Visitor Visa

**Overview**

Generally, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for a temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. Visitor visas are nonimmigrant visas for persons who want to enter the United States temporarily for business (visa category B-1), for tourism (visa category B-2), or for a combination of both purposes (B-1/B-2).

Here are some examples of activities permitted with a visitor visa:

[Business (B-1)](javascript:void(0);" \o "Business (B-1))

* Consult with business associates
* Attend a scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conference
* Settle an estate
* Negotiate a contract

[Tourism (B-2)](javascript:void(0);" \o "Tourism (B-2))

* Tourism
* Vacation (holiday)
* Visit with friends or relatives
* Medical treatment
* Participation in social events hosted by fraternal, social, or service organizations
* Participation by amateurs in musical, sports, or similar events or contests, if not being paid for participating
* Enrollment in a short recreational course of study, not for credit toward a degree (for example, a two-day cooking class while on vacation)

[Travel Purposes Not Permitted On Visitor Visas](javascript:void(0);" \o "Travel Purposes Not Permitted On Visitor Visas)

These are some examples of activities that require different categories of visas and cannot be done while on a visitor visa:

* Study
* Employment
* Paid performances, or any professional performance before a paying audience
* Arrival as a crewmember on a ship or aircraft
* Work as foreign press, in radio, film, print journalism, or other information media
* Permanent residence in the United States

Visitor visas will also not be issued for birth tourism (travel for the primary purpose of giving birth in the United States to obtain U.S. citizenship for their child).

**How to Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary by U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Please consult the instructions on the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/).

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

Interviews are generally required for visa applicants with certain limited exceptions below. Consular officers may require an interview of any visa applicant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14-79 | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You should schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

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| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

**Prepare for Your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview. If your visa is approved, you may also need to pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**$185**

**Select your nationality to see Issuance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

* Review the instructions available on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to learn more about fee payment.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport** valid for travel to the United States – Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup)). Each individual who needs a visa must submit a separate application, including any family members listed in your passport.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** [**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ds160)**confirmation page.**
* **Application fee payment receipt,** if you are required to pay before your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails,](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html) you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified. For example, additional requested documents may include evidence of:

* The purpose of your trip,
* Your intent to depart the United States after your trip, and/or
* Your ability to pay all costs of the trip.

Evidence of your employment and/or your family ties may be sufficient to show the purpose of your trip and your intent to return to your home country. If you cannot cover all the costs for your trip, you may show evidence that another person will cover some or all costs for your trip.

**Note:** Visa applicants must qualify on the basis of the applicant's residence and ties abroad, rather than assurances from U.S. family and friends. A letter of invitation or Affidavit of Support is not needed to apply for a visitor visa. If you choose to bring a letter of invitation or Affidavit of Support to your interview, please remember it is not one of the factors used in determining whether to issue or deny the visa.

**Attend Your Visa Interview**

A consular officer will interview you to determine whether you are qualified to receive a visitor visa. You must establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive a visa.    
  
Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans are taken as part of the application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, the consular officer may determine that your application requires further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html).  The consular officer will inform you if this required.

After the visa is approved, you may need to pay a visa issuance fee (if applicable to your nationality), and make arrangements for the return of the passport and visa to you.  Review the [visa processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html) to learn more.

**Entering the United States**

A visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (generally an airport) and request permission to enter the United States. A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port-of-entry have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States. If you are allowed to enter the United States, the CBP official will provide an admission stamp or a paper Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. Learn more about admissions and entry requirements, restrictions about bringing food, agricultural products, and other restricted/prohibited goods, and more by reviewing the [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup).

**Extending Your Stay**

See [Extend Your Stay](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website to learn about requesting to extend your stay beyond the date indicated on your admission stamp or paper Form I-94.

Failure to depart the United States on time will result in being [out of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/glossary.html#outofstatus). Under U.S. law, visas of individuals who are out of status are automatically voided ([Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup)).  Any multiple entry visa that was voided due to being out of status will not be valid for future entries into the United States.

Failure to depart the United States on time may also result in you being ineligible for visas in the future. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) and [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html) to learn more.

**Change of Status**

If your plans change while in the United States (for example, you marry a U.S. citizen or receive an offer of employment), you may be able to request a change in your nonimmigrant status to another category through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). See [Change My Nonimmigrant Status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more.

While you are in the United States, receiving a change of status from USCIS does not require you to apply for a new visa.  However, once you depart the United States you must apply for a new visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the appropriate category for your travel.

**Additional Information**

* An individual on a visitor visa (B1/B2) is not permitted to accept employment or work in the United States.
* There is no guarantee you will be issued a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.
* A valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid. Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date. If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.

[Travel for Medical Treatment](javascript:void(0);" \o "Travel for Medical Treatment)

If you are seeking medical treatment in the United States, the consular officer may ask for further documents at your visa interview, which may include:

* Medical diagnosis from a local physician, explaining the nature of the ailment and the reason you need treatment in the United States.
* Letter from a physician or medical facility in the United States, stating they are willing to treat your specific ailment and detailing the projected length and cost of treatment (including doctors’ fees, hospitalization fees, and all medical-related expenses).
* Proof that your transportation, medical, and living expenses in the United States will be paid. This may be in the form of bank or other statements of income/savings or certified copies of income tax returns (either yours or the person or organization paying for your treatment).

[Visitor Visas for Personal or Domestic Employees (B-1)](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visitor Visas for Personal or Domestic Employees (B-1))

You may apply for a B-1 visitor visa to work in the United States as a personal or domestic employee for your employer in limited situations. You may work in the United States on a visitor visa if your employer is:

* A U.S. citizen who has a permanent home or is stationed in a foreign country, but is visiting or is assigned to the United States temporarily; or
* A foreign citizen who is in the United States on one of the following nonimmigrant visa categories:  B, E, F, H, I, J, L, M, O, P, or Q.

Learn more about your rights in the United States and protection available to you by reading the [Legal Rights and Protections](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/rights.html) pamphlet.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#apply), above). Some applicants seeking to renew their visas in certain visa classes may be eligible for the Interview Waiver (IW) which allows qualified individuals to apply for visa renewals without being interviewed in person by a U.S. consular officer. Review the instructions on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to determine if the IW is available and if you qualify.

[Do I need a visa if I have an ABTC?](javascript:void(0);" \o "Do I need a visa if I have an ABTC?)

Yes, you will still need a visa to travel to the United States, unless you qualify for the [Visa Waiver Program](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html). Having an Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travelers Card (ABTC) does not change visa requirements, your visa status, or the visa process for travel to the United States.

[How can I use my ABTC when I apply for my visa?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How can I use my ABTC when I apply for my visa?)

If you have an Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travelers Card (ABTC),  you might be able to schedule an expedited visa interview appointment. Review the instructions for scheduling expedited appointments on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

[Visa Annotations for Certain Maritime Industry Workers](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Annotations for Certain Maritime Industry Workers)

Certain foreign maritime workers are eligible to apply for a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) once in the U.S. If you, as a maritime industry worker, will perform services in secure port areas, your visa must be annotated “TWIC Letter Received.” Workers whose visas are not annotated will not be permitted by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to apply for a TWIC.

In order for your visa to be annotated, you must obtain a letter from your employer explaining the need for a TWIC and that you are a potential TWIC applicant. See a [template example](https://fam.state.gov/fam/09FAM/09FAM040309.html#M403_9_5_B) of this letter. You must present this letter when you apply for the B-1 visa. You must meet all other eligibility requirements for a B-1 visa.

Complete information about the TWIC program is available on TSA’s website at [https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/twic](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup).

[Visa Denial and Ineligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Ineligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities, denials and waivers.

[I was refused a visa, under Section 214(b). May I reapply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was refused a visa, under Section 214(b). May I reapply?)

Yes, if you feel circumstances have changed regarding your application. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) to learn more.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html).

[Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizens of Canada and Bermuda)

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not require visas to enter the United States, for visit, tourism and temporary business travel purposes. For more information see [U.S. Embassy Ottawa website](https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/do-i-need-a-visa/), [U.S. Consulate Hamilton website](https://bm.usconsulate.gov/consulate/hamilton/) and [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup).

Additional resources for Canadian visitors to the United States can be found on the U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites in Canada.

[Citizens of China](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizens of China)

In accordance with the agreement signed between the United States and China to extend visa validity, beginning on November 29, 2016, Chinese citizens with 10-year B1, B2 or B1/B2 visas in Peoples’ Republic of China passports will be required to update their biographical and other information from their visa application via a website every two years, or upon getting a new passport or B1, B2, or B1/B2 visa, whichever occurs first.  This mechanism is called EVUS - Electronic Visa Update System.

The EVUS website is now open to the public for enrollments at [www.EVUS.gov](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup).  CBP will not collect a fee for EVUS enrollment at this time. CBP anticipates the eventual implementation of an EVUS enrollment fee, but does not have a time frame. Until the implementation of a fee, travelers can enroll in EVUS without charge.  The Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will keep visa holders informed of new information throughout the year. For further information, please visit [www.cbp.gov/EVUS](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup).‎

根据美中双方签署的延长签证有效期的协议，自2016年11月29日起，凡持有10 年 期B1，B2 或 B1/B2签证的中华人民共和国护照持有人需要每两年或在获取新护照或最长有效期的B1、B2或B1/B2签证时时（以先到者为准），通过网站更新他们签证申请上的个人资料及其它信息。这个机制我们称之为EVUS –签证更新电子系统。

EVUS的登记网站[www.EVUS.gov](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup) 现已开放接受登记。美国海关和边境保护局（CBP）目前不会收取登记费用。美国海关和边境保护局预期EVUS登记收费最终会实施，但目前尚未落实执行时间。在收费实施前，旅客可以免费完成EVUS登记。美国国土安全部海关和边境保护局将在今年及时向签证持有人公布最新的信息。获取更多的信息，请访问[www.cbp.gov/EVUS](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ExternalPopup)。

[Citizens of Mexico](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizens of Mexico)

Citizens and permanent residents of Mexico generally must have a nonimmigrant visa or Border Crossing Card (also known as a "Laser Visa"). For ease of travel, the B-1/B-2 and the Border Crossing Card have been combined into one document (DSP-150). Select [Border Crossing Card](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/border-crossing-card.html) to learn more about this card.

