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How long should my passport be valid when applying for a U.S. visa?Your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond your intended stay in the U.S., unless specific agreements with your country provide exemptions. Am I eligible for the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)?You qualify if you are a citizen of a VWP-eligible country, have a machine-readable passport, are traveling for business or tourism for less than 90 days, meet all other program requirements, and have obtained an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). What is the ESTA fee, and how do I pay it?The ESTA registration fee is $14, payable online using a debit or major credit card. If your ESTA application is denied, the fee is $4. What happens if I travel to the U.S. without ESTA?Without ESTA approval, VWP travelers will be denied boarding on U.S.-bound air carriers. If you are allowed to board, you may face significant delays and possible denial of admission at the U.S. port of entry. ESTA registration is quick, usually with instant approval. If I am a third country national living in Saudi Arabia, can I apply for a non-immigrant visa there?Yes, you can apply for a visa in Saudi Arabia even if it is not your country of nationality or residence. It is recommended to apply where you can show the strongest ties. Do all non-immigrant visa applicants need to attend an interview?Most applicants do need an interview, but exceptions include official travelers on central government business and children under 14, depending on their parents’ visa status. My non-immigrant visa is about to expire. Do I need to reapply?Yes, each non-immigrant visa application is a separate process, even if your current visa is still valid. My passport has expired but my U.S. visa is still valid. Do I need a new visa?No. You can travel to the U.S. with both the old passport containing the valid visa and your new passport. Which passport should I use to travel to the U.S. if I have dual citizenship?You may use either passport but should disclose all your nationalities on your visa application form. U.S. citizens, including dual nationals, must use a U.S. passport to enter and exit the U.S. How can I extend my visa?You cannot extend a visa’s validity. You need to apply for a new visa. Do I need to submit my visa application form online?Yes, you must complete and submit the DS-160 form online and bring a printed confirmation page to your interview. What is “administrative processing”?Administrative processing refers to additional review needed for some visa applications after the interview, which can take extra time. You will be informed if this applies to your case. How do I read and understand my visa?Check that all personal information is correct. The visa expiration date is the last day you can use it to enter the U.S., but the length of your stay is determined by the Department of Homeland Security upon entry. My visa will expire while I am in the U.S. Is that a problem?No. You can stay in the U.S. for the duration determined by the Department of Homeland Security officer at your arrival, even if your visa expires during your stay. What happens when I arrive in the U.S.?You will be given an I-94 Arrival/Departure Record and a Customs Declaration form. Entry is not guaranteed by the visa alone; CBP officers will determine your length of stay upon arrival. I didn’t turn in my I-94 when I left the U.S. What should I do?If you didn’t return your I-94, follow the instructions on the CBP website. The I-94 is now automated, but a paper form may still be used in some cases. What information do I need to provide about social media on the DS-160?You need to provide your social media identifiers used in the past five years on your visa application forms. Can I arrive early for my appointment?Please arrive no more than 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. Early arrivals will not be allowed in. Can I reschedule my appointment?Yes, you can change your appointment date on the appointment website up to the day before your interview. My appointment is not soon enough. What can I do?Follow the expedite process on the appointment website to request an earlier date. What documents are required for medical treatment in the U.S.?You need a letter from a U.S. doctor authorizing treatment and detailing all costs, as well as proof of your ability to pay for the medical care. How do I check my visa status?Check online or contact the consular section where you applied, providing your full name, date of birth, and passport number. What if my visa is damaged?Apply for a new visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. What if my visa is lost or stolen?Apply for a new visa and bring a copy of the police report to your interview. How long can I stay in the U.S. on a tourist or business visa?The length of stay is determined by the CBP officer at the port of entry and noted on your I-94. Can I use my visa if it expires after my intended date of arrival?Yes, you can arrive in the U.S. up to the last date of visa validity. However, do not overstay the period granted by the CBP officer. When should I book my travel tickets?Wait until you receive your passport and visa to avoid issues. What procedures do I need to go through at the U.S. port of entry? Check the CBP website for detailed procedures. Is the expiration date of my visa the last day I can stay in the U.S.?No, the expiration date is the last day you can enter the U.S. The CBP officer will determine the length of your stay upon entry. Who can influence the consular officer to reverse a decision?Consular officers have the final authority on visa cases. Decisions can only be changed with new evidence. What is 214(b)?Section 214(b) presumes that all B1/B2 visa applicants are intending immigrants. Applicants must show strong ties to their home country to overcome this presumption. Visitor Visas B-1/B-2 are essential documents for individuals intending temporary stays in the United States for business (B-1) or pleasure (B-2). These visas include tourism, visiting friends or relatives, attending conferences, or engaging in short-term business activities. Understanding the criteria for these visas and the application process is crucial for