



The Insider Truth About  
U.S. Visas & Immigration

Every year, thousands of people act on their role of coming to the U.S. to study, work, and/or begin a new life. Unfortunately, a comparative few understand how the visa and immigration process works, and are taken advantage of by fraudulent parties offering cheap legal services.

- In 2015, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement set up a [fictional university](#) near Detroit to catch individuals offering student visas to undocumented immigrants. Eight people were arrested for visa fraud and “harboring aliens for profit.”
- In March 2019, a [Rochester man was arrested](#) for falsifying immigration documents and manipulating the H-1B visa program.

These are only two examples, but they prove that you need to be extremely careful about which immigration professionals you entrust with your money and dreams. Unless you understand how the system works, you can make wrong choices and miss important opportunities.

## **How Do You Legally Get a Visa for the U.S.?**

There are over 180 U.S. visas that address a variety of needs, from visiting and studying to doing business and joining your family. Each one requires different evidence and supporting documentation. For example:

- P-visas require you to be an athlete, member of a music group, or engaging in a culturally unique program.

- O-visas need evidence of extraordinary ability and distinction in business, the arts, science, athletics or education.
- L-visas are for those holding a managerial position in an overseas company with an affiliated office in the U.S.

When you hire an immigration attorney, they will help you identify the visa that matches your goals, confirm your eligibility, and present your case in a convincing way to the visa processing center closest to where you intend to live or work. Once filed, you should get a response from USCIS within 60 to 90 days; although with expedited processing the wait could be as short as two weeks.

Once you receive your visa, you may remain in the U.S. until the date stamped on your passport and I94 document. Most visas are valid for anywhere between several months and three years. Some of them can be extended for two to three years or for however long your contracts or program continue. If you can later demonstrate that you meet the criteria for other immigrant visa categories, you may be able to adjust your status to permanent resident after a specified number of years and receive a green card.

### **Common Visa Application Mistakes**

People handling their own immigration matters make a lot of mistakes, but the ones reviewed below are the most common.

- Making mistakes on the paperwork - Visa applications involve a lot of paperwork, and the information must be presented in a particular way depending on which visa you

are applying for. If you make an error, your application could be denied.

- Omitting necessary information and evidence - Different visa applications need different types of information and supporting evidence from you. If you are seeking a P visa, for example, you have to verify your background as an athlete or artist. Leaving anything out could result in a request for more information or an outright denial.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are some frequently asked questions about U.S. visas and immigration policies.

*What supporting documents and evidence do I need to submit with my application?*

It depends on which visa you apply for but in general, you need to put forward sufficient evidence to thoroughly prove your case.

- If you are being sponsored by an immediate family member, you will need to provide copies of marriage and birth certificates.
- For work visas, a resume with your educational history and references are necessary. The latter can include letters or affidavits from previous and current employers and colleagues.

*What are some of the fees and costs associated with processing a visa?*

Government processing fees range from \$325 to about \$1000 per application.

*Do I need an immigration attorney?*

If you are an individual or company wanting to enter or do business in the U.S., consulting with an immigration attorney is strongly recommended. There is a lot of paperwork and documentation involved, and it's easy to make mistakes that can jeopardize your chances of getting the visa you need. If you are denied, an appeal is both expensive and time-consuming. As the saying goes, it costs more to fix a problem than to prevent one.

*How can I find the right attorney?*

You should look for an attorney who specializes in the area of law you want. Those who are members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association are a safe bet, as this association generally consists of skilled and qualified immigration attorneys.

You also want to work with someone who is easy to relate to and clearly cares about you and your situation. They are easy to reach, return your calls promptly, and deliver excellent client service.

Remember: there are a lot of fraudulent individuals who say that they are offering legal immigration services for very cheap rates. You must be very, very careful that you're getting involved with a legitimate attorney and not notarios, who are deemed by the government as fraud--as your future work and life opportunities rely on it.

## **Contact RelisLaw PLLC**

At RelisLaw PLLC, we can help you apply for the visa that meets your immigration goals. As someone who went through the visa process herself, Dr. Tamara Relis understands first hand your desire for a better future and will do everything possible to ensure you get the proper visa for your situation.

We are a very unique firm in that our clients become our extended family, and we care for them in exactly that way. If you have questions or want to schedule a consultation with Tamara Relis, please [contact RelisLaw PLLC](#) today.