

U.S. VISAS

U.S. Department of State • Bureau of Consular Affairs

BUSINESS TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

What type of U.S. visa will you need?

If you are planning business-related travel to the United States on a temporary basis, it is important to have information about the type of nonimmigrant visa you will need for travel. The purpose of your intended travel and other facts regarding your plans will determine what type of visa is required under immigration law. This flier is a resource that will help you learn about the visa process in general, so that you will better understand the different steps involved.

Business Visitor Visa (B-1) - For business-specific purposes

The chart below is an overview of key groupings of temporary business related travel permitted on **business visitor visas** (Note: This is not comprehensive. For other travel permitted under a business visitor visa (B-1), reference [9 FAM 41.31.](#))

Purpose of Your Travel	About Your Temporary Visit
Athlete, professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Receives no salary or income from a U.S. based company/entity, other than prize money for participation in a tournament or sporting event.b. Athletes or team members who seek to enter the United States as members of a foreign based team in order to compete with another sports team shall be admitted provided:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) The foreign athlete and the foreign sports team have their principal place of business or activity in a foreign country;(2) The income of the foreign based team and the salary of its players are principally accrued in a foreign country; and(3) The foreign-based sports team is a member of an international sports league or the sporting activities involved have an international dimension.c. Try-outs for a professional team, but cannot remain in the U.S. playing on a U.S. team in this visa category.
Business venture, investor seeking investment	Survey potential sites for a business and/or to lease premises in the United States. Cannot remain in the United States to manage business in this visa category.



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Purpose of Your Travel	About Your Temporary Visit
Conference, meeting, trade show, or business event attendee	Will receive no salary or income from a U.S. based company/entity. For scientific, educational, professional or business purposes.
Exposition or trade show employees of foreign exhibitors at international fairs (excludes government representatives)	Will receive no salary or income from a U.S. based company/entity. Will plan, assemble, dismantle, maintain, or be employed in connection with exhibits at international fairs or expositions.
Lecturer or speaker	No salary or income from a U.S. based company/entity, other than expenses incidental to the visit. If honorarium will be received, activities can last no longer than nine days at any single institution or organization; payment must be offered by an institution or organization described in INA 212(q); honorarium is for services conducted for the benefit of the institution or entity; and visa applicant will not have accepted such payment or expenses from more than five institutions or organizations over the last six months.
Researcher	Independent research, no salary/income from a U.S. based source, or benefit to U.S. institution.
Sales/selling	Exhibition/taking orders/negotiating and signing contracts for products, which must be produced outside the United States.
Service engineer (Commercial, Industrial)	Engineer(s) install, service or repair commercial or industrial equipment or machinery sold by a non-U.S. company to a U.S. buyer, when specifically required by the purchase contract. Installation cannot include construction work, except for supervision or training of U.S. workers to perform construction.
Training	Participating in a training program that is not designed primarily to provide employment. Will receive no payment or income from a U.S. based company/entity, other than an expense allowance or expense reimbursement related to traveler's stay.



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Next Steps - What You Must Do - If your purpose of planned travel and facts about your visit fits within the description above, the next step is to schedule a visa interview appointment and apply for a visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, generally in your country of residence.

How to Apply for a Visa

- Learn more about how to apply for a business [visitor visa](#) (B-1).
- Check on [visa wait times](#) for an interview appointment.
- [Locate a U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#) worldwide: find out how to pay the visa application fee, make an interview appointment, and learn much more.

Important Note: When applying for a visa, you will need to meet all requirements for the visa for which you are applying. The consular officer at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will apply for your visa will determine eligibility for a visa, including type of visa required, based on your application, interview, individual facts presented, and on U.S. immigration law.

Business Visa Center (for U.S. companies) – The Department of State [Business Visa Center](#) assists businesses located in the United States by providing information about the application process for business visitor visa (B-1) travel to the United States.

Embassy Business Facilitation (for companies abroad) - If you or your company are located overseas, U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide have programs to assist businesses. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate where the visa applicant will be applying is in the best position to provide information about any program they may have to assist businesses in their location. For more information, select [Locate a U.S. Embassy or Consulate](#).

Seeking Employment or Work in the United States?

If your purpose of planned travel and facts about your visit **does not** fit within the description above, you will probably need another type of visa. If you are seeking to come to the United States on a temporary basis to work, be employed, and/or be paid by a U.S. based company as a skilled or unskilled worker, you will need a temporary worker type of visa. In these situations, the prospective employer must file with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), on behalf of the foreign prospective employee, a nonimmigrant visa petition accompanied by an approved labor certification.



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Purpose of Your Travel	About Your Temporary Visit	Type of Visa	Key Steps – What You Must Do
Employment/work	Payment, income, salary will be paid to you by U.S. based company or business entity.	Temporary Worker Visa (H, L, O, P, Q visas and more)	U.S. employer files petition with USCIS. After petition approval, visa application at U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
Internship	Practical training through an internship with a U.S. based employer, whether paid or unpaid by that company.	Temporary worker trainee (H-3) or Exchange Visitor (J) visa	H- U.S. employer files petition with USCIS. J – Applicant approval by J sponsor. After above approval, visa application at U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
Researcher	Independent research, will receive U.S. payment, or benefit to U.S. institution	Temporary Worker (H-1B) Visa or Exchange Visitor (J) Visa.	H- U.S. employer files petition with USCIS along with an approved labor certification. J – Applicant approval by J sponsor. After above approval, visa application at U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

To learn more about temporary workers in the United States, see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, [USCIS Website](#), and the Department of State, [travel.state.gov](#) website. See the Department of Labor information about hiring [foreign workers](#) and labor certification required with petitions for some types of temporary workers.

If you are seeking to come to the United States on a permanent basis to work, be employed, and/or be paid by a U.S. based company as a skilled or unskilled worker, you will require an immigrant visa. To learn more, see the [USCIS Website](#) and the Department of State, [travel.state.gov](#) website.