prospective travelers to ensure a smooth entry into the U.S. Navigating the application process involves understanding eligibility requirements, completing the DS-160 form, scheduling a visa interview, and providing supporting documentation. By familiarizing themselves with these steps and adhering to the guidelines, applicants can increase their chances of obtaining B-1/B-2 visas and enjoying their temporary visits to the United States. The B-1 (Business Visitor) and B-2 (Tourist Visitor) visas are essential for individuals planning temporary visits to the United States. While the specific requirements for these visas may vary based on individual circumstances and the purpose of the visit, there are general eligibility criteria that applicants must meet: Intent: Applicants must demonstrate a genuine intention to enter the United States temporarily for business, tourism, medical treatment, or other permissible purposes under the B-1 or B-2 visa category. Nonimmigrant Intent: Applicants must show that they do not intend to immigrate to the United States permanently and that they have a residence outside the U.S. that they do not intend to abandon. Financial Ability: Applicants should have sufficient funds to cover the costs of their stay in the United States, including transportation, accommodation, and other expenses, without relying on employment or public assistance. Compliance with Immigration Laws: Applicants must comply with U.S. immigration laws and regulations and have no history of immigration violations or criminal offenses that would render them inadmissible to the United States. Purpose of Visit: B-1 visa applicants must demonstrate that their visit is for legitimate business activities, such as attending meetings, conferences, or negotiations. In contrast, B-2 visa applicants must show that their visit is for tourism, leisure, or visiting friends or relatives. Strong Ties to Home Country: Applicants should provide evidence of strong ties to their home country, such as family, employment, property ownership, or other commitments, to demonstrate their intention to return after the temporary visit. Health Insurance (for B-2 visas): While not a formal requirement, having adequate health insurance coverage for the visit is advisable for B-2 visa applicants, especially for medical treatment purposes. It’s important to note that meeting these requirements does not guarantee visa issuance, as consular officers will assess each application individually based on the specific circumstances and supporting documentation provided. Additionally, applicants may be subject to additional requirements or procedures based on their country of citizenship or other factors. Therefore, it’s advisable to consult the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate where the visa application will be submitted for specific guidance and instructions. On a B-1 or B-2 visa, individuals are typically allowed to stay in the United States for a maximum of six months. However, the actual length of stay granted is determined by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry. The CBP officer will stamp the individual’s passport with the date until which they are authorized to stay in the U.S. This period is typically up to six months from the date of entry. Individuals on B-1 or B-2 visas must adhere to the authorized period of stay indicated by the CBP officer. Overstaying the authorized period can result in immigration violations, potential deportation, and future difficulties with U.S. immigration authorities. In some cases, individuals may be eligible to apply for an extension of stay in the United States if they need additional time for their permitted purpose. However, extension requests must be submitted to USCIS before the authorized stay expires, and approval is not guaranteed. It’s crucial for B-1 and B-2 visa holders to familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions of their visas and to comply with U.S. immigration laws and regulations to ensure a smooth and legal stay in the United States. Yes, the B-1/B-2 visa can be used for multiple entries into the United States during its validity period. This means that individuals with a B-1/B-2 visa can enter and exit the United States multiple times as long as the visa remains valid. The B-1/B-2 visa typically has a validity period of up to 10 years for individuals from countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), while for other countries, the validity period may vary. Each entry into the United States on a B-1/B-2 visa is subject to the discretion of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry. The CBP officer will assess the purpose of the visit, the length of stay requested, and other relevant factors before granting entry. Individuals need to adhere to the terms and conditions of their B-1/B-2 visa, including the authorized period of stay, to avoid any immigration violations. Additionally, individuals with a B-1/B-2 visa should ensure that their visa remains valid for multiple entries into the United States and that they have a valid passport for each entry. Overstaying the authorized period of stay or violating the terms of the visa can result in immigration consequences, including denial of entry or deportation. Applying for B-1 and B-2 visas involves several steps to ensure a smooth and successful application process. Here’s a step-by-step guide: Step 1: Determine Eligibility Before applying for a B-1 or B-2 visa, determine if you meet the eligibility criteria. B-1 visas are for business purposes, while B-2 visas are for tourism, visiting friends or relatives, medical treatment, or participation in social events. Step 2: Complete the DS-160 Form Fill out the DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application form on the U.S. Department of State’s Consular Electronic Application Center (CEAC) website. Provide accurate and truthful information about your details, travel plans, and background. Step 3: Pay the Visa Application Fee Pay the non-refundable visa application fee, which varies depending on the country and visa type. Fees are paid through the U.S. Embassy or Consulate’s designated payment method. Step 4: Schedule a Visa Interview Schedule a visa interview appointment at your home country’s