

CONSULAR PROCESSING FOR FAMILY BASED PETITIONS

What is a Consular Processing?

Consular Processing refers to the process of applying for a green card from OUTSIDE the United States through a consulate or U.S. embassy in a beneficiary's home country. The entire process is done through a consulate or embassy.

Filing a Petition with USCIS:

An I-130 petition can be filed for an immediate relative (spouse, child, or parent of a U.S. citizen) with a USCIS field office, U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Situations where this may be applicable include if you, the petitioner, are a U.S. citizen and 1) there is an international USCIS field office located in the country in which the beneficiary resides, 2) if the beneficiary resides within the consular office's jurisdiction for countries in which there is no USCIS field office and exceptional circumstances exist that warrant the local filing, 3) Members of the military 4) emergency situations 5) situations involving the health or safety of the petitioner or 6) when in the national interests of the United States.

The Process:

National Visa Center:

- DS 260 - Immigrant Visa Application Fee - \$325 - questions such as biographical information and previous entries into the United States
- I-864 - Affidavit of Support Fee - \$120
- Signed by the Sponsor and must submit evidence of financial responsibility
- Civil Documents - such as birth certificates and marriage certificate but check your local embassy for all requirements

Interview with Consulate

- Once a visa number becomes available an interview will be scheduled
- If you cannot appear make sure to contact the appropriate location as soon as possible
- Check for embassy specific requirements prior to the interview

The Interview:

- The Consular Officer will review the application and verify the information or documentation provided.
- During the interview, ink free, digital fingerprints will be taken

After the Immigration Interview:

- If approved, a "Visa Packet" will be received, which includes the immigrant visa and important documentation needed to enter the United States.
- After entering the United States, a green card will be mailed within 45 days of arrival

U.S. Entry with Approved Visa

- This "Visa Packet" will be handed to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agent upon entry into the United States.
- The beneficiary is required to travel to the United States within a certain period, so ensure they enter within that time frame.
- The beneficiary must also carry their medical records and required proof of vaccinations for children (if applicable)
- Please ensure all immigration fees have been paid before departing to the United States

How to read the Visa Bulletin:

- You will need the date listed on your approval notice and the most recent Visa Bulletin - Available at travel.state.gov

Find your preference category

- First: (F1) Unmarried Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens
- Second: (F2A) Spouses and Children of Permanent Residents
- (F2B) Unmarried Sons and Daughters (21 years of age or older) of Permanent Residents
- Third: (F3) Married Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens
- Fourth: (F4) Brothers and Sisters of Adult U.S. Citizens

Find the country beneficiary is entering from:

- If your country is not exclusively listed at the top of the chart, then you go to the second column stating All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed
- The date listed on the corresponding box, is the priority date for that category.
- If the date on your approval notice is earlier than the date listed then a visa is available.
- If the date listed on your approval notice is later then a visa is not available yet.
- If there is a "C", the Visa is CURRENT and you may apply immediately.
- If there is a "U", those visas are currently unavailable.

