ScrubsToStates
From Kenyan RN to US Nurse — step by step

FREE · INTERACTIVE PDF

The Kenyan RN to USA Checklist

Every step from your NCK licence to a US nursing job and green card — with tick boxes, a cost worksheet and contract red flags. Click, type and save as you go.



Illustration only — not real documents.

6 steps, in order

60+ tick boxes

KSh/USD cost worksheet

10 red flags

This checklist belongs to

Started on

Target state

Tip: open in Adobe Acrobat Reader, Foxit, or your browser and save after typing. Fields stay on your device.

Start: go to contents →

Follow on WhatsApp

Your roadmap — tap a step to jump to it

1 NCK — 2 TruMerit — 3 NCLEX — 4 State Board — 5 VisaScreen — 6 Visa & Job

Finish line: green card + US RN

Independent information only — not legal or immigration advice. ScrubsToStates is not a recruiter and is not affiliated with NCSBN, TruMerit, NCK or any employer. NCLEX is a registered trademark of NCSBN. Facts checked 14 Nov 2026 — fees and rules change, so always confirm officially.

CLICK ANY LINE TO JUMP

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Who it's for

Kenyan-trained registered nurses — students, newly registered RNs, nurses studying for the NCLEX, and nurses who have passed it — who want to work as an RN in the USA and want an honest, recruiter-free overview of the usual path.

How to use it

- Click a box when a task is done; click the progress boxes to fill each step's bar.
- Type dates, notes and amounts into the fields, then save the file.
- Blue/teal underlined text opens official websites.
- Every page has a Back to contents button (top right).

YOUR 6-STEP JOURNEY

Steps 1–2: Kenya paperwork & evaluation

1 STEP 1 OF 6 NCK Verification

US boards and evaluators need proof, sent by the Nursing Council of Kenya, that your Kenyan registration and licence are genuine and in good standing.

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Create or sign in to your account on the NCK Online Services Portal (osp.nckenya.com).
- [ ] Make sure your annual practising licence (retention) is current — renew it first if it has lapsed.
- [ ] Apply for verification for outmigration in the portal and upload what it asks for (typically ID/passport, NCK certificates, valid licence).
- [ ] Generate the invoice and pay the fee shown on the portal. Save the receipt in your USRN folder.
- [ ] Note exactly where the verification must go (e.g. TruMerit or a state board) and confirm it was sent.

Done on: **Notes:**

2 STEP 2 OF 6 Credential Evaluation (TruMerit, formerly CGFNS)

TruMerit compares your Kenyan nursing education and licence to US standards. Many state boards require a TruMerit report — check which one your board accepts before ordering.

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Check your chosen state board's website for the exact evaluation report it requires.
- [ ] Create a TruMerit account at trumerit.org and order the service your board requires.
- [ ] Ask your school (KMTC / university) to send official transcripts directly to TruMerit.
- [ ] Ask NCK to send your licence validation directly to TruMerit (links to Step 1).
- [ ] Track your file online, answer any requests quickly, and save the final report.

Done on: **Notes:**

YOUR 6-STEP JOURNEY

Steps 3–4: NCLEX & your US licence

3 STEP 3 OF 6 NCLEX-RN (with your state board)

You apply to ONE US state board for licensure by examination, register with Pearson VUE, and test once the board makes you eligible. Requirements differ by state (documents, evaluation type, fingerprints, SSN rules) — read your board's page carefully.

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Choose a state board and download its checklist for internationally educated nurses.
- [ ] Submit the board's application for licensure by examination and pay its fee.
- [ ] Register with Pearson VUE using the exact name on your passport (it must match your ID at the test centre).
- [ ] Pay the NCLEX fee: US$200 now (US$350 from 1 Feb 2027), plus US$150 + VAT if you test at an international centre.
- [ ] Receive your Authorization to Test (ATT) and book within its validity dates.
- [ ] Sit and pass the NCLEX-RN. Save your results letter.

Done on: **Notes:**

4 STEP 4 OF 6 State Board Licence

After you pass, your board finishes its checks and issues your RN licence. Some boards add steps such as fingerprints/background checks.

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Complete any remaining board requirements (fingerprints, background check, forms).
- [ ] Receive your RN licence and record the licence number and expiry date.
- [ ] Check that your licence appears on Nursys (NCSBN's licence verification site).
- [ ] Note the renewal date and any continuing-education rules for that state.

