

Non-Immigration Visas

- [What is a non-immigration 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](#)

What is a non-immigration visa?

A visa is permission to apply to enter the United States. Foreign citizens must apply for a visa at an American embassy or consulate abroad, when desiring to travel to the United States. A consular officer decides whether you are qualified for a visa. Citizens of certain countries may be able to travel without a visa on the Visa Waiver Program if they meet certain conditions (see below).

The visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a port-of-entry in the United States, such as an international airport, a seaport or a land border crossing. At the port-of-entry, an officer of the Department of Homeland Security decides whether to allow you to enter and how long you can stay.

[Back to top](#)

Does every visitor to the United States require a visa?

No. Individuals traveling to the United States from one of the visa waiver countries (see below for a list) for tourism or business for 90 days or less are permitted to come without obtaining a visa. They must be traveling to the U.S. for business or tourism for a period of not more than 90 days, have a round trip ticket, fly on certain air carriers, and meet other requirements. Additionally, if the individual is coming for any other purpose, or plans to stay more than 90 days, he or she must obtain a visa despite coming from a visa waiver country. For more information, please go to the State Department's webpage on the [Visa Waver Program](#)

[Back to top](#)

Which are the visa waiver countries?

Andorra, Iceland, Norway, Australia, Ireland, Portugal, Austria, Italy, San Marino, Belgium, Japan, Singapore, Brunei, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain, Finland, Monaco, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, New Zealand, United Kingdom

[Back to top](#)

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

If a family member or friend is applying for a non-immigrant visa to come to the United States, please advise them to apply well in advance of their travel! Important steps to remember:

1. Remind them to review their visa status to find out if they need a U.S. visa or a renewal.
2. Contact the Embassy Consular Section, to learn about time frames for visa interviews and other issues, such as how to pay fees. Waiting time for an interview appointment is usually a few weeks or less, but it can be considerably longer.
3. Most visa applicants will have to attend an interview at the embassy or consulate. As part of the visa interview, a quick fingerprint scan should be expected. Applicants who need additional screening will be informed during the application process.

[Back to top](#)

Why are so many visa applications denied?

Every person who applies for a visa to come to the United States is automatically presumed to want to stay here unless they can prove they have compelling reasons for returning home. They must be prepared to prove to the consular officer that they have sufficient familial, economic or social ties to their own country. It is not enough simply to assert the ties; they must bring proof. Thus, it is important to remind your friends and family to document their ties to home – bring bank accounts, property deeds, business records, pay stubs, marriage licenses, birth certificates and other materials that will demonstrate to the consular officials that they have a reason to go home. More information is available at this [page](#) from the State Department.

[Back to top](#)

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 proof of their economic, social and familial ties to their home country.

[Back to top](#)

Where can I get more information about visitor's visas?

Go to [UnitedStatesVisas.gov](https://www.ustraveldocs.com) .

[Back to top](#)