Please visit [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) websites for more information regarding applying for a visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulates in Mexico.

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* Case-Specific Questions - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* General Questions - review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

Student Visa

**Overview**

Generally, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. You must have a student visa to study in the United States. Your course of study and the type of school you plan to attend determine whether you need an F visa or an M visa.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To enter the United States to attend:** | **You need the following visa category:** |
| **University or college** | F |
| **High School** |
| **Private elementary school** |
| **Seminary** |
| **Conservatory** |
| **Another academic institution, including a language training program** |
| **Vocational or other recognized nonacademic institution, other than a language training program** | M |

**Students cannot travel on the Visa Waiver Program or with Visitor Visas**A student visa (F or M) is required to study in the United States. Foreign nationals may not study after entering on a visitor (B) visa or through the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), except to undertake recreational study (non-credit) as part of a tourist visit. For more information on the VWP, see [Visa Waiver Program](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html).

**For short periods of recreational study, a Visitor (B) visa may be appropriate**  
A visitor (B) visa permits enrollment in a short recreational course of study, which is not for credit toward a degree or academic certificate. Learn more about [Visitor Visas](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html).

Study leading to a U.S. conferred degree or certificate is never permitted on a visitor (B) visa, even if it is for a short duration. For example, a student in a distance learning program that  requires a period of time on the institution’s U.S. campus must obtain a student (F or M) visa prior to entering the United States.

**Student Acceptance at a SEVP Approved School**The first step is to apply to a SEVP-approved school in the United States.  After the SEVP-approved school accepts your enrollment, you will be registered for the [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) and must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee.  The SEVP-approved school will issue you a Form I-20.  After you receive the Form I-20 and register in SEVIS, you may apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a student (F or M) visa.  You must present the Form I-20 to the consular officer when you attend your visa interview.

If your spouse and/or children intend to live with you in the United States while you study, they must also enroll in SEVIS, obtain individual Form I-20s from the SEVP-approved school, and apply for a visa (but they do not pay the SEVIS fee).

Visit the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) website to learn more about SEVIS and the SEVIS I-901 Fee.

Visit the Department of State [EducationUSA](https://educationusa.state.gov/" \o "Education USA) website to learn about educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate study, and an overview of the application process.  You can also visit the DHS [Study in the States](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) school search page to search for SEVP-certified schools.

**How To Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary by U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Please consult the instructions on the [embassy or consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/).

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application, and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo**–You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

Interviews are generally required for visa applicants with certain limited exceptions below. Consular officers may require an interview of any visa applicant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| **13 and younger** | Generally not required |
| **14 - 79** | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| **80 and older** | Generally not required |

You should schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

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| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

**New Students** – Student (F and M) visas for new students can be issued up to 365 days in advance of the start date for a course of study.  However, you will not be allowed to enter the United States on your student visa more than 30 days before the start date.

**Continuing Students**- Student (F and M) visas for continuing students may be issued at any time, as long as the student is currently enrolled at a SEVP-approved school or institution and in SEVIS.  Continuing students may enter the United States at any time before classes start.

**Prepare for Your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview. If your visa is approved, you may also pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**Application Fee**

**$185**

**Select your nationality to see Issurance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

* Review the instructions available on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to learn more about fee payment.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport** valid for travel to the United States – Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup)). Each individual who needs a visa must submit a separate application, including any family members listed in your passport.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** [**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ds160)**confirmation page.**
* **Application fee payment receipt,** if you are required to pay before your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails,](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html) you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).
* **Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status-For Academic and Language Students, Form I-20 or Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (M-1) Student Status for Vocational Students, Form I-20** – Your school will send you a Form I-20 once they have entered your information in the SEVIS database. You and your school official must sign the Form I-20.  All students must be registered in the Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS). Your spouse and/or minor children, if they intend live in the United States with you, will each receive an individual Form I-20.

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

A consular officer will interview you to determine your qualifications for a student visa, and may request additional documents, such as evidence of:

* Your academic preparation, such as:
  + Transcripts, diplomas, degrees, or certificates from schools you attended; and
  + Standardized test scores required by your U.S. school;
* Your intent to depart the United States upon completion of the course of study; and
* How you will pay all educational, living and travel costs.

Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

**Attend Your Visa Interview**

A consular officer will interview you to determine whether you are qualified to receive a student visa. You must establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive a visa.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans are taken as part of the application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, the consular officer may determine that your application requires further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html).  The consular officer will inform you if this is required.

After the visa is approved, you may need to pay a visa issuance fee (if applicable to your nationality), and make arrangements for the return of the passport and visa to you.  Review the [visa processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html) to learn more.

**Entering the United States**

A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States.  A visa only allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (generally an airport) and request permission to enter the United States. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port-of-entry have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States.

After you present your passport, visa, and Form I-20 at the port-of-entry, a CBP official will make this decision.  Once you are allowed to enter the United States, the CBP official will provide an admission stamp or paper Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record.

Learn about procedures for students (with F or M visas) entering the United States on the CBP website under [Arrival Procedures for Students or Exchange Visitors](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup).  Learn about admissions and entry requirements, restrictions about bringing food, agricultural products, and other restricted/prohibited goods, and more by reviewing the [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup).

**Extending Your Stay**

Foreign students in the United States with F visas must depart the United States within 60 days after the program end date listed on Form I-20, including any authorized practical training.

Foreign students may request an extension through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website (see the USCIS [Extend Your Stay](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) page). Additional information to maintain student status is on the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement SEVP website under [Maintaining Your Immigration Status While a Student or Exchange Visitor](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup).

Failure to depart the United States on time will result in being [out of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/glossary.html#outofstatus). Under U.S. law, visas of individuals who are out of status are automatically voided ([Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup)).  Any multiple entry visa that was voided due to being out of status will not be valid for future entries into the United States.

Failure to depart the United States on time may also result in you being ineligible for visas in the future. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) and [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html) to learn more.

**Change of Status**

If your plans change while in the United States (for example, you marry a U.S. citizen or receive an offer of employment), you may be able to request a change in your nonimmigrant status to another category through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). See [Change My Nonimmigrant Status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more.

While you are in the United States, receiving a change of status from USCIS does not require you to apply for a new visa.  However, once you depart the United States you must apply for a new visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the appropriate category for your travel.

**Additional Information**

* There is no guarantee you will be issued a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.
* For information about working in the United States during your study, review [Students and Employment](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) and Form I-765 [Work Authorization Instructions](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website.
* If you have a temporary break in your study, view the information on the SEVP website under [Do Students Returning from Temporary Absences Need New Visas?](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) If your student visa is still valid, but you are outside the United States, you should consult with your Designated School Officials.
* Spouse and children
  + Your spouse and unmarried, minor children who intend to reside with you during your study may apply for F-2 or M-2 visas. Although SEVIS fee payment is not required, your school must issue them an individual Form I-20, which is required to apply for their visas. You must provide a copy of your F-1 or M-1 visa and provide proof of relationship.
  + Your minor children are permitted to attend school in the United States while accompanying you.
  + U.S. Embassies and Consulates will adjudicate visa applications that are based on a same-sex marriage in the same way that we adjudicate applications for opposite gender spouses.
* A valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid. Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date. If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.

[Can I enter the United States more than 30 days in advance?](javascript:void(0);" \o "Can I enter the United States more than 30 days in advance?)

Students on F or M visas are not permitted to enter the United States earlier than 30 days before the start date of their program.  If you wish to enter earlier than 30 days before your start date, you must separately apply and qualify for a visitor (B) visa.

After you are admitted to the United States by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials in visitor (B) visa status, you must separately apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a [change of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) to student (For M) status prior to the start of your program.  You may not begin your course of study until the change of status is approved, and you may encounter lengthy processing times.  You may also depart the United States and re-enter on your student (F or M) visa.

[Optional Practical Training](javascript:void(0);" \o "Optional Practical Training)

Students who are authorized Optional Practical Training (OPT) must have a Form I-20 endorsed for OPT, and apply to USCIS for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). When authorized, OPT is temporary employment that is directly related to the eligible F-1 student's area of study. To learn more about OPT, please visit the [USCIS Website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) and the [ICE International Students](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#ExternalPopup) webpage.

[Attending Public Secondary School](javascript:void(0);" \o "Attending Public Secondary School)

There are restrictions for student (F) visa holders to attend public school in the United States. See [Foreign Students in Public Schools](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa/foreign-students-in-public-schools.html) to learn more.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/student-visa.html#howtoapply), above).

[Visa Denial and Ineligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Ineligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities, denials, and waivers.

[I was refused a visa under section 214(b). May I reapply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was refused a visa under section 214(b). May I reapply?)

You may reapply if you believe you have additional evidence of your qualifications for a student (F or M) visa, or you believe your circumstances have changed. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) to learn more.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws.](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html)

[Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizens of Canada and Bermuda)

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not require visas to enter the United States as students, although they must present a valid Form I-20 at the time of admission. For more information see [information for Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html).

