

## How to Apply / Visa Overview

### Overview

In general, a citizen of a foreign country who seeks to enter the United States must first obtain a U.S. visa, which is placed into the traveler's passport. Certain international travelers may be eligible to enter the United States without a visa if they meet the requirements for the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The VWP allows travelers, with a valid electronic passport, to enter the United States without a visa for up to 90 days for business or pleasure. For all VWP qualifications please visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>. Anyone traveling to the United States for any reason other than business or pleasure requires a visa

### Do I need a visa to travel to the United States?

Travelers that qualify for the United States Visa Waiver Program must obtain authorization to enter the United States using the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta>. Travelers whose ESTA applications are rejected and still wish to travel to the United States, will need to complete a Nonimmigrant Visa Application on this website.

Some travelers who are citizens of a Visa Waiver Program partner country may still be unable to travel to the United States under this program. If you have traveled to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, or Yemen after March 2011, you are not eligible to travel under the Visa Waiver Program. Similarly, if you are a dual national of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria, you are also not eligible to travel under the Visa Waiver Program. These travelers should apply for a nonimmigrant visa well in advance of the desired travel date to avoid any unnecessary delays.

Travelers with imminent travel may request an expedited visa appointment. To request an expedited visa appointment, first schedule a regular visa appointment on the closest available date. Then sign-in to your account, click 'Continue', select 'Request Expedite' and follow the instructions. The traveler should include in the request the date and purpose of the travel as well as a copy of any U.S. Customs and Border Protection message he/she received regarding their ESTA status and, if applicable, why the ESTA application was denied.

More information about restrictions to travel under the Visa Waiver Program, including the requirement for an electronic passport, is available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html>.

### Steps required to apply for a US visa

If required to apply for a visa to travel to the United States the process includes the following steps:

1. Determine the type of visa required to travel to the United States. Information about visa types can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/all-visa-categories.html>.
2. Complete the online visa application form, DS-160. The DS-160 is a U.S. Government on-line form and can only be completed at <https://ceac.state.gov/CEAC>. Each applicant must complete this form before using any services on this website.
3. Return to this website and complete the following application steps to schedule a Consular Section appointment:
  - a. Create a user account.
  - b. Add applicant information to complete the registration.
  - c. Enter the DS-160 confirmation number for each applicant applying for a visa.
  - d. Provide an address or select a location where you want to receive your documents from the Consular Section.
  - e. Pay the nonimmigrant visa (MRV) application fee(s) using one of the payment methods available in the country where you reside. See [Visa Fees](#) for available payment options.
  - f. Schedule a Consular Section appointment
4. Attend the Consular Section appointment.
5. After your interview, please follow specific instructions provided by the consular section or check this website for visa status and delivery information.

### Non-Resident Applicants

The US Embassy and Consulates in Mexico have a specific policy for accepting nonimmigrant visa applications for applicants not ordinarily resident in Mexico. Please visit the Embassy website at <https://mx.usembassy.gov/visas/#visa> for additional information.

### Renewing a visa without an interview

There are some Consular Sections that have a visa renewal process where applicants who qualify, may not require an in person interview. Eligibility is determined based on the answers provided to questions during the appointment scheduling process. However, consular officers reserve the right to require an interview for any visa applicant.

Applicants who qualify for the "Renewal Interview Waiver" process will be given instructions on how to courier-in or drop-off their documents at the selected consular section after completing the visa appointment scheduling flow through this website.

The specific requirements may vary by country, but in general to be eligible for renewal interview waiver processing, applicants must meet some or all of the following requirements:

1. Be renewing a visa issued in the country where you are applying that is either still current or expired within the past 12 to 48 months
2. Be a local citizen or permanent resident of the country where submitting the application and be physically present in the country
3. All 10 fingerprints were taken at the time the last visa was issued
4. The previous visa was not lost, stolen, or revoked
5. The most recent visa application was not refused
6. Meet other eligibility requirements as applicable

Visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate website for country-specific information on the renewal interview waiver process at <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

### Interview waivers based on age

There are some Consular Sections that have a process to waive interviews based on age related criteria. Eligibility is determined based on the answers provided to questions during the appointment scheduling process. However, consular officers reserve the right to require an interview for any visa applicant.

Applicants who qualify for the "Interview Waiver" process will be given instructions on how to courier-in or drop-off their documents at the selected consular section after completing the visa appointment scheduling flow through this website.

The specific requirements may vary by country, but in general the following may be eligible for interview waiver processing based on age:

- Applicants under the age of 14 or over the age of 79 (since they are not required to be fingerprinted).

Note: When applying for a visa in Mexico, the applicants need to be under the age of 7 years old to potentially qualify for Interview Waiver.

Visit the U.S. Embassy or Consulate website for country-specific information on the interview waiver process at <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

## Discovering An Error On Your Visa

The information printed on an issued U.S. visa should match the information in the applicant’s passport. If you discover an error (misspelling, error in the date of birth, error in the expiration date, etc.) on your U.S. visa, the applicant or a designated proxy can contact the Consular Section via:

Mexico City: [visas\\_mexico@state.gov](mailto:visas_mexico@state.gov)  
Merida: [Meridavisas@state.gov](mailto:Meridavisas@state.gov)  
Guadalajara: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/visas>  
Monterrey: [MonterreyVisas@state.gov](mailto:MonterreyVisas@state.gov)  
Nuevo Laredo: [NVLVisas@state.gov](mailto:NVLVisas@state.gov)  
Matamoros: [MatamorosVisas@state.gov](mailto:MatamorosVisas@state.gov)  
Ciudad Juarez: [cdjconsularpassback@state.gov](mailto:cdjconsularpassback@state.gov)  
Nogales: [NogalesVisas@state.gov](mailto:NogalesVisas@state.gov)  
Hermosillo: [HermosilloVisas@state.gov](mailto:HermosilloVisas@state.gov)  
Tijuana: [TijuanaInfo@state.gov](mailto:TijuanaInfo@state.gov)

## Visa Denied

If an applicant has been denied a visa, the consular officer will give the applicant a letter explaining why the visa was refused.

If the refusal letter is marked 214(b), it will generally explain that the applicant does not qualify for a visa at this time under U.S. immigration laws. If the applicant chooses to reapply, the applicant needs to submit a new application, pay a new visa fee, schedule a new interview, and provide information on how the circumstances have changed since the initial visa application.

If the refusal letter is marked 221(g), it will generally include additional actions that the applicant needs to take to continue with his/her visa application. The letter will also have instructions on how to complete the additional required steps. The applicant will not have to pay the visa application fee again.

Occasionally applications will require additional administrative processing, which may delay the adjudication of a visa. In the event that administrative processing is required, the letter will also be marked 221(g) and provide additional instructions.

If you need specific information concerning the visa denial please visit the following link for further instructions: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/visas>.

### Nonimmigrant Visas

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