Done on: **Notes:**

YOUR 6-STEP JOURNEY

Step 5: English test & VisaScreen

5

STEP 5 OF 6

English Test & VisaScreen Certificate

US immigration law requires foreign-educated nurses to hold a health care worker certificate. TruMerit's VisaScreen checks your education, every licence you have ever held, English proficiency, and that you passed the NCLEX-RN (or TruMerit's Qualifying Exam).

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Check TruMerit's VisaScreen page for the current accepted English tests and minimum RN scores.
- [ ] Book an approved test at a test centre — TruMerit does not accept at-home versions.
- [ ] Sit the test, get your score report and confirm it meets the RN minimums.
- [ ] Order VisaScreen at trumerit.org (reuse your TruMerit account from Step 2 if you have one).
- [ ] Request validation of ALL licences you have ever held (NCK and any others).
- [ ] Make sure proof of your NCLEX-RN pass reaches TruMerit.
- [ ] Receive your VisaScreen certificate and note its expiry date.

Done on: **Notes:**

Verified today: English rules for VisaScreen

• Accepted tests (TruMerit list): Cambridge English (B2 First, C1 Advanced, C2 Proficiency), TOEFL iBT, Academic IELTS, Michigan English Test, OET and PTE Academic.
• Kenya is not on the exemption list. The exemption needs entry-level education in the UK, Australia, Canada (except Quebec), New Zealand, Ireland or the US, taught in English.
• Score rules changed on 12 May 2026 (HRSA update). Tests taken before then follow the old scores, and tests taken on or after it follow the new ones. Check the current table before booking.

Source: trumerit.org → VisaScreen: Visa Credentials Assessment (checked 14 Nov 2026)

YOUR 6-STEP JOURNEY

Step 6: Job offer, visa & relocation

6

STEP 6 OF 6

Job Offer, EB-3 Visa & Relocation

Most nurses immigrate through an employer-sponsored immigrant visa (usually EB-3). Registered nurses are a "Schedule A" occupation, so the employer files Form I-140 directly with USCIS without first getting a Department of Labor certification. After approval, the National Visa Center (NVC) processes your case until your priority date is current.

PROGRESS — click one box for each task you finish

START DONE

- [ ] Compare employers/recruiters in writing (see Contract Red Flags, p. 9) before signing anything.
- [ ] Get the full contract in writing, take time to read it, and get independent advice if you can.
- [ ] Employer files Form I-140 with USCIS. Record your receipt number and priority date.
- [ ] After approval, watch for the NVC welcome letter. Log in to CEAC, pay the fees and file Form DS-260.
- [ ] Upload civil documents: passport, birth certificate, police certificate, marriage certificate if any.
- [ ] Track the monthly Visa Bulletin and the NVC scheduling tool for Nairobi.
- [ ] Do the medical exam with an embassy-approved panel physician once your interview is scheduled.
- [ ] Attend your interview at the US Embassy Nairobi with your passport and original documents.
- [ ] Plan travel, the first month's costs and housing. Confirm your start date with the employer in writing.
- [ ] After arrival, get your Social Security number, a US bank account and the green card that is mailed to you.

Done on: **Notes:**

GATHER · SCAN · KEEP IN ONE "USRN" FOLDER

Document Checklist

DOCUMENT	HAVE IT	SCANNED	NOTES / EXPIRY
Passport (valid well beyond your travel date)	☐	☐	
National ID card	☐	☐	
Birth certificate	☐	☐	
Marriage certificate / name-change proof (if any)	☐	☐	
KCSE certificate & result slip	☐	☐	
Nursing diploma / degree certificate	☐	☐	
Official transcripts (sent directly by school)	☐	☐	
NCK registration certificate	☐	☐	
Current NCK practising licence	☐	☐	
NCK verification / good standing confirmation	☐	☐	
TruMerit evaluation report	☐	☐	
NCLEX results letter / ATT	☐	☐	
US state RN licence	☐	☐	
English test score report	☐	☐	
VisaScreen certificate	☐	☐	
Police certificate (Kenya: Certificate of Good Conduct)	☐	☐	
Employment / experience letters	☐	☐	
Signed job offer & contract	☐	☐	
Form I-140 approval notice	☐	☐	
NVC welcome letter / case number	☐	☐	
Medical exam results (from panel physician)	☐	☐	
Passport photos (US visa specification)	☐	☐	

Tip: name files clearly (e.g. "2026-NCK-licence.pdf"), keep originals safe and never post ID, passport or licence numbers in public groups.