Additional resources for Canadian visitors to the United States can be found on the [U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites in Canada](https://ca.usembassy.gov/).

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* **Case-Specific Questions** - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* **General Questions** - review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

Business

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**A foreigner traveling to the United States to conduct temporary business must have a visitor visa (B) unless qualifying for entry under the Visa Waiver Program.**

Examples of temporary business include:

* Attending business meetings or consultations
* Attending a business convention or conference
* Negotiating contracts

[**Visitor Visa**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html)**B**

For travel to the United States to conduct temporary business.

1. [Overview](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#overview)
2. [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#apply)
3. [Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#fees)
4. [Required Documentation](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#documentation)

[**Visa Waiver Program**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html)**VWP**

Citizens of participating countries (see NOTE below) may be eligible to travel to the United States for short temporary business visits without a visa through the [Visa Waiver Program](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/business.html#ExternalPopup).

Travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program requires ESTA approval.

* [Overview](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html#overview)
* [Participating Countries](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html#participating)
* [ESTA Application](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html#ESTA)
* [Passport Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visa-waiver-program.html#passportrequirements)

[**Canadian & Bermudian Citizens**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html)

While citizens of Canada and Bermuda generally do not need visas to conduct temporary business, some purposes of travel may require a visa.

Traveling to the United States for another reason?

[SEE ALL VISA CATEGORIES](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/all-visa-categories.html)

**NOTE**

With respect to a “country” or “countries” participating in VWP, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that “[w]henever the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan.” 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1).  Accordingly, all references to “country” or “countries” in the Visa Waiver Program authorizing legislation, Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1187, are read to include Taiwan.  This is consistent with the one-China policy of the United States, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979.

Visitor Visa

**Overview**

Generally, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to enter the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for a temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. Visitor visas are nonimmigrant visas for persons who want to enter the United States temporarily for business (visa category B-1), for tourism (visa category B-2), or for a combination of both purposes (B-1/B-2).

Here are some examples of activities permitted with a visitor visa:

[Business (B-1)](javascript:void(0);" \o "Business (B-1))

* Consult with business associates
* Attend a scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conference
* Settle an estate
* Negotiate a contract

[Tourism (B-2)](javascript:void(0);" \o "Tourism (B-2))

* Tourism
* Vacation (holiday)
* Visit with friends or relatives
* Medical treatment
* Participation in social events hosted by fraternal, social, or service organizations
* Participation by amateurs in musical, sports, or similar events or contests, if not being paid for participating
* Enrollment in a short recreational course of study, not for credit toward a degree (for example, a two-day cooking class while on vacation)

[Travel Purposes Not Permitted On Visitor Visas](javascript:void(0);" \o "Travel Purposes Not Permitted On Visitor Visas)

These are some examples of activities that require different categories of visas and cannot be done while on a visitor visa:

* Study
* Employment
* Paid performances, or any professional performance before a paying audience
* Arrival as a crewmember on a ship or aircraft
* Work as foreign press, in radio, film, print journalism, or other information media
* Permanent residence in the United States

Visitor visas will also not be issued for birth tourism (travel for the primary purpose of giving birth in the United States to obtain U.S. citizenship for their child).

**How to Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary by U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Please consult the instructions on the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/).

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

Interviews are generally required for visa applicants with certain limited exceptions below. Consular officers may require an interview of any visa applicant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14-79 | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You should schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

Employment

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**To work in the United States temporarily as a lawful nonimmigrant, temporary workers must qualify for the available visa category based on the planned employment purpose. The steps in the process before applying for a visa vary. Review the employment groupings and categories below.**

[**Temporary Employment Visas**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html)**H L O P Q**

For approved petition-based temporary employment in the United States.

1. [Overview](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#overview)
2. [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#howtoapply)
3. [Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#fees)
4. [Required Documentation](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#documentation)
5. [Spouses and Children](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#spouse)

[**Exchange Visitor Visa**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html)**J**

For certain teachers, professors, summer work travel, and other exchange participants, accepted for approved programs.

1. [Overview](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#overview)
2. [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#howtoapply)
3. [Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#fees)
4. [Required Documentation](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#documentation)
5. [Spouses and Children](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html#spouse)

[**Media Visa**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html)**I**

For members of the foreign media, press, and radio.

1. [Overview](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#overview)
2. [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#howtoapply)
3. [Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#fees)
4. [Required Documentation](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#documentation)
5. [Spouses and Children](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#spouse)

**Trade Treaty**

For executives, managers, and essential workers of qualified companies from treaty countries, who qualify to conduct treaty-based trade or investment in the United States.

[Treaty Trader & Investor Visa](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html) E

[NAFTA Professional Worker Visa](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html) TN/TD

# Temporary Worker Visas

**Overview**

A citizen of a foreign country who wishes to work in the United States must first get the right visa.  If the employment is for a fixed period, the applicant can apply for a temporary employment visa.  There are 11 temporary worker visa categories.  Most applicants for temporary worker visas must have an approved petition.  The prospective employer must file the petition on behalf of the applicant.  U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews the petition.

**Temporary worker visa categories**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Visa category** | **General description – About an individual in this category:** |
| **H-1B:**Person in Specialty Occupation | For applicants working in a specialty occupation. Applicants must have at least a bachelor’s degree, or equivalent experience in the specialty occupation. Includes fashion models, physicians, and DOD project participants. |
| **H-1B1:**Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Professional **-**[Chile](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup), [Singapore](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) | For applicants  from Chile or Singapore working in a specialty occupation. Applicants must have a post-secondary degree involving at least four years of study in the field of specialization. (Note: This is not a petition-based visa. For application procedures, please refer to the website for the [U.S. Embassy in Chile](https://cl.usembassy.gov/visas/) or the [U.S. Embassy in Singapore](https://sg.usembassy.gov/).) |
| **H-2A:** Temporary Agricultural Worker | For applicants performing temporary  or seasonal agricultural work. Only citizens or nationals of designated countries are eligible for this visa.  There are limited exceptions. |
| **H-2B:** Temporary Non-agricultural Worker | For applicants performing temporary or seasonal non- agricultural work. Only citizens or nationals of designated countries are eligible for this visa.  There are limited exceptions. |
| **H-3:** Trainee or Special Education visitor | For applicants receiving training, other than graduate medical or academic training, in any field that is not available in their home country.  Applicants may also participate in practical training programs in the education of children with mental, physical, or emotional disabilities. |
| **L:** Intracompany Transferee | For applicants working in a managerial or executive capacity; or  applicants working in a position requiring specialized knowledge.  The petitioner must be a branch, parent, affiliate, or subsidiary of the applicant’s current employer.  Applicants must have worked for same employer abroad for 1 year within the three preceding years. |
| **O:** Individual with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement | For applicants with an extraordinary ability or achievement in the field of science, art, education, business, or athletics.  Also for applicants who are internationally recognized in the motion picture and television fields.  This category includes persons assisting the above individual. |
| **P-1:** Individual or Team Athlete, or Member of an Entertainment Group | For applicants who are recognized athletes or members of an entertainment/sports group.  They must perform at a specific athletic competition or entertainment performance.  Includes persons providing essential services in support of the above individual. |
| **P-2:** Artist or Entertainer (Individual or Group) | For applicants performing individually or in a group.  They must be part of a reciprocal exchange program between an organization in the United States and an organization in another country. Includes artists providing essential services in support of the above individual. |
| **P-3:** Artist or Entertainer (Individual or Group) | For applicants performing, teaching, or coaching.  They must be part of a program that is unique.  The program can also be a traditional ethnic, folk, cultural, musical, theatrical, or artistic performance or presentation. Includes persons providing essential services in support of the above individual. |
| **Q-1:** Participant in an International Cultural Exchange Program | For applicants participating in an international cultural exchange program.  The program can be for cultural labor and training, or to share the history, culture, and traditions of the applicant’s home country. |

**Labor Certification**

Certain visa categories need an approved labor certification. First, the prospective employer must apply for the labor certification with the [Department of Labor](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup).  Then, the prospective employer can file the Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, Form I-129, with USCIS.  Please refer to the [Instructions for Form I-129](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup)  on the USCIS website to confirm if you need  the labor certification.

**Petition Approval**

Some temporary worker categories are limited in the total number of petitions which can be approved on a yearly basis. Before an applicant can apply for a temporary worker visa, USCIS must first approve the [Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, Form I-129](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup).    For more information about the petition process, see [Working in the U.S.](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) and [Temporary (Nonimmigrant) Workers](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website.  Once USCIS approves the petition, it will send the prospective employer a Notice of Action, Form I-797.

[Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage](javascript:void(0);" \o "Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage)

**How to Apply**

You may apply for a visa when USCIS has approved your petition. There are several steps in the visa application process. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary at the U.S. embassy or consulate where you apply. Please visit the [embassy or consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for instructions on how to apply.

**Complete The Online Visa ApplicationComplete The Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form**[**DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo**–You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/digital-image-requirements.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

Applpicants of a certain age may not need to have an interview. Consular officers have the discretion to  interview any applicant, regardless of age.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14 - 79 | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You must schedule an appointment for your visa interview at any [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you live.  However, it may be difficult to qualify for a visa outside of your place of permanent residence.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category.  You should apply for your visa early.  Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment as a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

Kyiv

| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

You will need to provide the receipt number to schedule an interview.  The receipt number is printed on your approved Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, Form I-129, or Notice of Action, Form I-797.

