

Global Immigration alert

July 2025

United States

Department of State interview waiver update

Executive summary

Beginning 2 September 2025, many nonimmigrant visa applicants will no longer be eligible for an interview waiver and will therefore need to attend an in-person visa interview at a U.S. consular post abroad. This new policy further restricts the more expansive visa interview waiver program rolled out in recent years.

Background and analysis

In December 2023, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) determined certain categories of interview waivers to be in the national interest and provided consular officers with the authority and discretion to waive the in-person interview requirement for, among others, nonimmigrant visa applicants applying for any type of nonimmigrant visa, provided that they were previously issued a nonimmigrant visa in any classification (excluding those who had only been issued a B visitor visa in the past) and were applying within 48 months of the expiration date of their most recent nonimmigrant visa. DOS had updated the 48-month period to 12 months in February of this year.

Pursuant to the change announced on 25 July 2025, all visa applicants - including applicants under the age of 14 and over the age of 79 - will need to attend an in-person interview at a U.S. consulate abroad except the following:

- Applicants classifiable under the visa symbols 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;
- Applicants for diplomatic or official visas; and
- Applicants renewing a full validity B-1, B-2, B1/B2 visa or a Border Crossing Card/Foil (for Mexican nationals) within 12 months of the prior visa's expiration, and who

were at least 18 years old at the time of the prior visa's issuance.

Notably, to be eligible for a B-1, B-2, B1/B2 visa or a Border Crossing Card/Foil interview waiver, applicants must also satisfy the following requirements:

- Apply in their country of nationality or residence;
- Have never been refused a visa (unless such refusal was overcome or waived); and
- Have no apparent or potential ineligibility.

What this means

Young children (under the age of 14) and the elderly (over the age of 79) will now need to attend visa appointments. H, L, E, TN, and F visa holders (and their dependents) will no longer be eligible for interview waivers when renewing their visas within 12 months of the prior visa's expiration.

Visa applicants should expect longer appointment wait times at U.S. consulates abroad and plan their travel accordingly. They should also carefully monitor and review instructions on consulate websites for new information about visa application requirements and procedures.

We will continue to monitor and share future developments. For additional information, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact your EY Law LLP professional or Mehlman Jacobs LLP professional.

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