nationalpopulation.gov.ng/our-offices
Please share any additional information that may be helpful.	• The process may be started online but must be picked up at a local office of the NPC. • Much of the information for Nigeria is not readily available online. As a general note, even when an online system exists, applications may still need to be processed manually, or the manual method may be the only option on the ground. Systems and

	processes in Nigeria are rarely fully automated, so many procedures require in-person applications. Timelines are also difficult to verify, as processing times can vary significantly depending on the local office, the level of bureaucracy and the sophistication of the state in which the application is made. As Nigeria is still developing many of these systems, they remain a work in progress.
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Police record

What is the government authority or agency responsible for issuing this document?	Nigerian Police Force.
Can the document be obtained online?	No
Please provide the link.	None available
Please provide a brief description of the process.	This service is typically not available online.
Must the application be done in person?	No
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?	- Valid government ID. - Passport-size photo. - Proof of address.
Is there a fee to obtain the certificate?	Yes
How much is the fee?	NGN 30,000.
What is the average time it takes to receive the document?	Depends on the record (unverified): - Police character one to two weeks - Police record five to seven days - Traffic record five to ten working days.

	Note that the info provided here may only apply to the police clearance certificate. Most local police bodies operate manually and may not have an automated system that is centralized or accessible.
Is the certificate provided digitally, by mail or must it be picked up in person?	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.	Identify local police office via this website: https://npf.gov.ng/ Police character: • FCIID. Police record: • Police station where the police report was filed. Traffic report: • Traffic division of the police stations where the accident was reported.
Are there any known challenges to accessing this document (e.g., bureaucratic delays, corruption, limited online access)?	• No official online system for a complete process. Online services claiming one-stop-shop may be fraudulent. • Some records may be restricted by third-party retrieval. • Different locations and authorities are based on issue. • Police character approval: Division police stations where crime was committed. • Traffic violations: Traffic division of police stations. • Location can be remote; multiple visits may be required if documentation isn't correct or internet is down; some stations do not maintain digital records.
Please list any methods for contacting the relevant agencies and organizations (e.g., WhatsApp, email, online contact form, telephone numbers, postal address, etc.).	Depends on the location, see above. It is possible to verify and find offices via the website https://npf.gov.ng/

Please share any additional information that may be helpful.

- Process may be started online. However, for verification, see <https://npf.gov.ng/>
- Must verify with the local NPF if third-party collection is allowed.
- Much of the information for Nigeria is not readily available online. As a general note, even when an online system exists, applications may still need to be processed manually, or the manual method may be the only option on the ground. Systems and processes in Nigeria are rarely fully automated, so many procedures require in-person applications.
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