U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Wait times for appointments may vary, so plan accordingly. Step 5: Gather Required Documents Prepare the necessary documents to bring to your visa interview, including the following: Passport valid for travel to the United States Passport-sized photograph meeting the specified requirements DS-160 confirmation page Visa application fee receipt You should provide supporting documents, such as proof of ties to your home country, a travel itinerary, and financial evidence showing you can cover the costs of your trip. Step 6: Attend the Visa Interview Arrive at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the scheduled date and time for your visa interview. Answer the consular officer’s questions truthfully and provide any requested documents. Step 7: Await Visa Processing After the interview, the consular officer will determine whether to approve or deny your visa application. If approved, your passport with the visa stamp will be returned to you. Step 8: Travel to the United States Once you receive your visa, you can travel to the United States within the visa’s validity period. Upon arrival, present your passport and visa to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the port of entry. By following these steps and thoroughly preparing for your B-1 or B-2 visa application, you can increase your chances of a successful outcome and enjoy your temporary visit to the United States. The cost associated with applying for a B-1/B-2 visa includes several fees that applicants must pay throughout the application process. These fees may vary depending on the applicant’s country of residence and the specific services required. Here’s a breakdown of the typical costs associated with obtaining a B-1/B-2 visa: Most applicants’ visa application fee for a B-1/B-2 visa is $160. This fee is paid when completing the DS-160 Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application form and is non-refundable, regardless of whether the visa application is approved or denied. Some countries have reciprocity agreements with the United States that require applicants to pay an additional visa issuance fee based on the principle of reciprocity. The U.S. Department of State determines this fee and varies depending on the applicant’s country of citizenship. Applicants may also incur additional costs for expedited visa processing, visa delivery, or document translation services. These optional fees may vary depending on the applicant’s preferences and circumstances. It’s important to note that these fees are subject to change. Applicants should verify the current fees on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where they plan to apply for their visa. Additionally, applicants should budget for any additional expenses related to travel, accommodation, and supporting documents required for their visa application. Navigating the intricacies of visa statuses can be daunting, especially when circumstances change. For individuals holding a B-1/B-2 visa, whether they can change their status arises. This guide explores the process and considerations of transitioning from a B-1/B-2 visa to another visa category. Understanding the eligibility criteria, timing requirements, and potential limitations is crucial for those seeking to adjust their immigration status within the United States. By delving into these key aspects, individuals can understand the possibilities and implications of changing their B-1/B-2 visa status. Purpose Alignment – Ensure that your intended stay in the U.S. aligns with the requirements of the new visa type. For instance, transitioning to a student visa (F-1) for educational pursuits or a work visa (like H-1B) if sponsored by an employer. Timely Application – Submit your application before the expiration of your current status, typically indicated on the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record. USCIS advises filing at least 45 days before the status expiration. Eligibility Evaluation – Understand that not everyone is eligible to change their status. For instance, individuals entering the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program generally cannot change status unless due to marriage to a U.S. citizen. Compliance Check – Avoid status violations such as unauthorized employment while on a B1/B2 visa. Violations may impede your ability to change status. USCIS Discretion – Although meeting all requirements and filing an application is crucial, final approval rests with USCIS, subject to their evaluation. B-1/B-2 visas are nonimmigrant visas issued by the United States for temporary visits. The B-1 visa is for individuals visiting the U.S. for business purposes, such as attending meetings, conferences, or negotiating contracts, while the B-2 visa is for tourism, vacation, or visiting friends and relatives. These visas allow holders to stay in the U.S. for a maximum initial period of six months, although the actual length of stay is determined by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer at the port of entry. Applying for a B-1/B-2 visa involves: Completing the DS-160 form. Paying the visa application fee. Scheduling a visa interview. Providing supporting documents. Eligibility criteria include demonstrating a nonimmigrant intent, financial ability to cover expenses and compliance with immigration laws. Understanding the application process and visa requirements is essential for individuals planning temporary visits to the United States under the B-1/B-2 visa category. A foreign national traveling to the United States for tourism needs a visitor visa (B-2 or combined B1/B2) unless qualifying for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. Travel for pleasure or tourism may include a short visit for vacation, visiting family and friends, or for medical treatment. Traveling to the United States for another reason? SEE ALL VISA CATEGORIES 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. Are you planning a trip to the United States? You might need a visitor visa if you’re there for sightseeing, business meetings, or a little bit of both. These temporary visas, known as the B-1/B-2, are designed for someone visiting the United States temporarily.Unlike visas for permanent residence, visitor visas allow you to