

WELCOME TO AMERICA

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MELTZER HELLRUNG
IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

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Congratulations on getting your case approved! Below are some answers to frequently asked questions and a glossary of immigration terms.

Important Documents



Passport: You must maintain a valid passport while inside the U.S. When you enter the U.S. you will not be allowed to stay longer than the expiration date of your passport at the time of entering, even if the visa stamp in your passport is valid longer than the expiration date of your passport. We recommend renewing your passport at least 1 year before it expires.



Visa Stamp: A visa stamp is issued to individuals coming to work, study, or visit the United States and their dependents (Canadians are generally visa exempt). A visa stamp itself does not authorize you to work or stay in the United States. The visa stamp only authorizes you to enter the United States during the validity of the visa stamp (though entrance is still not guaranteed until the final step, when Customs and Border Protection admits you.)



I-94: An I-94 is issued by CBP once you enter the U.S. in a nonimmigrant status. It is a digital document and is found at tinyurl.com/record-i-94. Please be sure to check your I-94 after every international trip to ensure the visa type and expiration date are correct. An I-94 determines how long you can stay in the U.S., and for certain non-immigrant visas provides work authorization. You cannot stay in the U.S. beyond your I-94 expiration date without filing an extension with the USCIS. If you cannot locate your I-94 or an error is on the document you must contact the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) through a deferred inspection site for a correction: <https://www.cbp.gov/about/contact/ports/deferred-inspection-sites>



I-797 Notice of Action: An I-797 notice demonstrates that the USCIS has received a petition, and has possibly taken action on it. Look closely at the type of notice and read all its information. An I-797A is an approval notice that has an I-94 card on the bottom, and extends current status in the U.S. It is only issued by USCIS and not updated in the CBP portal until international travel. An I-797B is an approval for consular processing only, or for a benefit not extending status, and has no I-94 on the bottom because it does not extend status in the U.S. An I-797C is either a receipt only, or a courtesy copy of an approval, but again has no I-94 on the bottom.

How Do I Get a Social Security Number?



Request a Social Security Number (SSN) from the Social Security Administration (SSA) here: <https://www.ssa.gov/number-card/request-number-first-time>

The process has two parts. First, you must submit the online form and schedule an appointment at an SSA office. You can do this before entering the U.S. When submitting the form, you will need to know what your U.S. address will be. You will also need to specify which documents you can provide to prove your identity, work-authorized immigration status, and age.

After submitting the form, within 45 days, you must attend the appointment at the SSA office. There, you must present the documentation you specified in the online form. These documents must be originals, as the SSA will not accept copies or notarized copies. The SSA will review your application and, if approved, issue your SSN card.

Please note that you do not need an SSN to begin employment with your new employer. Should your employer have any questions about the procedure for starting employment without an SSN, please have them contact your designated Meltzer Hellrung attorney.

Local Logistics

How do I Get a Driver's License?



Each state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has specific sets of requirements for obtaining a state driver's license. Most require evidence of lawful status in the United States. A full list of the required documentation can be found at each state's DMV's website.

If you want to use your non-U.S. driver's license in the U.S., you may need to obtain a document called an International Driver Permit (IDP), depending on the state. Before arriving in the U.S., contact the DMV of the state(s) where you want to drive and ask if they require an IDP to drive in that state. If so, you must obtain an IDP in the country that issued your driver's license, before arriving in the U.S. Note that some car rental companies may also require an IDP if you do not have a U.S. driver's license.

Can I Legally Vote in the United States?



Generally, you cannot vote in the U.S. until you are a U.S. citizen. If you vote in a **federal election** (for example, for President, Senator, or Representative), you will be prevented from getting a green card or U.S. citizenship, and may face criminal charges and deportation proceedings. As for state and local elections, non-citizens generally may not vote.

However, in a very small number of specific cities, non citizens may vote in **local elections** only. Learn more at:

https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_permitting_noncitizens_to_vote_in_the_United_States

Can I Enroll My Children in Public School?



Yes, the public schools are obligated to accept all residents where they live. Please contact your local school district to find out how to enroll your children in public school.

Can I Use Recreational Marijuana If It Is Legal in My State?



No, the use of marijuana, recreational or medicinal, is still a federal crime and can have severe implications for your immigration status. You should avoid consumption, possession, and/or distribution of marijuana, as well as any employment with the marijuana industry, to avoid any complications or termination of your immigration status.

Financial Logistics

How do I Open a Bank Account?

Contact the bank for requirements. Typically, you will need to visit the bank in person. Banks will generally require photo ID (such as your passport, driver's license if you have one, and/or other documents), proof of your U.S. address (such as your lease, paychecks, bills, or other mail), proof of your non-U.S. address, and your Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).



Can I Purchase Property in the United States?

You are welcome to purchase property in the United States. However, many banks will not provide you a mortgage or loan unless you are a citizen or a legal permanent resident (green card holder).



Can I Buy Stock or Other Assets?

Yes, you are welcome to buy stocks, bonds, commodities, or any other asset. You may invest in other businesses but cannot take wages or work from such investment without authorization.



Can I Start a Business?

Yes, you may start a business. Businesses are made under state law and any person can file to create a business. However, you cannot work for the business or take home wages from working at the business unless you have work authorization to do so. We recommend speaking to your Meltzer Hellrung attorney about entrepreneurial opportunities.



How Can I Obtain Legal Permanent Residence (Green Card)?



There are multiple paths to obtain a green card.

Your employer may sponsor you at their discretion. Contact your employer about whether they offer this option and the details.

Or, you may pursue independent paths:

- ⇒ If you are an immediate relative (parent, child, spouse, sibling) of a U.S. Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR), your U.S. Citizen or LPR relative may sponsor you.
- ⇒ If you invest at least \$800,000 into a U.S. company and create at least 10 U.S. jobs with that investment, you may be eligible for an EB-5 green card.
- ⇒ If you are a highly qualified individual with certain credentials, achievements, or work proposals, you may self-sponsor for a green card.
- ⇒ Depending on your country of birth, you may apply for a Diversity Visa Lottery green card.

To pursue independent paths, you should contact your designated Meltzer Hellrung attorney to evaluate your options.

Please note that a green card does not confer U.S. citizenship. That is a separate process that you may pursue several years after obtaining the green card. You may apply for citizenship after 2 years and 275 days if the green card was through marriage to a U.S. citizen, or after 4 years and 275 days otherwise. For more information on U.S. citizenship, consult with your designated Meltzer Hellrung Attorney.



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.

