

How do I apply for a visa?

As a standard part of the visa process, the State Department is now requiring that consular officers interview almost every applicant. Some consulates may have a long wait for an interview so applicants should contact the consulate to schedule an interview as early as possible. Furthermore, many visa applications are sent to the State Department in Washington, D.C. to be reviewed by several agencies. Because of the number of visa applications and the need for thorough security reviews, the process can take several months. Therefore, it is advisable for travelers to apply for their visas as early as possible (at least three to four months before the visa is needed). Contact the nearest [U.S. consulate or embassy](#) for details on visa application procedures at that post.

Tips for Successful Visa Applications

Visa applicants are expected to provide evidence that they are intending to return to their country of residence. Therefore, applicants should provide proof of “binding” or sufficient ties to their home country or permanent residence abroad. This may include documentation of the following:

- family ties in home country or country of legal permanent residence
- property ownership
- bank accounts
- employment contract or statement from employer stating that the position will continue when the employee returns;

Visa applications are more likely to be successful if done in a visitor’s home country than in a third country;

Applicants should present their entire trip itinerary, including travel to any countries other than the United States, at the time of their visa application; Include a letter of invitation from the meeting organizer or the U.S. host, specifying the subject, location and dates of the activity, and how travel and local expenses will be covered;

If travel plans will depend on early approval of the visa application, specify this at the time of the application;

Provide proof of professional scientific and/or educational status (students should provide a university transcript);