

Ghana: The Ghana Card, including its appearance, content, biometric and security features; requirements and procedures to obtain or replace the card from within the country and from abroad; prevalence and uses of the Ghana Card; samples (2024–December 2025) [GHA202451.E]

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

15-19 minutes

1. Overview

According to Ghana's National Identification Authority (NIA), the *National Identification Authority Act, 2006* (Act 707) established the national identity card known as the Ghana Card and created the NIA's mandate to issue them to eligible citizens and permanent residents (Ghana n.d.a).

The NIA website states that the National Identification System (NIS) is authorized to collect and store the personal information of "all" Ghanaian citizens and permanent residents (Ghana n.d.a). The NIS also generates unique identity numbers and assigns them to individuals registered in the National Identity Register (NIR) (Ghana n.d.a). In addition, the NIS enables the verification of the identity of a Ghana Card holder (Ghana n.d.a).

All Ghanaian citizens, "aged zero (0) and above," living within or outside of the country, may register for a Ghana Card [for citizens] (Ghana n.d.b). Foreign nationals who have resided in Ghana for a "cumulative period of 90 days or ha[ve] a residence permit issued by the Government of Ghana" are eligible for a non-citizen Ghana card (Ghana n.d.c).

1.1 Appearance and Content

A sample of the front and back of the Ghana Card issued to citizens is available on the NIA website (Ghana n.d.b). Another sample of the front of the Ghana Card issued to citizens is available on the website of the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana in Doha, Qatar (Ghana n.d.d).

According to the NIA, a non-citizen Ghana Card has the words "NON-CITIZEN IDENTITY CARD" written in bold red font along the front of the card, while Ghana Cards issued to citizens do not (Ghana n.d.c), or "NON CITIZEN IDENTITY CARD," as seen on the sample available on the NIA website (Ghana n.d.e).

1.2 Biometric and Security Features

According to the NIA, the Ghana Card's security features include biometric information, such as "fingerprints or facial contours" (Ghana n.d.c). The same source lists the following "visible security features" found on Ghana Cards:

1. Aluminium Watermark
2. Dual Interface Chip Module
3. Tactile features for easy identification by the visually impaired
4. Ultraviolet Features
5. UV Printing
6. [Economic Community of West African States] ECOWAS [\[1\]](#) Logo
7. Card Access and Document Number
8. Tracking Number
9. E-Passport Symbol
10. Contactless Symbol
11. Machine Readable Zone. (Ghana n.d.c)

2. Requirements and Procedures to Obtain the Ghana Card

The NIA states that all Ghana Card registrants who applied between 2008 and 2018 must register again for the card and update their personal information in the NIR; they will then receive a new card (Ghana n.d.c). It adds that the card is valid for 10 years (Ghana n.d.c).

2.1 Ghanaian Citizens Applying from Within Ghana

According to the NIA webpage, first-time Ghanaian applicants living in Ghana can register for the Ghana Card for free at NIA district offices and "some" regional offices (Ghana n.d.b). Ghanaian citizens aged 0 and above must present a "Digital Address Code" of the applicant's residence and one of the following mandatory documents at an NIA Registration Centre to apply:

- A Birth Certificate issued by the Births and Deaths Registry of Ghana; or
 - A valid Ghana Passport issued by Government of Ghana; or
 - An Oath of Identity form(s) obtained through the vouching process; or
 - Evidence of acquired citizenship such as Naturalization or Registration Certificates.
- (Ghana n.d.b)

The webpage also states that applicants must present any of the following government-issued identity cards or documents in their possession:

- [Social Security and National Insurance Trust] SSNIT ID Card
- Tax Identification Number

- Driver's License
- Voter ID Card
- [National Health Insurance Scheme] NHIS Card. (Ghana n.d.b)

After verifying the required documents at a Registration Centre, the Registration Officer will

1. interview the applicant and assist them in completing an application form;
2. enter the personal information used in the form into the NIR;
3. obtain the applicant's signature and biometrics (10 fingerprints, irises scans and a photograph);
4. have the applicant review a copy of their personal details for confirmation through a signature or thumbprint; and finally,
5. print and issue a Ghana Card to the applicant (Ghana n.d.b).