**Prepare for your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview. When your visa is approved, you may also pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**$205**

**Select your nationality to see Issuance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

**Reciprocity Fees**

Nonimmigrant visa applicants from certain countries\*/areas of authority may be required to pay a visa issuance fee after their application is approved. These fees are based on the principle of reciprocity:  when a foreign government imposes fees on U.S. citizens for certain types of visas, the United States will impose a reciprocal fee on citizens of that country\*/area of authority for similar types of visas.

Check the [Reciprocity Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html)

* Fee payment information is available on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.
* **L visa applicants included in a L blanket petition**: must also pay the Fraud Prevention and Detection fee and may need to pay the Border Security Act fee. Select [All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html) to learn more.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport** valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup)).  Each person included in a single passport needs a separate visa application.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** [**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ds-160)**confirmation page**.
* **Application fee payment receipt,** if you are required to pay before your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails,](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html) you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/digital-image-requirements.html).
* **Petition Receipt Number**as it appears on your Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, Form I-129, or Notice of Action, Form I-797.
* **L Visa Applicants** included in an L blanket petition, must bring Form I-129S to the interview.

**Legal Rights and Protections**

H-1B, H-2A, and H-2B visa applicants should read the [Legal Rights and Protections](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/rights.html) pamphlet before applying for a visa.  The pamphlet includes information on your rights in the United States and protection available to you.

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

Review the instructions on how to apply for a visa on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified.

Most visa applicants, except H-1B and L, need to show their intent to return to their home country after their temporary stay in the United States. They can do so by showing proof of compelling ties to the home country, which may include:

* A residence abroad which you do not intend to abandon
* Your family relationships
* Your economic situation
* Your long term plans

**Attend your Visa Interview**

During the visa interview, a consular officer will determine if you are eligible for the visa.  The consular officer will also determine if the visa category is appropriate for your purpose of travel. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive the category of visa for which you are applying.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, your application may need further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html). A consular officer will inform you if further processing is necessary for your application.

Depending on your nationality, you may need to pay a visa issuance fee.  You must pay this fee when the visa is approved.  The embassy will explain how your passport with visa will be returned to you.  Review the [visa processing time](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html), to learn how soon your passport with visa will generally be ready for pick-up or delivery by the courier.

**Entering the United States**

A visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (generally an airport).  A visa also allows you to request permission to enter the United States.  A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States.  U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port-of-entry have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States.  When admitted, you may get an admission stamp or  Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. Review the CBP website to learn more about entry requirements and customs restrictions.

**Extending Your Stay**

You must leave the United States on or before the date indicated on your admission stamp or Form I-94.  You can request to extend your stay by contacting USCIS.  Visit USCIS's [Extend Your Stay](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) website for more information.

Failure to leave the United States on time will result in you being [out of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/glossary.html#outofstatus). Under U.S. law, visas of travelers who are out of status are automatically voided ([Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup)). If you had a multiple-entry visa and it was voided due to you being out of status, it will not be valid for future entries into the United States.

Failure to leave the United States on time may also result in you being ineligible for visas you may apply for in the future. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) and [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html) to learn more.

**Change of Status**

While in the United States, you may be able to request a change to another nonimmigrant category.  See [Change My Nonimmigrant Status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more.

Requesting a change of status does not require that you apply for a new visa, as long as you remain in status. If you cannot remain in status while USCIS processes your change of status request, you must apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

**Additional Information**

* The approval of a petition does not guarantee that you will get a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.
* Spouse and Children –
* Your spouse and unmarried, minor children may also apply for the same visa category as you to accompany or join you.  The only exception is for Cultural Exchange Visitor Q-1 visa applicants.  You must be able to show that you will be able to financially support your family in the United States.
* For more information, visit USCIS’s [Temporary Workers](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) information and [Employment Authorization](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup) website.
* Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date.  Therefore, a valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid. If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.

[Visa Denial and Ineligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Ineligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities, denials and waivers.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

The same visa application process applies for first-time applicants and renewals. Please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#howtoapply) for more information.  Some applicants may be eligible for interview waiver.  Interview waiver allows eligible individuals to renew their visa without an in-person interview. To determine if you are eligible for interview waiver, please review the instructions on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

[I was refused a visa under section 214(b). May I reapply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was refused a visa under section 214(b). May I reapply?)

Yes, if you feel circumstances have changed regarding your application. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) to learn more.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html).

[Citizen of Canada and Bermuda](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizen of Canada and Bermuda)

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not need visas to enter the United States as temporary workers.  These applicants do need a temporary worker petition approved by USCIS. For more information see the [U.S. Embassy Ottawa website](https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/do-i-need-a-visa/), the [U.S. Consulate Hamilton website](https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/u-s-consulate-general-hamilton-island-of-bermuda/) and the [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html#ExternalPopup).

Additional resources for Canadian temporary workers to the United States can be found on the [U.S. Embassy Ottawa website](https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/) in Canada.

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* **Case-Specific Questions** - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* **General Questions** - review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

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Visas for Members of the Foreign Media, Press, and Radio

**Overview**

Media (I) visas are for representatives of the foreign media, including members of the press, radio, film, and print industries. The media representative must be traveling temporarily to the United States to work in their profession. The individual may only participatein informational or educational activities, essential to the foreign media function. Activities in the United States while on a media (I) visa must be for a media organization with a home office outside of the United States. Activities in the United States must be informational in nature and generally associated with the news gathering process and reporting on current events.

[Travel purposes which require an (I) Visa for Representatives of Foreign Press, Radio, Film, or Other Information Media – Examples:](javascript:void(0);" \o "Travel purposes which require an (I) Visa for Representatives of Foreign Press, Radio, Film, or Other Information Media – Examples:)

[Working Media Cannot Travel on the Visa Waiver Program or with Visitor Visas](javascript:void(0);" \o "Working Media Cannot Travel on the Visa Waiver Program or with Visitor Visas)

[Travel Purposes for which a Visitor Visa Can Be Used Instead of a Media Visa – Examples:](javascript:void(0);" \o "Travel Purposes for which a Visitor Visa Can Be Used Instead of a Media Visa – Examples:)

[Some travel purposes require a temporary worker visa, not a media (I) visa](javascript:void(0);" \o "Some travel purposes require a temporary worker visa, not a media (I) visa)

[Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage](javascript:void(0);" \o "Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage)

**How to Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary at the U.S. embassy or consulate where you apply. Please consult the instructions available on the [embassy or consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

While interviews are generally not required for applicants of certain ages outlined below, consular officers have the discretion to require an interview of any applicant, regardless of age.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14-79 | Required (some exceptions) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You must schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. While you may be able to schedule your interview at any U.S. embassy or consulate, be aware that it may be difficult to qualify for a visa outside of your place of permanent residence.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

Kyiv

| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

**Prepare for your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview. When your visa is approved, you may also pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**$185**

**Select your nationality to see Issuance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

**Reciprocity Fees**

Nonimmigrant visa applicants from certain countries\*/areas of authority may be required to pay a visa issuance fee after their application is approved. These fees are based on the principle of reciprocity:  when a foreign government imposes fees on U.S. citizens for certain types of visas, the United States will impose a reciprocal fee on citizens of that country\*/area of authority for similar types of visas.

Check the [Reciprocity Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html)

* Review the instructions available on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to learn more about fee payment.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport** valid for travel to the United States - Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup)). If more than one person is included in your passport, each person who needs a visa must submit a separate application.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,** [**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ds160)**confirmation page**
* **Application fee payment receipt,** if you are required to pay before your interview
* **Photo**– You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails,](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html) you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified.

As examples:

* A journalist working under contract or freelance to a foreign media organization will need to present a valid contract of employment.
* An employee of an independent production company, with a few exceptions, will need to present a credential issued by a professional journalistic association.

**Attend Your Visa Interview**

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are elegible to receive a visa. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive the category of visa for which you are applying.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.  
  
After your visa interview, your application may require further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html). You will be informed by the consular officer if further processing is necessary for your application.

When the visa is approved, you will be informed how your passport with visa will be returned to you. Review the [visa processing time](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html), to learn how soon your passport with visa will generally be ready for pick-up or delivery by the courier.

**Entering the United States**

A visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (generally an airport) and request permission to enter the United States. A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port-of-entry have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States. If you are allowed to enter the United States, the CBP official will provide an admission stamp or Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. Learn more about admissions and entry requirements, restrictions about bringing food, agricultural products, and other restricted/prohibited goods, and more by reviewing the [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup).

**Extending Your Stay**

See [Extend Your Stay](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website to learn about requesting to extend your stay beyond the date indicated on your admission stamp or Form I-94.

You must depart the United States on or before the date indicated on your admission stamp or Form I-94, unless your request to extend your stay is approved by USCIS.

Failure to depart the United States on time will result in you being [out of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/glossary.html#outofstatus). Under U.S. law, visas of travelers who are out of status are automatically voided ([Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup)). If you had a multiple-entry visa and it was voided due to you being out of status, it will not be valid for future entries into the United States.

Failure to depart the United States on time may also result in you being ineligible for visas you may apply for in the future. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) and [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html) to learn more.

**Change of Status**

While in the United States, you may be able to request that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) change your nonimmigrant status to another nonimmigrant category. See [Change My Nonimmigrant Status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more.

Requesting a change of status from USCIS while you are in the United States and before your authorized stay expires does not require that you apply for a new visa. However, if you cannot remain in the United States while USCIS processes your change of status request, you must apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

**Additional Information**

We cannot guarantee that you will be issued a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.

