

Travel to the United States for Medical Treatment

If you or someone you know wants to come to the United States for medical treatment, it is important to understand the process generally required for foreign travel to the United States, including travel for surgery or cancer treatment or to take care of a family member. This document is intended only as a general overview of information. We strongly encourage you to discuss any immigration questions you have with a qualified immigration attorney.

To Enter the United States, You May Need to Obtain a Visa

Any person who is a citizen of a foreign country and wishes to lawfully enter the United States must first check to see if you need to obtain a visa¹. A visa is like a permission slip that you have to apply for with the US Embassy. Citizens of certain countries may be able to enter the U.S. for a short visit without a visa under a visa waiver program. There are different types of visas depending on the reason for your travel. For a temporary stay, you may apply for a nonimmigrant visa. If you or your loved one wants to move to the US permanently, you may apply for an immigrant visa.

Visitor visas are nonimmigrant visas for persons who want to enter the United States temporarily for business (visa category B-1) or for tourism: pleasure or visiting (visa category B-2), or a combination of both purposes (B-1/B-2). A visitor visa is not the right document if you wish to work or study in the U.S. You may need to get a different type of visa if you wish to work or study in the U.S.²

For additional information on visitor visas, please visit:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visitor.html> or call: (603) 334-0888

To Apply for a Nonimmigrant Visitor Visa:

To apply for a visa, you should contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest to your home. U.S. Embassy locations are listed here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/united-states-mission-geneva/>. It is a good idea to talk to an immigration attorney to help you with your application.

¹ Citizens of certain countries may be able to enter the U.S. for a short stay without a visa under a visa waiver program: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visa-waiver-program.html> Citizens of India, Mexico, and China must apply for a visa.

² A visa is supposed to be used only for limited purposes. You cannot work or study on a visitor visa. Some short recreational courses of study (for example, a two-day cooking class while on vacation) are okay as long as they are not classes for credit toward a degree.

- 1) **You will need to complete an online nonimmigrant visa application**, Form DS-160³ and print the application confirmation form to bring to your interview. You will need to upload your photo as part of completing the online form DS-160. Please refer to the Department of State website for current photo requirements⁴.
- 2) **You may be subject to an interview by consular officers.** Applicants 13 and under, as well as those 80 and older, generally do not require an interview. Anyone between the ages of 14-79 requires an interview. You should schedule your appointment for your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country where you live.
- 3) **You will need to pay the applicable fee.** There is an application fee of \$160 U.S. dollars plus an issuance fee that varies by country. View the instructions on the website of the embassy or consulate to learn more about fee payment.
- 4) **Gather required documentation:** your passport, nonimmigrant visa application, fee payment receipt, and photo. Requirements:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visitor.html>

Medical Visa

If you or a loved one has a medical condition (like cancer) you wish to have treated in the United States, you will still need to obtain a visa to enter the U.S. Simply having a serious illness that requires medical treatment does not grant automatic entry into the U.S., no matter how sick you are. In fact, if you are seeking medical treatment in the U.S., you may be asked for additional documentation during your visa interview, including:

- Medical diagnosis from a local doctor, explaining the nature of the illness and the reason you need treatment in the United States.
- Letter from a doctor or medical facility in the United States, stating they are willing to treat your specific illness and detailing the projected length and cost of treatment (including doctors' fees, hospitalization fees, and all medical-related expenses).
- Proof that your transportation, medical, and living expenses in the United States will be paid. This may be in the form of bank or other statements of income/savings or certified copies of income tax returns (either yours or the person or organization paying for your treatment).

People typically have the most difficulty showing that they have the ability to pay. There may be nonprofit organizations and charities that offer financial assistance, but it is the visa applicant's responsibility to show that he or she has the ability to pay for medical treatment and associated costs.

³ Form DS-160 <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

Learn more about form DS-160 <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/forms/ds-160--online-nonimmigrant-visa-application.html>

⁴ Requirements for visa photos <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/photos.html>

Humanitarian Parole

If you have been unsuccessful in trying to get a visa to enter the United States, you may contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to apply for humanitarian parole⁵. Humanitarian parole is a process to allow someone into the U.S. for a temporary time due to a serious emergency. Parole is granted on a case-by-case basis for “an urgent humanitarian reason” or “significant public benefit.” Humanitarian Parole cannot be used to get around the normal visa-issuing requirement, and it is not meant as a way to bypass the normal processing for refugee status. You may want to consult with an immigration attorney to determine whether you are a good candidate for humanitarian parole.

To apply for medical parole, you must submit the following:

- An explanation from a medical doctor stating the diagnosis and prognosis, and how long treatment is expected to last;
- Information on reasons why you cannot obtain treatment in your home country or in a neighboring country;
- Estimated cost of the treatment and an explanation on how the treatment will be paid for; and
- How you will pay to return to your home country.

To apply for parole for children with Medical Needs:

- Parole of children, including for medical needs, requires the consent of a parent or legal guardian.

A person granted parole must leave the United States before the parole ends. You may submit a request for reparole, which must be approved by USCIS.⁶ The fee for Humanitarian Parole application is \$575 U.S. dollars.

Application instructions for Humanitarian Parole can be found on the USCIS website:

https://my.uscis.gov/exploremyoptions/humanitarian_parole

⁵ About Humanitarian Parole: https://my.uscis.gov/exploremyoptions/humanitarian_parole

⁶ <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian-parole/guidance-evidence-certain-types-humanitarian-or-significant-public-benefit-parole-requests>

Immigration Resources:

For more information on immigration generally:

United State Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

Bureau of Citizenship & Immigration Services: (800) 375-5283 www.uscis.gov

For more information on how to obtain a visa to travel to the United States:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visitor.html>

Contact information for the U.S. Department of State can be found here:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/contact.html>

If you would like to apply for a nonimmigrant visa, and have questions that have not been answered on the Department of State website or on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, call the

National Visa Center at [\(603\) 334-0888](tel:6033340888) (7a.m. - 12a.m. EST Monday - Friday (excluding holidays)).

If you want to talk to an immigration attorney, you can get a referral from the state bar association lawyer referral service in the state you want to travel to.

How do I financially sponsor someone who wishes to immigrate to the U.S.?

<http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/F3en.pdf>

I Am a U.S. Citizen: How Do I Help My Fiancée Become a U.S. Permanent Resident?

<http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Resources/A2en.pdf>

I Am a U.S. Citizen: How Do I Help My Relative Become a U.S. Permanent Resident?

<http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Resources/A1en.pdf>

I Am a Permanent Resident: How do I apply for U.S. Citizenship?

<http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Resources/B3en.pdf>

I Am a Permanent Resident: How Do I Help My Relative Become a U.S. Permanent Resident?

<http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Resources/B1en.pdf>

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