



CONSULAR PROCESSING AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR I-94 RECORD AND VISA STAMP TO
MELTZER HELLRUNG UPON YOUR ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES



MELTZER HELLRUNG
IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

Disclaimer: This information is accurate as of July 28, 2025, but legal developments on these issues are fast-changing. Please discuss any travel plans and visa applications with your Meltzer Hellrung attorney before proceeding.

CONSULAR PROCESSING AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

A visa provides you permission to enter the United States. However, it does not give you work authorization, it does not guarantee that you will enter the United States, and it does not guarantee how long you will be allowed to stay. The Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers always have the final say on whether you can enter and for how long you can stay.



The consulate or embassy that you will visit to get a visa stamp in your passport is operated by the United States Department of State (DOS). You can find a complete list of all consulates and embassies at usembassy.gov. Please note that each consulate has a unique procedure and you should consult the website for that consulate in addition to these instructions.

Please note that Canadian Citizens do not require visa stamps to enter the U.S. (unless entering in E-2 status). Citizens of all other countries require visa stamps issued at a U.S. consulate or embassy in order to enter the U.S.

DS-160

The first step in applying for a U.S. nonimmigrant visa is to complete an [Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application \(DS-160\)](#). You must submit the DS-160 at least 2 full business days in advance of your appointment. When completing this form, you must provide your social media handles for DOS review. DOS may screen your accounts for content that they believe renders you “inadmissible,” or ineligible to enter the U.S.

DO I NEED AN INTERVIEW?

In many cases, you will need an interview to get a visa stamp. However, you may be eligible for an interview waiver instead. To see if you are eligible, see below under “Nonimmigrant Visa Waivers (Dropbox Appointment).”

1 Which consulate should I attend to get a visa stamp?

It is best to attend a consulate in a country you are a citizen of, especially if this is the first time you are getting a visa stamp in this visa category. However, you can attend any consulate in the world that will accept appointments for third-country nationals to get a visa stamp.

Please note that for subsequent visas, many consulates offer dropbox (interview waiver) services. See below under “Nonimmigrant Visa Waivers (Dropbox Appointment).”

2 What documents should I bring with me to the consular appointment?



YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- Your passport
- Prior passports with prior U.S. visa stamps, if any and available
- I-797 approval notice
Copy of your USCIS petition
You should bring a copy of an RFE response, if one was submitted
- If you are already working for the company in the U.S., please bring your two most recent pay stubs
- If you have not started working for the company in the U.S. please bring a letter from your employer verifying your employment
- DS-160 confirmation
- Evidence of payment of applicable fees to the consulate

3 Can my spouse and children under 21 years of age attend the same interview as me?



Yes, but each member of your family will need a separate DS-160 and payment of consular fees. Children under 14 generally do not need to attend the interview.

4 What documents do my dependents need to bring to the consular interview?



IF YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS ARE GOING TO THE CONSULATE TOGETHER, EACH PERSON SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING:

- Passport
- Prior passports with prior U.S. visa stamps, if any and available
- Children under 21 years of age: birth certificates
- Spouse: marriage certificate

4 What documents do my dependents need to bring to the consular interview? (cont.)



IF YOUR DEPENDENTS WILL INTERVIEW AT A DIFFERENT TIME THAN YOU, THEY SHOULD BRING THE ABOVE LISTED DOCUMENTS **PLUS** THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:

- Copy of your passport
- Copy of your I-797 notice of action (approval notice)
- Copy of your visa stamp
- Copy of your I-94, if you are currently in the United States
- Copies of your two most recent pay stubs, if you are currently in the U.S., or an employment verification letter

5 Do you have any tips for the consular interview?



PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND FOR YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Your DS-160 should be consistent with what was written in your USCIS petition
- You should be familiar with what was written about your job in the USCIS petition
For third party client placements, you should be prepared to discuss how your employer maintains the control over your work product, including supervisor information, frequency of check-ins, method of following up, etc.
- Your DS-160 should be consistent with what was written in your USCIS petition
- Show up to your interview 10-15 minutes early
- Have all of your documents on hand at the time of the interview

6 Does Meltzer Hellrung offer any services to help me prepare for the consular processing?



Yes, we offer an additional service to prepare consular processing packets, including completion of the DS-160. If you would like our assistance with this process, please follow up with us.

7 Are there any additional reasons I should reach out to Meltzer Hellrung before going to the consulate?



YES, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH US BEFORE APPLYING IF YOU FALL UNDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- You have a criminal record
- You have previously been denied a visa at the consulate
- The circumstances of your job offer have changed substantially since the visa petition was originally submitted to USCIS

8 How should I dress for my consular interview?



We recommend wearing business casual attire to your interview. At the interview, it is important that you appear calm and confident. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the visa category you are applying under and be prepared to discuss the job duties described in your letter of support.

9 What should I do if I receive a 221(g) refusal form from the consulate/embassy?



A 221(g) is a request for more information before the consulate can process the visa. Please reach out to your Meltzer Hellrung attorney and provide a copy of the 221(g) form. We can then review what additional documentation is required, so that we can determine the next best steps for your visa application.

10 What should I do if my visa application is denied?



If your application is denied, we recommend that you request documentation from the officer regarding the reason for denial. Contact your Meltzer Hellrung attorney immediately and forward any documentation which is provided to you to your Meltzer Hellrung attorney so that we may assess what next steps are required in your situation.

Does Meltzer Hellrung offer any services to help me prepare for the consular processing?

Yes, we offer an additional service to prepare consular processing packets, including completion of the DS-160. If you would like our assistance with this process, please follow up with us.



MELTZER HELLRUNG

IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

NONIMMIGRANT VISA INTERVIEW WAIVERS (DROPBOX APPOINTMENT)



In general, an in-person interview at a U.S. consulate is required to obtain a visa. However, some applicants may be eligible for visa interview waivers.