* You may travel to the United States on a media (I) visa to work in your profession as a foreign media representative. As part of the same trip you may take a vacation while in the United States.
* Your spouse and unmarried minor children may apply for media (I) visas to accompany or join you to reside temporarily in the United States.
* Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date.  Therefore, a valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid. If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.
* For information about employment and study, review [Representative of Foreign Media](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup) and [Employment Authorization](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website

[Visa Denial and Ineligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Ineligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities. denials, and waivers.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html#howtoapply), above). Some applicants seeking to renew their visas in certain visa classes may be eligible for interview waiver which allows elegible individuals to apply for visa renewals without being interviewed in person by a U.S. consular officer. Review the instructions on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to determine if interview waiver is available and if you are elegible.

[I was refused a visa, under section 214(b). May I reapply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was refused a visa, under section 214(b). May I reapply?)

Yes, if you feel circumstances have changed regarding your application. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) to learn more.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html).

[Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](javascript:void(0);" \o "Citizens of Canada and Bermuda)

Citizens of Canada and Bermuda do not generally require visas to enter the United States as members of the press or media working in the United States. For more information see [information for Citizens of Canada and Bermuda](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/citizens-of-canada-and-bermuda.html).

Additional resources for Canadian visitors to the United States can be found on the [U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites in Canada](https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/).

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* **Case-Specific Questions** - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* **General Questions** - Review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

# Treaty Trader & Treaty Investor and Australians in Specialty Occupations

Generally, a non-citizen who wishes to travel to the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. Treaty Trader (E-1), Treaty Investor (E-2), and Australian in Specialty Occupation (E-3) nonimmigrant visas may be issued to elegible nationals of countries with which the United States maintains treaties of commerce and navigation or are considered a treaty country based on legislation. For a list of participating countries, select [Treaty Countries](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/treaty.html).

To be eligible for an E-2 visa, you must:

* engage in substantial trade, including trade in services or technology, in qualifying activities, principally between the United States and the treaty country;
* develop and direct the operations of an enterprise in which you have invested a substantial amount of capital; or
* work for the E visa enterprise as an executive, supervisor, or essentially skilled employee.

To be elegible for an E-3 visa, you must:

* be a national of Australia working in a specialty occupation.

For more information on business investment in the United States, see the U.S. Department of Commerce website [SelectUSA](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html" \l "ExternalPopup" \o "Select USA).

[To qualify for a Treaty Trader (E-1) Visa](javascript:void(0);" \o "To qualify for a Treaty Trader (E-1) Visa)

* You must be a national of a treaty country.
* The U.S. enterprise (trading firm) for which you plan to come to the United States must have the nationality of the treaty country.
* For an enterprise to have the nationality of a treat country, at least 50 percent of the business or entity must be owned by persons with the treaty country’s nationality.
* You or the U.S. enterprise (trading firm) will carry out international trade that is substantial, meaning that there is a sizable and continuing volume of trade; More than 50 percent of the international trade involved must be between the United States and the treaty country.
* Trade means the international exchange of goods, services, and technology.
* If you are not the treaty trader, you must be employed in a supervisory or executive capacity, or possess specialized skills essential to the efficient operation of the U.S. enterprise (trading firm).
* You must intend to depart the U.S. when your E-1 status expires.

[To qualify for a Treaty Investor (E-2) Visa](javascript:void(0);" \o "To qualify for a Treaty Investor (E-2) Visa)

* You must be a national of a treaty country.
* The U.S. investment enterprise must have the nationality of a treaty country. For an enterprise to have the nationality of a treat country, at least 50 percent of the business or entity must be owned by persons with the treaty country’s nationality.
* The investment in the U.S. must be substantial and sufficient to ensure the successful operation of the enterprise. Uncommitted or revokable funds in a bank account or similar security are generally not considered an investment.
* The U.S. enterprise must be a real and operating,  commercial enterprise .
* The enterprise must generate more income than just to provide a living to you and family, or it must have a significant economic impact in the United States.
* If you are the principal investor, you must be coming to the United States to develop and direct the enterprise. If you are not the principal investor, you must be coming to the U.S. to be employed in a supervisory, executive or possess specialized skills essential to the efficient operation of the U.S. enterprise.
* You must intent to depart the U.S. when your E-2 status expires.

[To qualify for an Australian in Specialty Occupation (E-3) Visa](javascript:void(0);" \o "To qualify for an Australian in Specialty Occupation (E-3) Visa)

* You must be a national of Australia.
* You must have an approved Labor Condition Application (LCA) issued by the [Department of Labor](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup) (DOL).
* You must demonstrate that the prospective employment meets the standard of being a “specialty occupation employment.”
  + Please see the [USCIS page on H-1B](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup) visas for more information on “specialty occupation”
* You must demonstrate that you have the necessary academic qualifications for the job.
* You must intend to depart the U.S. when your E-3 status expires.

[Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage](javascript:void(0);" \o "Important Notice: Same-sex Marriage)

Effective immediately, U.S. Embassies and Consulates will adjudicate visa applications that are based on a same-sex marriage in the same way that we adjudicate applications for opposite gender spouses. Please reference the specific guidance on the visa category for which you are applying for more details on documentation required for derivative spouses. For further information, please see our [FAQ’s](https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/DOMA/DOMA%20FAQs%20-%202015%20Supreme%20Court%20Ruling.pdf).

**How to Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you apply. Please consult the instructions available on the [embassy or consulate website](https://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview.
* **Photo** – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).

**Schedule an Interview**

While interviews are generally not required for applicants of certain ages outlined below, consular officers have the discretion to require an interview of any applicant, regardless of age.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14-79 | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You must schedule an appointment for your visa interview, generally, at the [U.S. embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at any U.S. embassy or consulate, but be aware that it may be difficult to demostrate that you qualify for a visa outside of your place of permanent residence.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply:

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

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| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

**Prepare for Your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview.  When your visa is approved, you may also pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**$315**

**Select your nationality to see Issuance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

* Review the instructions available on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to learn more about fee payment.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport** valid for travel to the United States - Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup)). If more than one person is included in your passport, each person who needs a visa must submit a separate application.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit/visitor.html#ds160)**confirmation page**
* **Application fee payment receipt**, if you are required to pay before your interview
* **Photo** – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails,](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html) you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html).
* **Nonimmigrant Treaty Trader/Treaty Investor Application**, [Form DS-156E](https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds156_e.pdf) – This form is required for:
  + all E-1 treaty trader visa applicants; and
  + E-2 treaty investor visa applicants, if you are an Executive/Manager/Essential Employee.
* **Australian in Specialty Occupation (E-3) visa applicants will need the following additional documents:**
  + An approved Labor Condition Application (LCA), which the U.S. employer obtains from the Department of Labor.
  + Evidence of academic or other qualifying credentials, such as required academic degrees and certificates or proof of sufficient work experience in specialty field.
  + Job offer letter from the U.S. employer.
  + In the absence of academic or other qualifying credentials, evidence of education and experience that is equivalent to the required U.S. degree.
  + A certified copy of any required license or other official permission to practice the occupation in the state of intended employment if so required or, where licensure is not necessary to commence immediately the intended specialty occupation employment upon admission, evidence that the required license will be obtained within a reasonable time after admission.

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified.

Treaty Trader (E-1) or Treaty Investor (E-2) visa applicants must establish that the trading enterprise or investment enterprise meets the requirements of the law and complies with the many requirements for the E visa category. The consular officer may provide you with special forms to complete for this purpose. Australian in Specialty Occupation (E-3) visa applicants must establish that they have obtained the required academic or other qualifying credentials for the intended specialty occupation. You should expect that the consular officer will request additional documentation to determine your eligibility for a treaty trader or treaty investor visa or for an Australian in Specialty Occupation visa. It is impossible to specify the exact documentation required since circumstances vary greatly by applicant. For detailed requirements for this category, review [9 Foreign Affairs Manual 402.9 Treaty Trader and Treaty Traders Investors and Specialty Occupations -E Visas](https://fam.state.gov/FAM/09FAM/09FAM040209.html).

**Attend Your Visa Interview**

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are qualified to receive a visa, and if so, which visa category is appropriate based on your purpose of travel. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive the category of visa for which you are applying.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, your application may require further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html). You will be informed by the consular officer if further processing is necessary for your application.

When the visa is approved, you may pay a visa issuance fee if applicable to your nationality, and will be informed how your passport with visa will be returned to you. Review the [visa processing time](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html), to learn how soon your passport with visa will generally be ready for pick-up or delivery by courier.

**Entering the United States**

A visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (generally an airport) and request permission to enter the United States. A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at the port-of-entry have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States. If you are allowed to enter the United States, the CBP official will provide an admission stamp or paper Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. Learn more about admissions and entry requirements, restrictions about bringing food, agricultural products, and other restricted/prohibited goods, and more by reviewing the [CBP website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup).

**Extending Your Stay**

See [Extend Your Stay](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website to learn about requesting to extend your stay beyond the date indicated on your admission stamp or paper Form I-94.

You must depart the United States on or before the date indicated on your admission stamp or paper Form I-94, unless your request to extend your stay is approved by USCIS.

Failure to depart the United States on time will result in you being [out of status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/glossary.html#outofstatus). Under U.S. law, visas of travelers who are out of status are automatically voided ([Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup)). If you had a multiple-entry visa and it was voided due to you being out of status, it will not be valid for future entries into the United States.

Failure to depart the United States on time may also result in you being ineligible for visas you may apply for in the future. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) and [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html) to learn more.

**Change of Status**

While in the United States, you may be able to request that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) change your nonimmigrant status to another nonimmigrant category. See [Change My Nonimmigrant Status](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more.