enter the country for a specific period for business pleasure or a combination of both.The United States recognizes the value of temporary visitors, and the B-1/B-2 visa program reflects this. Let’s learn all there is to know about the tourist visa in the U.S.A., the business visa, and the combination of business and tourist visa, helping you determine which visitor visa best suits your travel needs.We’ll explain the B1/B2 eligibility requirements, the application process, and what to expect at your interview (if required). So, get ready to explore all the U.S. has to offer – with the proper visitor visa! Have you ever wondered what a travel visa is? Simply put, it’s a permission slip issued by a country that allows you to enter for a specific purpose and timeframe. Visitor visas, also known as B1/B2 visas in the United States, are a specific type of travel visa designed for temporary stays.Think of them as guest passes to the U.S. These visas cater to two main categories: business and pleasure. A business visa, designated as B-1, is for those engaging in commercial or professional activities during their visit. It means attending conferences, negotiating contracts, or participating in business consultations. It’s important to note that business visas don’t allow you to take on local employment or work for hire.On the other hand, a tourist visa, known as the B2 visa, is perfect for leisure travel. This visa lets you explore the U.S. for vacations, visit friends and family, or even seek medical treatment. Many people apply for a combined B-1/B-2 visa, giving them the flexibility to address business and personal needs during their trip.However, before you learn more about U.S. visitor visas from this guide, it’s worth checking the Visa Waiver Program (ESTA) if you’re from a participating country. ESTA offers a faster and cheaper alternative for short-term business or tourist visits, allowing stays of up to 90 days.So, whether you’re a business professional on the go or a tourist yearning to explore the U.S., understanding visitor visas is the first step towards a memorable trip. The good news is you can reapply for a B1/B2 visa. Except for a specific refusal type (221(g) – which requires additional documents), you must submit a new application and pay the associated fee again. Here are some tips to make the second time around better:Carefully analyze the reason(s) for the denial mentioned in your official notification. It will help you correct the specific errors in your previous application.For instance, if the insufficient bond to your home country was a concern, focus on gathering more robust documentation like proof of employment, property ownership, or family connections. On the other hand, if your denial stemmed from a lack of a clear travel purpose, consider waiting until you have a more concrete itinerary or business meeting planned before reapplying. Scroll to Top Overview Generally, a citizen of a foreign country who wishes to travel to 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 (B-1 visa), for tourism (B-2 visa), or for a combination of both purposes (B-1/B-2 visa). Here are some examples of activities permitted with a visitor visa: Consult with business associates Attend a scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conference Settle an estate Negotiate a contract 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) 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 Birth tourism (travel for the primary purpose of giving birth in the United States to obtain U.S. citizenship for their child) is not permissible on a visitor visa. 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. Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160 – Learn more about completing the DS-160. 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 meet the Photograph Requirements. 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 generally schedule an appointment for your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country where you live. You may schedule your interview at another U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will be present but aware that in some cases it may be more difficult to demonstrate your qualifications 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: Review the instructions available on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will apply to learn more about fee payment. 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). 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 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, you must bring one printed photo in the format explained in the Photograph Requirements. Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate 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 based on their ties abroad/to their home country, 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. 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. 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 to learn more. 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. See Extend Your Stay 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. Under U.S. law, visas of individuals who are out of status are automatically voided (Section 222(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act). 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 and Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws to learn more. 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 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. 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. 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). 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 for a visitor visa as a domestic employee if, among other requirements, 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, Q or TN. Learn more about your rights in the United States and protection available to you by reading the Legal Rights and Protections pamphlet. Whether you are applying for the first time or renewing your visa, you will use the same application process (please review How to 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 where you will apply to determine if IW is available and if you qualify. Yes, you will still need a visa to travel to the United States, unless you qualify for the Visa Waiver Program. 