

Non-Immigration Visas

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- [What is a nonimmigrant visa?](#)
- [Does every visitor to the United States require a visa?](#)
- [Which are the visa waiver countries?](#)
- [What should I tell a friend who is coming to visit me from abroad?](#)
- [Why are so many visa applications denied?](#)
- [What can be done if a visitor's visa is denied?](#)
- [Where can I get more information about visitor's visas](#)

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What is a nonimmigrant visa?

Nonimmigrant visas are more commonly known as “tourist visas” or “visitor’s visas.” According to the U.S. Department of State, a [nonimmigrant visa](#) is a type of permission “for international travelers (citizens of other countries) to come into the U.S. temporarily. The visa, placed on your passport when issued, allows you to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (e.g. airport) and request permission of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection immigration officer to enter the U.S. A visa does not guarantee entry into the U.S.” Foreign nationals wishing to travel to the U.S. must apply for a visa at an American embassy or consulate abroad. You may view the types of nonimmigrant visas issued by the U.S. [here](#)

. A Consular Officer at the U.S. embassy or consulate decides whether you are qualified for a visa.

[Back to top](#)

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Does every visitor to the United States require a visa?

No. Individuals may travel to the U.S. without a nonimmigrant visa, but only if they meet certain requirements under U.S. law. Mexican and Canadian NAFTA professional workers, citizens of Canada and Bermuda, and countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program may travel into the U.S. without nonimmigrant visas. For more information about travelling without a visa, [click here](#)

[Back to top](#)

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Which are the visa waiver countries?

Participating countries include: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. For more information about the Visa Waiver Program, [click here](#) .

[Back to top](#)

□

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What should I tell a friend who is coming to visit me from abroad?

If a family member or friend is applying for a nonimmigrant visa to come to the United States, please advise them to apply well in advance of their travel!

Please also remind them to:

1. Review their visa status to find out if they need a U.S. visa or a renewal; and
2. Review the [Visa Wait Times](#) information for interview appointments and visa processing procedures of a particular U.S. embassy or consulate; and
3. [Visit the U.S. embassy or consulate website](#) where they will apply for a visa to find out how to schedule an interview, pay fees, and ensure their visa application is appropriate; and
4. Prepare for an interview and fingerprint scan at the U.S. embassy or consulate, both of which are required for most nonimmigrant visa applicants. However, some visa applications require additional administrative processing, which require additional time.

[Back to top](#)

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Why are so many visa applications denied?

When applying for a nonimmigrant visa, a visa applicant must be prepared to prove that he or she is not planning to immigrate to, or permanently remain in, the U.S. A visa applicant must be prepared to provide documented proof of one or more of their compelling reasons to return to their country of origin. A visa applicant must be prepared to prove to the Consular Officer that they have sufficient familial, economic, or social ties to their country of origin. Thus, it is important to remind any friends or relatives wishing to apply for nonimmigrant visas to gather documents proving strong ties to their country of origin prior to applying, and to bring those documents to their interview. For more information on visa denials and eligibilities, [click here](#).

[Back to top](#)

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What can be done if a visitor's visa is denied?

If a visa is denied because the person failed to overcome the presumption that they intend to immigrate, they are free to reapply. If they do reapply, they are strongly advised to submit additional documented proof of their economic, social and familial ties to their country of origin. For more information on visa denials and eligibilities, [click here](#).

[Back to top](#)

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□

Where can I get more information on nonimmigrant visas?

For more information on nonimmigrant visas, [visit the U.S. Department of State's official website](#)

[Back to top](#)