Requesting a change of status from USCIS while you are in the United States and before your authorized stay expires does not require that you apply for a new visa. However, if you cannot remain in the United States while USCIS processes your change of status request, you must apply for a visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Additional Information**

* We cannot guarantee that you will be issued a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.
* Spouse and Children –
  + Your spouse and unmarried children under age 21 may apply for visas to accompany or join you to reside temporarily.
  + For information about employment and study, review [Employment Authorization](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website.
  + The spouse and children of an E-3 visa applicant are not required to be Australian citizens to be eligible for an E-3D dependent visa. However, the U.S. does not recognize De Facto relationships for the purposes of immigration, and to qualify as a spouse you will need a marriage certificate.
* Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date.  Therefore, a valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid.  If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.

[Visa Denial and Eligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Eligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities. denials, and waivers.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html#apply), above). Some applicants seeking to renew their visas in certain visa classes may be eligible for the Interview Waiver Program (IWP) which allows qualified individuals to apply for visa renewals without being interviewed in person by a U.S. consular officer. Review the instructions on the website of the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to determine if the IWP is available and if you qualify.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html).

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* **Case-Specific Questions** - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* **General Questions** - Review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

Visas for Canadian and Mexican USMCA Professional Workers

Generally, a noncitizen who wishes to travel to the United States must first obtain a visa, either a nonimmigrant visa for temporary stay, or an immigrant visa for permanent residence. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) created special economic and trade relationships for the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Click [United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) to visit the Office of the United States Trade Representative website to learn more.

The nonimmigrant USMCA Professional (TN) visa allows eligible citizens of Canada and Mexico to work in the United States as USMCA professionals in prearranged professional level business activities for U.S. or foreign employers. Permanent residents of Canada and Mexico are not able to apply for TN visas to work as USMCA professionals. Select [TN USMCA Professionals](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) on the USCIS website to learn more about TN nonimmigrant status.

[Eligibility for USMCA Professional (TN) Nonimmigrant Status](javascript:void(0);" \o "Eligibility for USMCA Professional (TN) Nonimmigrant Status)

Canadians and Mexicans may be eligible to work in the United States as NAFTA professionals under the following conditions:

* Applicant is a citizen of Canada or Mexico;
* Profession is on the [USMCA list](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup);
* Position in the United States requires a USMCA professional;
* Applicant will work in a prearranged full-time or part-time job for an employer (see [Required Documentation](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#doc)). Self-employment is not permitted;
* Applicant has the apropriate qualifications for the profession, including education requirements or experience.

With some exceptions, each profession requires a baccalaureate (bachelor's) degree as an entry-level requirement. If a baccalaureate is required, experience cannot be substituted for that degree. In some professions, an alternative to a bachelor's degree may be acceptable. For some professions, experience is required in addition to the degree. For a complete list of professions with minimum education requirements and alternative credentials, see [Appendix 1603.D.1](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) of USMCA Chapter 16.

**Note**: Requirements for Canadians and Mexicans are different, as explained below.

[Requirements for Canadian Citizens](javascript:void(0);" \o "Requirements for Canadian Citizens)

A visa is not required for a Canadian citizen entering the United States as a USMCA Professional, although a visa can be issued to a qualified Canadian TN visa applicant upon application at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

A Canadian citizen can apply for TN nonimmigrant status at a U.S. port-of-entry. Learn about these requirements on the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) and [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) websites. More information about receiving TN status without applying for a visa is also available on the [U.S. Embassy Ottawa](https://ca.usembassy.gov/visas/do-i-need-a-visa/) website.

**When is a USMCA Professional (TN) visa required for a Canadian citizen?** A Canadian who lives outside Canada with a non-Canadian spouse and/or child(ren), and who plans to enter the United States as a USMCA professional with their family member(s), will need a TN visa in order for the family member(s) to be eligible to apply for derivative TD nonimmigrant visa(s).

[Requirements for Mexican Citizens](javascript:void(0);" \o "Requirements for Mexican Citizens)

Mexican citizens require TN visas to request admission to the United States as USMCA professionals.

**How to Apply**

There are several steps to apply for a visa. The order of these steps and how you complete them may vary by U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Please consult the instructions on the [U.S. embassy or consulate website](http://www.usembassy.gov/).

**Complete the Online Visa Application**

* **Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/) – [Learn more](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/forms/ds-160-online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html) about completing the [DS-160](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/). You must: 1) complete the online visa application and 2) print the application form confirmation page to bring to your interview
* **Photo** –You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html). (A photo is not required if you are applying in Mexico.)

**Schedule an Interview**

Interviews are generally required for visa applicants with certain limited exceptions below. Consular officers may require an interview of any visa applicant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If you are age:** | **Then an interview is:** |
| 13 and younger | Generally not required |
| 14-79 | Required (some exceptions for renewals) |
| 80 and older | Generally not required |

You should schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate, but be aware that it may be more difficult to demostrate you qualify for a visa outside of the country where you live.

Wait times for interview appointments vary by location, season, and visa category, so you should apply for your visa early. Review the interview wait time for the location where you will apply.

**Appointment Wait Time**

Check the estimated wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Note: Please check the individual Embassy or Consulate website to determine if your case is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview.**

**Applicants scheduling visa appointments in a location different from their place of residence should check post websites for nonresident wait times.**

**Select a U.S. Embassy or Consulate:**

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| **Nonimmigrant Visa Type** | **Appointment Wait Time** |
| --- | --- |
| Interview Required Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Required Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Required Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Required Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Students/Exchange Visitors (F, M, J) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Petition-Based Temporary Workers (H, L, O, P, Q) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Crew and Transit (C, D, C1/D) | Closed |
| Interview Waiver Visitors (B1/B2) | Closed |

[See details on appointment availability and processing times](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html)

**Prepare for Your Interview**

* **Fees - Pay the non-refundable visa application fee**, if you are required to pay it before your interview. If your visa is approved, you may also pay a visa issuance fee, if applicable to your nationality. Fee information is provided below:

**$185**

**Select your nationality to see Issuance Fee**

[All Fees](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html)

* Review the instructions available on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply to learn more about fee payment.

**Gather Required Documentation**

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

* **Passport**valid for travel to the United States - Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the United States (unless exempt by [country-specific agreements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup)). Each individual who needs a visa must submit a separate application, including any family members listed in your passport.
* **Nonimmigrant Visa Application,**[**Form DS-160**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ds160)**confirmation page**
* **Application fee payment receipt,** if you are required to pay before your interview
* **Photo** – You will upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the [photo upload fails](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos/frequently-asked-questions.html), you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the [Photograph Requirements](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html). (A photo is not required if you are applying in Mexico.)
* **A contract or letter of employment in the United States -**To show that you have a job offer, provide a contract or employment letter from your employer in the United States confirming your upcoming employment in one of the professional occupations listed in Appendix 1306.d.1 of NAFTA Chapter 16. The letter should also include:
  + Your purpose of entry;
  + A detailed description of your anticipated business activities or job responsibilities;
  + Your anticipated length of stay in the United States;
  + Your educational qualifications or appropriate credentials demonstrating professional status;
  + Evidence of your compliance with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations and/or state laws; and
  + Arrangements for your pay.
* **Documentation proving that you meet the minimum education and/or work experience requirements** set forth in Appendix 1603.d.1 of NAFTA chapter 16 – Evidence of education may include degrees, diplomas, certificates, professional licenses, and /or membership in professional organizations. To demonstrate your experience, present letters from former employers. If you were self-employed, provide your business records.

**Additional Documentation May Be Required**

A consular officer will interview you to determine your qualifications for a TN visa. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified. For example, additional requested documents may include evidence of your intent to depart the United States after employment as a USMCA professional.

**Licensure** - Proof of licensure to practice a given profession in the United States is not required to receive a TN visa, but you should consider presenting such proof along with your job offer letter and other documentation in support of your TN visa application. Upon arriving in the United States, state or non-Federal authorities may require you to present proof of licensure to practice a given profession.

Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [embassy or consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) where you will apply.

**Attend Your Visa Interview**

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are qualified to receive a visa. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive the category of visa for which you are applying.

Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. They are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, your application may require further [administrative processing](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/administrative-processing-information.html). You will be informed by the consular officer if further processing is necessary for your application.

When the visa is approved, you will be informed how your passport with visa will be returned to you. Review the [visa processing time](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html), to learn how soon your passport with visa will generally be ready for pick-up or delivery by the courier.

**Additional Information**

* **Spouse and Children** – Your spouse and unmarried, minor children may apply for TD visas to accompany you to the United States or join you later. You must be able to show your ability to financially support your family in the United States.
  + Review [TN NAFTA Professionals](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) information on the USCIS website for information about employment and studying while in the United States in TD nonimmigrant status.
  + **Canadian citizen spouses and children** do not need visas, but should review the [CBP](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#ExternalPopup) website for the port of entry requirements.
  + **Spouse and children who are not Canadian citizens** must apply for TD nonimmigrant visas.
  + **Mexican citizen spouse and children** must apply for TD nonimmigrant visas.
  + **Spouse or children seeking to join a TN USMCA Professional in the United States** must show a valid Form I-94 from the principal TN visa holder to show that the principal TN visa holder is maintaining TN visa status.
* We cannot guarantee that you will be issued a visa. Do not make final travel plans or buy tickets until you have a visa.
* Unless canceled or revoked, a visa is valid until its expiration date. Therefore, a valid U.S. visa in an expired passport is still valid. If you have a valid visa in your expired passport, do not remove it from your expired passport. You may use your valid visa in your expired passport along with a new valid passport for travel and admission to the United States.