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. 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 where you will apply. 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 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 . Review Visa Denials for detailed information about visa ineligibilities, denials and waivers. Yes, if you feel circumstances have changed regarding your application. Review Visa Denials to learn more. 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. Citizens of Canada and Bermuda generally 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, U.S. Consulate Hamilton website and CBP website. Additional resources for Canadian visitors to the United States can be found on the U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites in Canada. 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. 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. 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 to learn more about this card. Please visit U.S. Embassy or Consulate websites for more information regarding applying for a visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulates in Mexico. Case-Specific Questions - Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your visa application for status information. Select U.S. Embassy or Consulate for contact information. General Questions - review Contact Us. Written by Travis and Mandy Feuerbacher, Former Visa Officers & Immigration Attorneys Quick Summary Allowed: Business meetings, tourism, medical treatment. Not Allowed: Employment, school enrollment, unauthorized performances. Common Mistake: Assuming unpaid work is legal - it can still be considered unauthorized employment. Next Steps: Watch our visa interview tips video & download our free B1/B2 visa guide. A Visa Denied Before You Even Arrive? Here’s How to Avoid It Imagine you're planning to travel to the U.S. for meetings with an important customer. You’re well-prepared, excited for your trip, and confident that everything is in order. But once you arrive at the visa interview and explain that you will install some computer hardware during the meeting for the customer, the Visa Officer denies your application, explaining that you are unauthorized to work on a B1/B2 visitor visa. Now you have to explain to your boss – and your customer - why you couldn’t make it to the important meeting. What went wrong? You assumed that meetings with customers were allowed under a B1/B2 visitor visa, but under U.S. immigration law, certain activities, such as performing other services like installing hardware, may still qualify as “work” and are not allowed. To protect yourself from a visa nightmare, let’s break down exactly what you can and can’t do on a B1/B2 visa. ✔ What’s Allowed on a B1/B2 Visa? Consult or meet with business associates Attend scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conferences Settle estates Negotiate contracts Travel for tourism or vacation Visit friends or relatives Obtain medical treatment Participate in social events hosted by fraternal, social, or service organizations Participate as amateurs in musical, sports, or similar events or contests, if not being paid for participating Enroll in a short recreational course of study, not for credit toward a degree (for example, a two-day cooking class while on vacation) What’s NOT Allowed? Attend school Work Perform for money Perform professionally before a paying audience Arrive as a crewmember on a ship or aircraft Work as foreign press, in radio, film, print journalism, or other information media Permanently reside in the United States Engage in criminal activity Travel for the primary purpose of giving birth in the United States Can I attend a wedding or family event on a B1/B2 visa?Yes, attending social events such as weddings or family gatherings is permitted under the B2 (tourism) category. Is it permitted to seek medical treatment in the U.S. on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, obtaining medical treatment is an allowed activity on a B2 visa. Ensure you have documentation from your physician and the U.S. medical facility. Can I participate in a short recreational course on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, enrolling in a short recreational course, such as a two-day cooking class, is allowed as long as it's not for credit toward a degree. Am I allowed to negotiate business contracts on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, negotiating contracts is a permissible activity under the B1 (business) category. Can I perform in a concert for free on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, amateur participation in musical or sports events without remuneration is allowed on a B2 visa. Is house hunting allowed on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, you can look for potential residences; however, purchasing property does not grant you residency rights. Property ownership does not grant you the ability to study in the United States without a student visa. Can I attend job interviews on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, attending job interviews is generally permitted on a B1/B2 visa, but accepting employment requires proper work authorization. Can I bring my children with me on a B1/B2 visa? Yes, your children can accompany you, each with their own B1/B2 visa. Take the Next Step & Get Your Visa Approved Watch: Ex-Visa Officer Explains What You Can and Can’t Do on a B1/B2 Visa (YouTube Channel) Download: Your Free Step-by-Step B1/B2 Visa Guide, trusted by thousands of successful applicants. (Free Guide) Prepare: Get expert coaching inside our B1/B2 Visa Course - don't leave your approval to chance! (Click here) Your approval isn’t based on luck - it’s based on preparation. Let’s make it happen. Legal Note: The information provided does not constitute legal advice or a guarantee of visa approval. For specific legal guidance, contact ZF Visa & Immigration at . More Questions? Join Our Weekly Newsletters Join our mailing list to receive the latest news and updates from our team. We hate SPAM. We will never sell your information, for any reason. You may be eligible for a B-1 visa if you will be participating in business activities of a commercial or professional nature in the