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2025, A VISA APPLICANT MAY QUALIFY FOR AN INTERVIEW WAIVER, FOR A NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION IF THEY SATISFY THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

1. Applicant is applying at the consular post in the country of nationality or usual residence;
2. Applicant is applying for one of the following visas:
 - a A-1, A-2, C-3 (except attendants, servants, or personal employees of accredited officials), G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1 through NATO-6, or TECRO E-1, or diplomatic- or official-type visas; or
 - b Applicant is renewing a full validity B-1, B-2, B1/B2 visa or a Border Crossing Card/ Foil (for Mexican nationals)
3. **For item (b) above:**
 - a Applicant has a previously issued U.S. visa in the **same** classification as the visa for which they are applying and the prior visa is still valid or has expired within the last 12 months;
 - b Applicant was at least 18 years old at the time of the prior visa's issuance.
4. Applicant's prior visa is not annotated "Clearance Received" or "Department Authorization";
5. Applicant's most recent visa in the same classification for which they are applying was not lost/stolen or canceled; and
6. Applicant was not previously refused a visa in any classification.

Please note U.S. consulates may have varying procedures for interview waivers; therefore please review the local U.S. consulate's website or appointment scheduling website. Consular officers also have the discretion to require an in-person interview on a case-by-case basis. In general, if the applicant is eligible for a visa interview waiver, the U.S. consulate will require the applicant to schedule an appointment to drop off or mail in documents to a designated location. The applicant must be present in the country where they are applying for the visa interview waiver at the time the visa application is submitted and until the passport is picked up with the issued visa stamp.

TYPICAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR DROPBOX/MAIL-IN:

- DS-160 confirmation
- Valid passport
- Pre-paid courier packaging for passport/document return
- Evidence of payment of applicable fees to the consulate
- Two passport style photos
- I-797 approval notice, I-20, DS-2019, etc. as applicable to visa type

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

1 What will happen once my visa is issued?

Once approved, the consulate will take your passport to put the visa stamp into the passport. The consulate will then return the passport via the selected delivery method.



2 When entering the U.S., individuals on employment visas should carry the following documentation:



YOU SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- Current passport with at least six months of validity
- Passport with current visa stamp, if this is not the same passport as your current passport
- I-797 approval notice, if applicable
- Two most recent pay stubs or employment verification letter from employer

DEPENDENTS SHOULD CARRY THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION:

- Current passport with at least six months of validity
- Passport with current visa stamp, if this is not the same passport as your current passport
- I-797 approval notice, if applicable
- Primary applicant's I-94, if already in the US
- Primary applicant's two most recent pay stubs or employment verification letter from employer

3 Once you enter the U.S. be sure to retrieve your I-94 record.

Once you enter the U.S. be sure to retrieve your CBP I-94 record [here](#), to ensure that your I-94 was issued for the requested validity period. Please forward this record to Meltzer Hellrung upon entry.



④ What documents do my dependents need to bring to the consular interview?



CBP officers typically issue I-94 dates in line with the expiration of your passport. If your passport will be expiring soon, we recommend renewing your passport prior to re-entry to the U.S. so as to ensure your I-94 is issued for the maximum duration. If you receive a shortened I-94 not related to an expiring passport, please reach out to your Meltzer Hellrung attorney so that we can determine the best method of correction. Typically, you will need to reach out to deferred inspection at the entry location link: [**Deferred Inspection Sites**](#)

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN SECONDARY INSPECTION WHEN ENTERING THE UNITED STATES



MELTZER HELLRUNG
IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

Secondary inspection allows U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers to conduct additional research to verify information and admissibility to the U.S. During secondary inspection, individuals are usually taken to a separate interview area where an individual's admissibility or status are reviewed before admitting the individual to enter the United States.

SOME OF THE REASONS PEOPLE MAY GET PULLED INTO SECOND INSPECTION MAY INCLUDE (BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

- Use of Advance Parole as an Adjustment of Status Applicant
- First entry after having received a green card adjudicated at a consulate
- Extended stay outside the U.S.
- Mistake in the system
- Review of additional immigration documents, such as student I-20s, letters of employment, etc.
- Previous experience in secondary inspection
- Frequent and/or extensive stay in the U.S. in B or ESTA status
- Officer discretion

SECONDARY INSPECTION CAN INCLUDE:

- Specific questions about travel, immigration history, and other related topics
- Inspection of goods and/or vehicle including personal items
- Search of electronic devices
- Search of the CBP records
- Search of the internet, including social media pages

COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED DURING INSPECTION INCLUDE:

- Why are you coming to the United States?
- Where will you be staying?
- How long will you be staying?
- Have you been to the United States before? How long did you stay?
- How often do you come to the United States?
- Do you have family in the U.S.? The officer may then have follow-up questions regarding any family in the U.S.

IN THE UNLIKELY SITUATION THAT THE CBP OFFICER DETERMINES THE PERSON TO BE INADMISSIBLE, THERE CAN BE SOME NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS WHICH INCLUDE BEING:

- Turned away with instructions on what must be done in order to be admitted
- Issued an order of Expedited Removal
- Issued a Notice to Appear (NTA), starting removal proceedings. The individual may also be placed in detention.



MELTZER HELLRUNG
IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

Meltzer Hellrung challenges conventions to deliver better outcomes.

Founded with the belief that immigration can be a strategic advantage, we understand the complexities of immigration and respond with innovative solutions to meet business and talent needs. Our unique solution - skilled immigration professionals delivering responsive service to clients through Voyager®, our proprietary immigration management platform, delivers the best immigration experience to companies, employees and their families.