The NIA indicates that the Ghana Card is issued "instantly" to applicants aged 15 and above at issuing locations that have electricity or "adequate network connectivity" (Ghana n.d.c). It adds that for location that do not, the Registration Officer will provide a pickup date and location (Ghana n.d.c).

2.2 Foreign Nationals Residing in Ghana Applying from Within Ghana

According to the NIA, a non-citizen of Ghana who has resided in Ghana for "at least" 90 days "cumulatively" [or has a residence permit (Ghana n.d.c)] can apply for a non-citizen Ghana Card (Ghana n.d.e). However, the following foreign nationals are exempted from applying for the card:

- A foreign national who is a diplomat
- A foreign national who is employed by a diplomatic or consular Mission
- A foreign national who is employed by the United Nations or an agency of the United Nations
- A foreign national who is the spouse or dependant of a diplomat, an employee of the United Nations or its agencies or a diplomatic or consular Mission. (Ghana n.d.e)

The NIA notes the following requirements to register for a non-citizen Ghana Card:

- Valid Passport
- Residence Permit
- Birth Certificate certified or validated by the applicant's country's Embassy
- An Oath of Identity form(s) obtained through the vouching process. Kindly note that vouching must be before a Commissioner for Oaths. (Ghana n.d.e)

The NIA website states that upon presenting these documents for verification at a Foreigner Identification Management System (FIMS) [2] Centre, the applicant must:

Step 1

Purchase a scratch card [3] at any CalBank or Access Bank branch or online using CalBank App or the Cal Bank [mobile banking] platform.

Step 2

Go through an interview process with a Registration Officer and complete an application form with your biographic information.

Step 3

Proceed to a Data Entry Officer to have your biometric information (10 fingerprints, portrait, iris [scan]) and signature captured. You will be required to give your FIMS [s]cratch card and application form to the Data Entry Officer who verifies the [Personal Identification Number] PIN on the scratch card and captures the data on the application form into the database.

Step 4

Confirm your personal details captured by the Data Entry Clerk. If you notice any inaccurate or incorrect information, draw the attention of the Data Entry Clerk to correct it.

Step 5

Collect your Non-Citizen Identity Card from a Card Issuance Desk. (Ghana n.d.e)

The NIA website indicates that the fee to apply for a non-citizen Ghana Card for the first time is the Ghanaian Cedi (GHS) equivalent of US\$120 (Ghana n.d.e). The fee to renew the card annually is the GHS equivalent of US\$60 (Ghana n.d.e).

2.3 Ghanaian Citizens Applying from Abroad

The NIA webpage states that the following documents are required for Ghanaians registering for a Ghana Card from abroad:

- An original Birth Certificate issued by the Births and Deaths Registry of Ghana; or
 - An original valid Ghana Passport issued by Government of Ghana; or
 - Evidence of acquired citizenship such as Naturalization or Registration Certificates;
- or

- An Oath of Identity form(s) obtained through the vouching process[.] (Ghana n.d.f)

It adds that applicants must present the following government-issued identity cards or documents in their possession:

- SSNIT ID Card
- Tax Identification Number
- Driver's License
- Voter ID Card
- NHIS Card. (Ghana n.d.f)

The following individuals can be "mandated to vouch" for a Ghana Card applicant registering from abroad:

- A practising or retired professional teacher (including principals, headmasters & headteachers)
- A Gazetted Chief
- A practicing or retired Magistrate or Judge
- A practicing or retired licensed Professional e.g. doctor, nurse, lawyer, accountant, engineer, architect etc.
- A serving or retired civil/public servant.
- A serving or retired Clergyman
- An Imam
- A Catechist
- A serving or retired member of the security services including the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Armed Forces, Ghana Prison Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana National Fire Service, [National Intelligence Bureau] NIB, Customs, Excise and Preventive Service of the Ghana Revenue Service and National Security
- A current or past Member of Parliament, an Assembly or Unit Committee. (Ghana n.d.f)

After verifying the required documents at a Registration Centre [or a Ghana diplomatic mission abroad (Ghana n.d.d)], the Registration Officer will

- review the application form the registrant would have completed and submitted online;
- enter the personal information from the application form into the NIR;
- register the applicant's biometrics (10 fingerprints, irises scans and photograph) and signature into the NIR;

- provide a printed copy of the personal information entered to the applicant for verification, confirmation, and signature or thumbprint; and
- print and issue a Ghana Card using the applicant's biometrics (Ghana n.d.f).