United States, including, but not limited to:Consulting with business associatesTraveling for a scientific, educational, professional or business convention, or a conference on specific datesSettling an estateNegotiating a contractParticipating in short-term trainingTransiting through the United States: certain persons may transit the United States with a B-1 visaDeadheading: certain air crewmen may enter the United States as deadhead crew with a B-1 visaYou must demonstrate the following in order to be eligible for a B-1 visa:The purpose of your trip is to enter the United States for business of a legitimate natureYou plan to remain for a specific limited period of timeYou have sufficient funds to cover the expenses of the trip and your stay in the United StatesYou have a residence outside the United States that you have no intention of abandoning, as well as other binding ties that will ensure your return abroad at the end of the visitYou are otherwise admissible to the United StatesInitial Period of StayExtension of Stay1 to 6 months; 6 months is the maximumUp to 6 months; maximum total amount of time permitted in B-1 status on any one trip is generally 1 year.At the port of entry, an immigration official must authorize your admission to the United States, and, if you are eligible for admission, you may be admitted initially for the period necessary to carry out your business activities, up to a maximum period of 1 year. If you who wish to stay beyond the time indicated on the Form I-94 without departing from the United States, you must file Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, and submit any required supporting documents to USCIS. For more information, see the Extend my Stay page.Your spouse and children are not eligible for a dependent visa. Each of your dependents who will be accompanying or following to join you must apply separately for a B-2 visa and must follow the regulations for that visa.Certain personal or domestic servants accompanying or following to join individuals in a B, E, F, H, I, J, L, or TN nonimmigrant classification, personal or domestic servants of U.S. citizens who have a permanent home or are stationed in a foreign country, as well as certain employees of foreign airlines, may be eligible for B-1 nonimmigrant status if their activities in the United States are in connection with their foreign employment. Such activities are not considered, for purposes of the B-1 classification, to be prohibited local “employment” or “labor for hire” within the United States.While these B-1 nonimmigrants are not required to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS before engaging in their approved B-1 activities, they may still receive an EAD upon request by filing Form I-765. Note, however, that if such persons engage in activities outside their B-1 nonimmigrant status, such as working for another employer in the United States, they will be found to have violated their B-1 nonimmigrant status. They also may not remain in the United States for longer than the authorized period of stay in B-1 nonimmigrant status. The visitor visas allow its holder to go to the US short-term visits for a maximum of six months. There are also two types of visitor visas into the B category: Allows you to enter the US with the purpose of doing business with a company within the US. Allows you to enter the US with the purpose of tourism, pleasure, or visit to friends and family. Do I Need to Apply for a US Visitor Visa? If you are a citizen of one of the countries in the Visa Waiver Program, you will not need to apply for the US visitor visa. You can apply for an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) instead. With the ESTA program, you will not be required to go to the US Embassy in person and can get the business visa much faster. Important: Starting May 30, 2023, the cost of a B1/B2 visa application has increased to $185 from the previous price of $160. This tool will help you determine whether you need a B1/B2 visa: B1/B2 Visa Requirements To be eligible for a US tourist visa or a business visa, the purpose of your visit should be one of the following: That your intent for visiting the United States is business-related. You have enough finances to cover your stay in the United States. You intend to return to your home country as soon as your visa expires and you do not intend to stay in the United States. Have a holiday in the United States. Tour various cities in the United States. Visit friends or family. Participate in social events hosted by various organizations. Visit for medical treatment. Participate in events or contests related to music or sports, for which you will not receive payment. Enroll in short study courses for which you will not receive credit (ex. cooking classes). If you do not fall into any of the categories above, then you should look into other types of US non-immigrant visas to see for which ones you qualify. Supporting Documents for a US Visitor Visa Here are the required documents that you need to submit when applying for a visitor visa: Your valid passport. You must possess a passport which is six months valid beyond your planned stay in the US. A photograph that complies with the requirements and guidelines. Form DS-160 confirmation page and code. Receipt of paid visa fees. Interview confirmation page. A letter which describes the purpose of your trip. Proof of financial means. Financial or bank statements to prove you have the finances to stay in the US of at least $266 for each day of your planned stay. Ties to your home country. Family, job contract, lease, or property deed, which prove you will return. Criminal records or letter from authorities stating that you do not have prior convictions. Details of your social media accounts. A list of the social media that you use, and the name of your account in each. If travelling for leisure: Optional US visitor visa invitation letter from friends or family in the US. Photocopies of your relative’s status in the US. If traveling for a business trip: a letter from the company detailing the purpose of the trip and your job position. If travelling for medical purposes: Letters from doctors on your diagnosis and treatment. If you work: a letter from your employer and payslips for the last three months. If you