[Visa Denial and Ineligibility](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Denial and Ineligibility)

Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) for detailed information about visa ineligibilities, denials, and waivers.

[Visa Renewal](javascript:void(0);" \o "Visa Renewal)

Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review [How to Apply](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html#apply), above).

[I was refused a visa, under section 214(b). May I reapply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was refused a visa, under section 214(b). May I reapply?)

You may reapply if you believe you have additional evidence of your qualifications for a student (F or M) visa, or you believe  your circumstances have changed. Review [Visa Denials](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/visa-denials.html) to learn more.

[Misrepresentation or Fraud](javascript:void(0);" \o "Misrepresentation or Fraud)

Attempting to obtain a visa by the willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or fraud, may result in the permanent refusal of a visa or denial of entry into the United States.

Review [Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html).

[Further Questions](javascript:void(0);" \o "Further Questions)

* **Case-Specific Questions** - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select [U.S. Embassy or Consulate](http://www.usembassy.gov/) for contact information.
* **General Questions** - review [Contact Us](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/contact-us/us-visas.html).

Domestic Renewal of H-1B Nonimmigrant Visas for Certain Applicants



Important Announcement

The Department of State has CLOSED the application window for the Domestic Visa Pilot Program and is no longer accepting applications. Those seeking to renew an H-1B visa must apply at a [U.S. embassy or consulate](https://www.usembassy.gov/) overseas. Individuals who previously submitted an application through this program and have questions should email [DomesticVisaRenewals@state.gov](mailto:DomesticVisaRenewals@state.gov)

**OVERVIEW**

The Department of State has announced a pilot program to resume domestic visa renewals for qualified H-1B nonimmigrant visa applicants who meet certain requirements.

* The pilot program will accept applications from January 29, 2024, through April 1, 2024, or when all application slots are filled, whichever comes first.
* Participation in the pilot program is voluntary.
* Individuals who do not meet the requirements for participation in the pilot program, or those who choose not to participate in the pilot program, may continue to apply for visa renewal at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.

There are several steps to apply for this pilot program:

1. Select the country where your most recent H-1B visa was issued (Note: this initial pilot is limited to renewal of visas issued in India and Canada).  Then follow the online navigator tool to assess your qualifications for participation in the pilot.
2. If you meet the requirements for participation, follow the instructions in the portal to complete and submit an Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (form DS-160).
3. Use the online portal to pay the required, non-refundable, non-transferrable Machine-Readable Visa (MRV) application processing fee of $205.00.
4. Follow the instructions on the portal to mail your passport and other required documents for processing.

The Department will make available a maximum of 20,000 application slots during this limited pilot program:  Approximately 2,000 per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission Canada with an issuance date of January 1, 2020 through April 1, 2023, and approximately 2,000 per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B was issued  by U.S. Mission India with an issuance date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

Application slots will be released on the following entry period dates:

* January 29, 2024
* February 5, 2024
* February 12, 2024
* February 19, 2024
* February 26, 2024

Applicants will only be able to apply through the portal linked below during the specified dates above.  Applications will be handled on a first-received, first-processed basis until the weekly limit is reached. Applicants who are unable to apply on one application date may reattempt application on any of the remaining application dates during the entry period. The application period will close when all application slots are filled or on April 1, 2024, whichever comes first.

* [Tourism & Visit](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/tourism-visit.html)
* [Business](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/business.html)
* [Employment](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment.html)
* [Study & Exchange](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html)
* [Immigrate](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate.html)
* [Other Visa Categories](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/other-visa-categories.html)
* [U.S. Visa: Reciprocity and Civil Documents by Country](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html)

[Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html)> [U.S. Visas](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html) > [Employment](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment.html) > Domestic Renewal of H-1B Nonimmigrant Visas for Certain Applicants

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* [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html&amp;src=sdkpreparse)
* [Twitter](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Domestic%20Renewal%20of%20H-1B%20Nonimmigrant%20Visas%20for%20Certain%20Applicantshttps://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html)
* [**Temporary Worker Visas**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html)
* [**Visas for Members of the Foreign Media, Press, and Radio**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-members-foreign-media-press-radio.html)
* [**Treaty Trader & Treaty Investor and Australians in Specialty Occupations**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/treaty-trader-investor-visa-e.html)
* [**Visas for Canadian and Mexican USMCA Professional Workers**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/visas-canadian-mexican-usmca-professional-workers.html)
* [**Domestic Renewal of H-1B Nonimmigrant Visas for Certain Applicants**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html)

Domestic Renewal of H-1B Nonimmigrant Visas for Certain Applicants



Important Announcement

The Department of State has CLOSED the application window for the Domestic Visa Pilot Program and is no longer accepting applications. Those seeking to renew an H-1B visa must apply at a [U.S. embassy or consulate](https://www.usembassy.gov/) overseas. Individuals who previously submitted an application through this program and have questions should email [DomesticVisaRenewals@state.gov](mailto:DomesticVisaRenewals@state.gov)

**OVERVIEW**

The Department of State has announced a pilot program to resume domestic visa renewals for qualified H-1B nonimmigrant visa applicants who meet certain requirements.

* The pilot program will accept applications from January 29, 2024, through April 1, 2024, or when all application slots are filled, whichever comes first.
* Participation in the pilot program is voluntary.
* Individuals who do not meet the requirements for participation in the pilot program, or those who choose not to participate in the pilot program, may continue to apply for visa renewal at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.

There are several steps to apply for this pilot program:

1. Select the country where your most recent H-1B visa was issued (Note: this initial pilot is limited to renewal of visas issued in India and Canada).  Then follow the online navigator tool to assess your qualifications for participation in the pilot.
2. If you meet the requirements for participation, follow the instructions in the portal to complete and submit an Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (form DS-160).
3. Use the online portal to pay the required, non-refundable, non-transferrable Machine-Readable Visa (MRV) application processing fee of $205.00.
4. Follow the instructions on the portal to mail your passport and other required documents for processing.

The Department will make available a maximum of 20,000 application slots during this limited pilot program:  Approximately 2,000 per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission Canada with an issuance date of January 1, 2020 through April 1, 2023, and approximately 2,000 per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B was issued  by U.S. Mission India with an issuance date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

Application slots will be released on the following entry period dates:

* January 29, 2024
* February 5, 2024
* February 12, 2024
* February 19, 2024
* February 26, 2024

Applicants will only be able to apply through the portal linked below during the specified dates above.  Applications will be handled on a first-received, first-processed basis until the weekly limit is reached. Applicants who are unable to apply on one application date may reattempt application on any of the remaining application dates during the entry period. The application period will close when all application slots are filled or on April 1, 2024, whichever comes first.

[AM I ELIGIBLE FOR DOMESTIC RENEWAL?](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html" \l "ExternalPopup" \o "Am I Eligible for Domestic Renewal?" \t "_blank)

**After you have determined your eligibility for the domestic renewal program, you must fill out your DS-160, the application for a nonimmigrant visa.  Follow the link below and in the drop-down menu under “Select a location where you will be applying for this visa” you may select “U.S. - DOMESTIC” to begin your application.**

[BEGIN YOUR APPLICATION FOR A DOMESTIC RENEWAL HERE!](https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/" \o "Am I Eligible for Domestic Renewal?" \t "_blank)

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

[Which applicants qualify for participation in the pilot program?](javascript:void(0);" \o "Which applicants qualify for participation in the pilot program?)

Participation in the pilot program will be limited to applicants who(se):

* Seek to renew an H-1B nonimmigrant visa *only*(no other visa classifications, including H-4 visas for dependent spouses and children, will be processed through this pilot program);
* Prior H-1B visa that is being renewed was issued by U.S. Mission Canada with an issuance date of January 1, 2020, through April 1, 2023; or by U.S. Mission India, with an issuance date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021;
* Are not subject to a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (commonly referred to as a “reciprocity fee”);
* Are eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement;
* Have submitted ten fingerprints to the Department in connection with a previous visa application;
* Prior visa does not include a “clearance received” annotation;
* Do not have a visa ineligibility that would require a waiver prior to visa issuance;
* Were most recently admitted to the United States in H-1B status;
* Are currently maintaining H-1B status in the United States;
* Have an approved and unexpired H-1B petition;
* Period of authorized admission in H-1B status has not expired; and
* Intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad.

Applicants who do not meet the requirements for participation in the program, including eligibility for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement, are not qualified to apply for, nor be issued, a visa domestically and will be required to apply overseas.

The navigator tool used during the application process is not capable of screening out all unqualified applicants.  If you submit an application that fails to satisfy the requirements for pilot participation or an application that is refused based on failure to qualify for an interview waiver or another ineligibility identified during the adjudication process, the MRV application processing fee payment will not be refunded.

[What documents and fees are required for a domestic H-1B visa renewal?](javascript:void(0);" \o "What documents and fees are required for a domestic H-1B visa renewal? )

You will need to submit the following documents as part of the application process:

* A DS-160 barcode sheet for a properly completed and electronically filed form DS-160, Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application.
* A passport valid for travel to the United States, which is valid for at least six months beyond the visa application date, and contains at least two blank, unmarked pages for placement of a visa foil. RECOMMENDED: A passport containing the most recently issued H-1B visa if the visa is not in the current passport.
* Non-refundable and non-transferable $205.00 MRV application processing fee, payable via the online portal after completing the form DS-160.
* One photograph (taken within the last six months), which meets the specifications at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html>.
* Copy of current Form I-797, Notice of Action.
* Copy of Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (available at [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html#ExternalPopup) or on the Form I-797).