The NIA webpage adds that first-time Ghanaian registrants living abroad will be charged a registration fee, payable when booking the appointment for an interview with a Registration Officer (Ghana n.d.f).

The related fees are as follows:

- ECOWAS Sub-Region: GHS equivalent of US\$55.00
- Rest of Africa: GHS equivalent of US\$75.00
- Rest of the world: GHS equivalent of US\$115.00 (Ghana n.d.f).

2.4 Permanent Residents of Ghana Applying from Abroad

Information on the requirements and procedures for permanent residents of Ghana to apply for a Ghana Card from abroad could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Requirements and Procedures to Replace the Ghana Card

The fee to replace a non-citizen Ghana Card is the GHS equivalent of US\$60 (Ghana n.d.e). Additional information on the requirements and procedures to replace a non-citizen Ghana Card could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.1 From Within Ghana

According to the NIA, Ghanaians can replace their lost, stolen or damaged Ghana Card at NIA regional or district offices for a fee of 125 GHS [C\$15] (Ghana n.d.g).

To begin the process of replacing the card, the NIA indicates that applicants must report the loss, theft, or damage of their card to the closest police station and request a "police extract" or police report (Ghana n.d.h). The same source notes that applicants must submit the police report or extract and, if applicable, their damaged Ghana Card to the registration office (Ghana n.d.h). The website then lists the following steps to complete the card replacement process at a registration office:

Step 1

1. For lost or stolen cards - a Registration Officer reviews your Police Report
2. For damaged or defaced cards - a Registration Officer reviews your Police Extract and your damaged or defaced Ghana Card

Step 2

A Registration Officer assists you to complete and sign or mark an electronic request form and submits it on your behalf for review

Step 3

An Approval Officer reviews your request and supporting documents and grants the necessary approvals. You will be informed if your request is declined with reasons

Step 4

Upon approval, a Registration Officer directs you to make the necessary payment at a CalBank branch or ... any approved payment platform and where applicable, retrieves your damaged or defaced Ghana Card from you

Step 5

A Registration Officer captures the serial number and PIN you received after making payment, your biometrics (10 fingerprints, irises [scans] and photograph) and your signature onto the National Identity Register

Step 6

A Registration Officer prints and issues a new Ghana Card to you. Your Ghana Card will be issued to you using your biometrics. (Ghana n.d.h)

3.2 From Abroad

Information on replacing a Ghana Card from outside of Ghana was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the NIA, the fees for replacing a lost, stolen or damaged Ghana Card from abroad depend on the following jurisdictions:

- ECOWAS countries: US\$55
- Rest of Africa: US\$75
- Rest of the world: US\$115 (Ghana n.d.g).

4. Uses of the Ghana Card

According to the NIA, the Ghana Card serves as proof of identity or citizenship, allowing Ghanaians to access services like health, education, communication, insurance, and banking (Ghana n.d.b). It is required for all transactions where an applicant must prove their identity, including "opening and

operating a bank account in Ghana, registering a plot of land in Ghana, applying for a driver's license in Ghana and for acquiring a Ghanaian passport in/or outside Ghana" (Ghana n.d.b). The card also grants its holders living abroad the ability to travel to Ghana without obtaining a visa (Ghana n.d.b).

4.1 Prevalence of Use

As of 7 November 2025, the NIA counts over 19 million Ghanaians registered for a Ghana Card and over 18 million cards issued (Ghana n.d.i). The CIA *World Factbook* estimates the population of Ghana to be 34,589,092 as of 2024 (US 2025-12-10).

In addition, the NIA says that there are 12 public institutions and 77 private institutions who have access to NIR data and can verify their clients' and beneficiaries' identities, including public institutions like the Ghana Police Service, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority, and the Births and Deaths Registry, and private corporations like banks, financial and telecommunications institutions (Ghana n.d.j).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] ECOWAS is a regional organization promoting economic integration and cooperation in West Africa formed by the 15 member states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo (ECOWAS n.d). [\[back\]](#)

[2] FIMS is the platform that provides permanent residents of Ghana with access to e-government services (Ghana n.d.e). [\[back\]](#)

[3] A scratch card is the "only" method of payment for a non-citizen Ghana Card (VFS Global n.d.). It has a serial number and a PIN (VFS Global n.d). [\[back\]](#)

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