have visited the US before: documents relevant to your prior visits. How to Apply for a US Visitor Visa? To apply for a US Visitor visa you must go through these simple steps: The application fee is $185. Depending on your country’s relationship with the US, you might have to pay other fees too. These are called visa issuance fees and they vary from country to country. After making the payments, you need to keep the receipts and attach them to your file of required documents. All applicants between 14 and 79 years old must go through an interview at the US Embassy. To attend this interview, you must schedule an appointment with the US Embassy in your country of residence. Due to the high workload that they have, make sure you schedule it as soon as possible. When this procedure is done, you will get an interview confirmation letter which you need to bring to the interview. The documents file that you have includes all supporting documents to show the US Embassy that it is safe to give you the visa. You must bring all of the documents to your visa appointment. On the date of your interview, a US Embassy official will ask questions about your background and why you want to go to the United States. They will go through your documents to ensure that everything is in order. The interviews do not last long but make sure to disclose all necessary information to avoid problems later on. What are the Limitations of the B1/B2 Visas? With a B1/B2 visa, you are strictly forbidden from doing these activities: Become a full or part-time student. Perform and get paid for it. Work in press or journalism. Engage in any form of employment. Enter as a crewmember on an aircraft or ship. Seek permanent residence in the US. How Long do the Visitor Visas take to Process? The processing time for the B1/B2 visa can vary from a few weeks to a few months. If you have a specific date that you need to be in the US in, it is best to apply as early as possible so that you can allow enough time for the visa to be processed. How Long Are the US Visitor Visas Valid? US Visitor visas are given for a period 1 month up to 10 years. The maximum stay on a visitor visa is six months, but bear in mind that you are not allowed to work during that time, so you must prove you can afford to stay for that period of time. Can I Extend My Stay? If you want to stay longer, you can apply for B1/B2 visa extension for an additional 6 months. You should do so at least 42 days before the expiration of your I-94 card. Yet, you are not allowed to apply within three months of arrival in the US. You should submit the following documents when applying for an: Completed form I-539. Your valid passport. A written statement on the reason behind the requested extension. Evidence of financial support. Payment of the extension fee, which is $370. Original or photocopy of I-94 card. The extension processing time varies on the number of applications USCIS is processing at the time of your application. Can I Get a Green Card With the Visitor Visas? Since the visitor visas are temporary and require you to prove that you will return to your home country, it is difficult to get permanent residence. You can do so only if you are able to change your status to a longer-term visa which allows dual intent (applying for a Green Card), marrying in the US, or applying to join your family. Can I Bring my Dependents With a B1/B2 Visa? The B1/B2 Visas do not have dependents visas, so if you want to travel with your family, they must also get the appropriate visitor visas. Did you find this page helpful? Editorial Note: We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations. A B-1 visa is a nonimmigrant visa that allows you to come to the United States temporarily for business purposes. A B-2 visa is a temporary tourist visa that allows you to visit the U.S. for tourism or other nonbusiness purposes such as participating in an event or getting medical treatment. It’s also possible to obtain a combined B-1/B-2 visa. This guide will explain what B-1 and B-2 visas are, the process for obtaining one and what you are allowed to do in the U.S. once you have a B-1 or B-2 visa. Both B-1 and B-2 visas allow visitors from foreign countries to enter the United States either for business or tourism purposes. These visas are issued to foreign nationals who come from countries that require a visa to enter the United States. B-1 and B-2 Visa Definition A B-1 visa is a temporary business visitor visa. You can come into the U.S. for specific business purposes using this visa. These purposes include consulting with associates, traveling for a conference, negotiating a contract, settling an estate, completing short-term work training or traveling through the United States. A B-2 visa is a tourist visa. With a B-2 visa, you can enter the U.S. for tourism, medical treatments, participating in contests that you aren’t paid for, visiting friends or completing coursework that you won’t earn a degree for. Here are some of the biggest benefits of getting a B-1 or B-2 visa. You gain entry into the country for business or tourism purposes. You have the opportunity to enter and leave the U.S. multiple times because B-1 visas are multi-entry visas, although every entry is at the discretion of Customs and Border Protection. You can be in the United States for between one and six months initially, and you can stay for up to a total of one year per trip. The key difference between the B-1 and the B-2 visas is the reason for the trip. The B-1 visa is intended for trips to the U.S. that are for business purposes. The B-2 visa is intended for trips to the U.S. that are not for business purposes but instead for tourism, securing medical treatment, participating in events or visiting with friends and relatives. It may be possible to change your status if you change the purpose of your visit while in the United States. However, you must file a request for a change of status with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) before your authorized status expires. However, USCIS states that it is not necessary to change your nonimmigrant status if you were admitted to the U.S. on a B-1 visa for business reasons and want to stay in the U.S. for pleasure prior to the expiration of your authorized stay. You can obtain a B-1 or