[How do I establish that I am working or living in the United States?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do I establish that I am working or living in the United States?)

Since the Department will not conduct in-person visa interviews domestically, applicants seeking to renew their visa in the United States through the pilot must be eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) section 222(h).  Based on this statutory requirement, applicants for domestic visa renewal must be resident in the United States.  In assessing this requirement, the Department will review certain information including your “home address” provided on the DS-160, “current residential U.S. address” on your Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, length of employment in the United States and your arrival and departure records. You are not required to submit any evidence establishing residence in the United States with your visa application. If needed, the Department may request such evidence following a review of your application. “Residence” in this context does not mean “lawful permanent resident” (or LPR).

[How do I show that I intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do I show that I intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad?)

To qualify for participation in the pilot program, you must intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad.  You are not required to submit evidence of this intent with your application; however, the Department may request additional evidence of intent on a case-specific basis.

**PROCESSING: LOGISTICS & FEES**

[How long will it take to process my application?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How long will it take to process my application?)

We estimate the processing time will take six to eight weeks from the date the applicant’s passport and other required documents are received by the Department.

[What if I must withdraw my application before a decision is made, or I need my passport for emergency travel before my application has been processed?](javascript:void(0);" \o "What if I must withdraw my application before a decision is made, or I need my passport for emergency travel before my application has been processed?)

You may withdraw your application and request your passport back via the online portal.  If you withdraw your visa application while it is pending adjudication, it will be refused under INA Section 221(g).  This would include situations where an applicant requests a return of the submitted passport for emergency travel prior to our office reviewing and processing the application.  The MRV fee will not be refunded.

[May I pay a fee to expedite my application?](javascript:void(0);" \o "May I pay a fee to expedite my application? )

No. The Department will not expedite domestic visa renewal applications.  All applications will be handled on a strict first-received, first-processed basis.  If you have an urgent need to travel, you may choose to apply for your visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.

**REFUSALS & INELIGIBILITIES**

[How can I tell if my application would require payment of a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (commonly referred to as a “reciprocity fee”), resulting in a return of my application without an adjudication taking place?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How can I tell if my application would require payment of a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (commonly referred to as a \“reciprocity fee\”), resulting in a return of my application without an adjudication taking place?)

The Department is unable to accept reciprocity fees domestically. Nationals from countries with a reciprocity fee may not participate in the pilot.

To view current reciprocity information, go to the U.S. Visa: Reciprocity and Civil Documents by Country information on the following web page: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>

[What will happen if my application is returned without adjudication?](javascript:void(0);" \o "What will happen if my application is returned without adjudication?)

The Department will return the below out-of-scope applications **without** adjudication and **without** a refund of the Machine-Readable Visa (MRV) fee:

* Any application that seeks to renew a visa other than an H-1B visa.
* Any application where the prior H-1B visa was not issued by Mission Canada with an issuance date from January 1, 2020 through April 1, 2023; or by Mission India with an issuance date of February 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021.
* Any application which is subject to a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (reciprocity fee).
* Any application where the prior visa was issued with a “clearance received” annotation.

If your case is returned without an adjudication, you will not be issued a visa domestically.  You may choose to file a new application with a new MRV fee at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.

[What will happen if my application is refused?](javascript:void(0);" \o "What will happen if my application is refused?)

Participation in the pilot program is voluntary.  If you are found to be ineligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement, or otherwise fail to satisfy the requirements for domestic visa renewal, your application will be refused under INA section 221(g) or returned unadjudicated.  If you are not issued a visa through this pilot program, you may choose to file a new application with a new MRV fee at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.  The Department cannot transfer your application to an overseas embassy or consulate.

[How many applications will be accepted during the pilot program?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How many applications will be accepted during the pilot program?)

The Department will release a total of approximately 20,000 application slots during the pilot program.  Each release will consist of approximately 2,000 application slots released per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission Canada, and approximately 2,000 application slots per week for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission India (for a total of approximately 4,000 application slots during each week of the pilot program).

Application slots will be released on the following entry period dates:

* January 29, 2024
* February 5, 2024
* February 12, 2024
* February 19, 2024
* February 26, 2024

Applications will be handled on a first-received, first-processed basis until the 2,000 maximum weekly limit for each participating Mission is reached.   Applicants who are unable to apply on one application date may reattempt application on any of the remaining application dates during the entry period.  The application period will close when all application slots are filled or on April 1, 2024, whichever comes first.

[How do I know if I am eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do I know if I am eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement?)

For purposes of the domestic renewal pilot, most applicants are generally eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement if you seek to renew your H-1B visa within the pilot program eligibility dates, and you reside in the United States, with certain exceptions set out in the law, including those specified below.

In particular, you are **not** eligible for interview waiver, and cannot participate in the pilot, if you fall within one or more of the below categories:

* You do not reside in the United States.
* You have ever been previously refused a visa, unless the refusal was subsequently overcome (and you were subsequently issued a visa) or you obtained a waiver of ineligibility.
* You have an apparent visa ineligibility or potential visa ineligibility.
* You are a national (including a dual national) of certain countries, including those designated by the Secretary of State as a state sponsor of terrorism.
* Interview waivers are discretionary.  Adjudicators will consider an applicant’s individual circumstances and may require an in-person interview on a case-by-case basis.

The navigator tool used during the application process is not capable of screening out all unqualified applicants. If you submit an application that fails to satisfy the requirements for pilot participation or an application that is refused based on failure to qualify for an interview waiver or another ineligibility identified during the adjudication process, the MRV application processing fee payment will not be refunded.

For the latest updated on waivers of the interview requirement, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/important-update-on-waivers-of-the-interview-requirement-for-certaing-nonimmigrant-visa-applicants.html>

[How do I know if I have an apparent ineligibility or potential ineligibility that might make me ineligible for an interview waiver?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do I know if I have an apparent ineligibility or potential ineligibility that might make me ineligible for an interview waiver? )

National security is our top priority. Before issuing any visa, we ensure that every prospective traveler is subject to extensive security screening. If it appears that an applicant may have been involved in an activity of a national security concern, might have a visa ineligibility, or requires further review, that applicant is ineligible for an interview waiver.

In some cases, an applicant may be ineligible for interview waiver for reasons unknown to the applicant.  In all cases, those reasons will be tied to a specific statutory ground, but the circumstances triggering the ineligibility may not be known to the applicant at the time of application.  The situations which make a visa applicant ineligible for a visa, called visa ineligibilities, are found in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and other immigration laws. More information about visa ineligibilities can be found here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/waivers.html>

[If an adjudicator determines that an applicant requires an in-person interview, why does an applicant need to make a new application overseas and pay a second application fee?](javascript:void(0);" \o "If an adjudicator determines that an applicant requires an in-person interview, why does an applicant need to make a new application overseas and pay a second application fee?)

The Department incurs costs to review visa applications and to determine if an applicant requires an in-person interview.  Applications submitted under this pilot program will be reviewed, and the fee submitted only covers the cost of processing the application for this program. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable regardless of whether you are issued a visa.

[If my application for domestic renewal is refused or returned, can my application be transferred overseas for continued processing?](javascript:void(0);" \o "If my application for domestic renewal is refused or returned, can my application be transferred overseas for continued processing? )

No. The Department cannot transfer applications to an overseas post under any circumstances. If your application is refused or returned and you want to pursue a new visa application, you may do so by applying overseas at a U.S. embassy or consulate and submitting a new application and a new MRV fee.

[Could a denial of my H-1B renewal application impact my ESTA?](javascript:void(0);" \o "Could a denial of my H-1B renewal application impact my ESTA? )

Yes. For the purposes of future visa applications, including ESTA applications required for travel under the Visa Waiver Program, a refusal under INA section 221(g) of a domestic visa renewal application constitutes a denial of a visa.  Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers with prior visa denials should mark “yes” for question F on the ESTA application form, “Have you ever been denied a U.S. visa or entry into the U.S. or had a U.S. visa canceled?”

**OTHER TOPICS**

[I was issued an F-1 student visa in India between February 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021 and was admitted to the United States as an F-1 student. I have since changed status from F-1 to H-1B. Do I qualify for this pilot program?](javascript:void(0);" \o "I was issued an F-1 student visa in India between February 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021 and was admitted to the United States as an F-1 student.  I have since changed status from F-1 to H-1B.  Do I qualify for this pilot program?)

No. The pilot program is limited to individuals who are seeking to renew a previously issued H-1B visa and who were most recently admitted to the United States in H-1B status.

[What if I meet the program requirements but I changed employers while in the United States? Can I still participate in the program?](javascript:void(0);" \o "What if I meet the program requirements but I changed employers while in the United States? Can I still participate in the program? )

If you are currently maintaining H-1B status in the United States and meet the other requirements for participation, you may still be qualified to participate in the pilot program.

[How do my family members with H-4 visas apply?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do my family members with H-4 visas apply?)

The Department is unable to process H-4 visas during the pilot program. Your spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age may seek to renew their H-4 visas overseas at a U.S. embassy or consulate where they have a residence or are physically present.

[How do I check the status of my application?](javascript:void(0);" \o "How do I check the status of my application?)

Applicants may check the status of their application at: <https://ceac.state.gov/CEACStatTracker/Status.aspx?App=NIV>.  The Department will not provide non-automated status reports on individual applications, other than the return of the application, issuance of the visa, or refusal.  The average processing time for a domestic visa renewal application is expected to be six to eight weeks from the time a passport and other required documents are received by the Department.