FILL IN YOUR OWN NUMBERS

Cost Worksheet (KSh / USD)

Verified fees (checked 14 Nov 2026) — everything else is left blank on purpose

NCLEX registration (Pearson VUE): US$200 for US licensure, rising to US$350 from 1 Feb 2027. Testing at an international centre adds a non-refundable US$150 scheduling fee (+VAT where applicable). Registration fees are non-refundable. State board licence fees: contact your board.

Source: nclex.com → Fees & Payment

ITEM	KSh	USD	PAID ON / RECEIPT
NCK verification (portal invoice)			
NCK licence renewal (if needed)			
School transcripts & courier			
TruMerit credential evaluation			
State board application fee			
NCLEX registration (see box above)			
NCLEX international scheduling fee			
NCLEX review course / books			
English test (IELTS / OET / TOEFL / PTE ...)			
VisaScreen certificate			
Fingerprints / background check			
Police certificate			
Passport (new / renewal)			
Visa fees (NVC / State Dept)			
Medical exam (panel physician)			
Flights to the US			
First month: housing & deposit			
First month: food & transport			
Other:			
Other:			
TOTAL (add it up yourself)			(fill in totals)

Exchange rate used (KSh per 1 USD) and date:

Always check the current fee on the official website on the day you pay — many fees are charged in US dollars by card, and your bank may add charges.

READ BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

Contract Red Flags

1 Breach / repayment clause ☐
How much do you owe if you resign or are fired early? Does it reduce over time? Is it a fixed sum or "damages" of unknown size?

2 Contract length ☐
Years or hours? When does the clock start — on arrival, licence, or first shift?

3 Who pays what ☐
I-140 and legal fees, visa and NVC fees, VisaScreen, NCLEX, flights, housing. Get every item in writing.

4 Arbitration & "loser pays" ☐
Must disputes go to private arbitration, with fees or lawyer costs charged to you?

5 Pay, shifts & location ☐
Are the hourly rate, overtime, unit and city stated? Can they move you without your agreement?

6 Non-compete ☐
Are you blocked from working for other employers after you leave?

7 Pressure to sign today ☐
A fair offer gives you time to read it and ask questions.

8 Holding your documents ☐
Nobody should keep your passport, certificates or licence.

9 Promises not in the contract ☐
If it was said on a call or in WhatsApp, ask for it in the contract.

10 No copy for you ☐
Always keep your own signed copy of every page.

REAL CASE · NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL · 29 MAY 2025

US$663,668.66 recovered for 71 foreign-recruited nurses

A New York staffing agency (Advanced Care Staffing / Priority Care Staffing) recruited nurses from abroad and sponsored their visas, but its contracts made nurses pay up to US$20,000 if they resigned or were fired before the end of a 2–3 year term. The Attorney General found it violated the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The agency had to repay the nurses, forgive outstanding debts and remove the penalty and mandatory-arbitration terms.

Source: ag.ny.gov press release, 29 May 2025 — tap to open

Employer / recruiter I am comparing:

PROTECT YOUR MONEY, DOCUMENTS AND LICENCE

Scam Signs & Official Links

Warning signs of a scam

- [ ] Asks you to pay a "placement" or "processing" fee to get a job or visa — often to a personal M-Pesa or bank account.
- [ ] Guarantees a visa, a job, a start date, or that you will pass the NCLEX.
- [ ] Offers a way to skip the NCLEX, the English test or VisaScreen, or sells "leaked" exam questions.
- [ ] Asks for your passport, certificates or portal passwords "for processing".
- [ ] Recruits only through WhatsApp or social media, with no company website, address or registration you can check.
- [ ] Sends links to look-alike websites. Official US government sites end in .gov. Type addresses yourself.

Official links (tap to open)

NCLEX (NCSBN) — registration, fees, candidate bullet...
www.nclex.com/

NCSBN — US boards of nursing contacts
www.ncsbn.org/contact-bon

Nursys — US nursing licence verification
www.nursys.com/

TruMerit (formerly CGFNS) — evaluations & VisaScreen
www.trumerit.org/

Nursing Council of Kenya
nckenya.org/

NCK Online Services Portal
osp.nckenya.com/

US State Dept — employment-based immigrant visas
travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/employ...

US State Dept — monthly Visa Bulletin
travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bull...

USCIS — Form I-140
www.uscis.gov/i-140

US Embassy in Kenya — visas
ke.usembassy.gov/visas/

My notes

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