B-1 visa only if you are traveling to the United States for specific purposes. Here are the reasons for travel that are allowed under each of these different visa types. Reasons for Travel Under a B-1 Visa When you obtain a B-1 visa, you are allowed to come to the U.S. to do the following tasks: consult with business associates travel for a convention or conference for scientific, educational, professional or business purposes settle an estate negotiate a contract participate in short-term training transit through the U.S. enter the U.S. as a deadhead crew if you are an aircrewman Reasons for Travel Under a B-2 Visa When you obtain a B-2 visa, you are allowed to come to the U.S. for the following purposes: tourism vacations or holidays visit with friends and relatives receive medical treatment participate in events including those hosted by fraternal, social or service organizations participate as an amateur in musical competitions, sports or other contests if you aren’t paid for participating enroll in a course of study that doesn’t earn you a degree In order to be eligible for a B-1 or B-2 visa, you must meet certain eligibility requirements. Specifically, here are the requirements you need to fulfill: You must demonstrate that the purpose of your trip is for an approved reason. You must show you plan to remain in the United States for a limited time period. You must provide proof you have specific funds to cover the costs of the trip. You must demonstrate that you have a residence outside of the U.S. that you don’t have an intention of abandoning and that you have other binding ties that will ensure that you don’t overstay in the United States. You are otherwise eligible to be admitted to the United States (which should be the case as long as you have no previous immigration violations, such as an unlawful overstay event). Documents required for a B-1 or B-2 visa include: your passport the nonimmigrant visa application Form DS-160 confirmation page a receipt for the payment of your application fee your photo evidence of the purpose of your trip, your intent to leave the U.S. and your ability to pay for the costs of your trip Here are the steps to applying for a B-1 or B2 visa. Complete an Online Visa Application The first step to getting a B-1 or B-2 visa is to complete an Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, Form DS-160. You must complete this application online and print out the confirmation so you can bring it to your visa interview. Schedule an Interview and Prepare for the Interview Interviews are required for applicants between the ages of 14 and 79. You’ll typically need to schedule your appointment at the U.S. Embassy or consulate in the country in which you live. If you schedule it in another location where you are present, it may be more difficult to demonstrate that you are qualified for the visa. Gather Required Documents Prepare the documents you must bring to your interview including your passport, proof of your completed DS-160 application, a receipt for your application payment fee and your photo. Attend the Visa Interview Attend a visa interview with a consular officer who will determine if you meet the requirements to obtain your visa. You’ll be fingerprinted during this process, and your visa may be approved or you may be informed that your application requires additional administrative processing. Enter the United States Finally, you’ll enter the United States. The visa doesn’t guarantee entry, but it allows you the opportunity to travel to a port of entry and request permission to enter from Customs and Border Protection officials. If you’re allowed entry, you’ll receive a paper Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record. The nonimmigrant visa application processing fee is $185. Visa appointment wait times vary depending on the embassy or consulate. You can find the current visa appointment wait times on the Travel.State.Gov website for your location. B-1 and B-2 visas are temporary nonimmigrant visas. You are allowed to stay in the United States only for a limited period of time. Your spouse and children are not eligible for a dependent visa but must submit their own independent applications for their own B-1 or B -2 visa. When you enter the United States on a B-1 visa, you are admitted for up to a year to carry out your business. You’ll receive a Form I-94 detailing your entry and allowable departure time. If you want to stay beyond that time, you must submit Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status and get approval. If you still need more details about B-1 and B-2 visas, here are the answers to some common questions. You can typically remain in the U.S. for up to a year. B-1 and B-2 visas are temporary nonimmigrant visas. They do not entitle you to a green card. However, if you meet the requirements to obtain lawful permanent resident status, then you may be able to apply for an adjustment of status to obtain a green card while you are in the U.S. on a B-1 or B-2 visa. This could eventually set you on the path to citizenship if you meet the U.S. citizenship requirements. There is no specific limit to the number of visits. However, your right to enter is at the discretion of U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials at the port of entry. You must prove you have the funds to cover the costs of your trip. There is no set dollar amount. If your visa is still valid and you haven’t reached your maximum allowable time in the U.S., you should be able to reenter whenever you want to. Your right to entry is at the discretion of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. You cannot work in the United States on a B-1 or B-2 visa. The B-1 and B-2 visas are both nonimmigrant visas for people to enter the United States for temporary business or tourism purposes. Nonpermanent residents may sometimes be eligible to buy a house in the United States. However, it may be difficult to secure a mortgage. Depending on what country you are from, there may be additional restrictions. It’s best to talk with an immigration lawyer to explore your options. Noncitizens can open bank accounts in the United States. However, you will need to meet your bank’s requirements. These usually include providing identification and U.S. and foreign addresses.