

Getting Ready to Apply for a Visa

In order to limit the delay in processing your visa application, it is essential that you fill out your application completely and provide all of the information and documentation requested by the US consulate or embassy. While the documentation you may be required to provide will vary depending on the type of visa you apply for, there some types of information that will be required whether you are applying for a nonimmigrant or immigrant visa.

Some of the documents you can expect to provide include:

- **Passport** (the passport must be valid for at least six months after the time your visa is issued)
- **Birth certificate** (also be prepared to provide the birth certificates of your spouse and any minor children that may be joining you)
- **Photographs** (digital photographs are now required)
- **Medical exam results** (the exam must be conducted by a US embassy or consulate approved physician)
- **Police and criminal records**, if applicable
- **Evidence of a clean criminal history**
- **Military record**, if applicable
- **Marriage license**, if applicable

US immigration laws require visa applicants to provide **fingerprints**, which will be taken at the US consulate or embassy and used to check criminal backgrounds and verify the visa holder's identity at a US port of entry.

Depending on the type of visa for which you apply, you also may be required to provide:

- **Employment offer letter**
- **University or college acceptance letter**
- **Letter from your employer** stating the purpose of your business travel in the US
- **Affidavit of support** from a family member sponsoring your immigration to the US
- **Bank statements** and other financial documents proving your ability to support yourself economically while in the US
- **Evidence of family relationship** for family-based immigration
- Evidence of intent to return home for nonimmigrant visas

In addition, the US embassy or consulate responsible for processing your visa application may request additional information from you. You should contact the proper office prior to submitting your application to check for any specific requirements they may have. For a complete listing of US embassy and consulate offices, see the US Department of State Web site at <http://www.usembassy.gov>.

For more information on applying for a visa, the requirements for a specific type of a visa or contesting a denied application, contact an experienced immigration attorney.



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