



Published on *US Immigration Lawyer, Law Offices of Rajiv S. Khanna, PC, Rajiv S. Khanna* (<https://immigration.com>)

A Visa Overview

A Visa Overview ^[1]

Submitted by admin on Feb 1st 2009

Note that the [A Visa](#), [G Visa](#) ^[2], and [NATO Visa](#) ^[3] are similar diplomatic visas. The [A Visa](#) applies to diplomats and foreign government officials, and their assistants; the [G Visa](#) applies to national representatives to international organizations; the [NATO Visa](#) applies to NATO representatives, staff, and families. Anyone in the diplomatic field may wish to review the descriptions for all three of these visas.

Diplomats and Foreign Government Officials

Diplomatic visas are used by diplomats and other government officials for travel to the United States. With the exception of a Head of State or Head of Government who qualifies for an A visa regardless of the purpose of his or her visit to the United States, the type of visa required by a diplomat or other government officials depends upon their purpose of travel to the United States.

1. A-1 ? For Ambassadors, public ministers, career, diplomatic or consular officers, and members of their immediate family.
2. A-2 ? For other foreign government officials or employees, and members of their immediate family.
3. A-3 ? For attendants, servants, or personal employees of holders of A-1 or A-2 visas and members of their immediate family.

To qualify for an A-1 or A-2 visa, you must be traveling to the United States on behalf of your national government to engage solely in official activities for that government.

The fact that there may be government interest or control in a given organization is not in itself the defining factor in determining if you qualify for an A visa; the particular duties or services that will be performed, must be governmental in character or nature. Government officials traveling to the United States to perform non-governmental functions of a commercial nature or traveling, as tourists, require the appropriate visa, and do not qualify for diplomatic visas.

Foreign officials who are traveling to the United States on official business must obtain an A visa prior to their entry.

They cannot travel on tourist's visas, or visa free under the Visa Waiver Program. Qualified A visa applicants traveling to the United States for assignments of less than 90 days will be issued visas annotated "TDY" (temporary duty).

Note on Local Government and European Union Officials

Local government officials representing their state, province, borough, or other local political entity do not qualify for A visa status; they require a B visa.

How to Apply - Required Documentation

Embassies and consulates generally do not require an interview for those applying for A-1 and A-2 visas; however, please note a consular officer can request an interview. Contact the embassy or consulate in your home country for more information. However, please note, personal employees or attendants of A visa holders (applicants for A-3 visas), are required to be interviewed. Additionally, as part of the visa interview, an ink-free, digital fingerprint scan will be quickly completed.

Each applicant and any accompanying persons, must submit the required forms and documentation to the embassy or consulate in the country in which you are a resident, as explained below:

- 1) A Nonimmigrant Visa Application , [Form DS-156](#) ^[4] (**must be the "e-form application**), signed and completed. The non-electronic form DS-1648 is **NOT** accepted.
- 2) An application for A, G, and NATO Visa, [Form DS-1648](#) ^[4] (ONLY for A-1 and A-2 visa applicants applying in the U.S., including in cases of change of status, or those working at the United Nations, the DS-1648 should be submitted in lieu of the DS-156). This application must be completed and submitted online by selecting DS-1648 Online: New Application for A, G, or NATO Visa (Applying in the United States only), and then submitting the confirmation page generated at the end of the application, affixed with the Embassy, mission, or organization seal. The non-electronic form DS-1648 is **NOT** accepted.
- 3) A diplomatic note. The diplomatic note is a written confirmation of the applicant's status by the sending government . A-3 applicants must also have a diplomatic note included with their applications to confirm the official status of their employers.
- 4) A passport valid for travel to the United States and with a validity date of at least six months beyond the applicant's intended period of stay in the United States (unless [country-specific agreements](#) ^[5] provide exemptions).
- 5) One photograph - For Online Application DS-1648, you will upload either a scanned or digital photograph meeting the format requirements explained in the [Photo Standards Guide for the Online Application DS-1648](#) ^[6]. If the photo upload function fails, continue trying to upload until the application allows you to proceed without a photo. Then, submit one print photograph meeting requirements, stapled or glued to the online DS-1648 confirmation page **ONLY** if the confirmation page has an X in the box where the uploaded photo should appear. See the print photo format found in the [Nonimmigrant Photograph Requirements](#) ^[7]. If the confirmation page includes a photo image, then the photo upload function has succeeded and

no separate print photograph is required.

6) **Copy of both the visa and I-94 (both front and back) for the principal visa holder.** Only required for an immediate family member applying separate from the principal visa applicant.

Visa Processing and Issuance Fees

Individuals who establish entitlement to an official visa classification (e.g., A, G, C-3, NATO) are exempt from paying visa fees. Additionally, individuals holding Diplomatic passports may also be exempt from visa fees regardless of visa classification and purpose of travel, if they meet one of the qualifying categories defined in 22 CFR 21.26 (c)(1)(i) through (xvi). Possession of a diplomatic passport or the equivalent is not by itself sufficient to qualify for a no fee diplomatic visa. The consular officer will make the determination whether the visa applicant qualifies for an exemption of fees under U.S. immigration laws. Official passport holders are not charged for official visas, but are required to pay visa application and reciprocal issuance fees, if applicable, for all non-official visas.

Visa Inquires

1. Questions on visa application procedures and visa ineligibilities should be made to the American consular office abroad by the applicant. Before submitting your inquiry, we request that you carefully review this website and also the Embassy Consular web site abroad. Very often you will find the information you need.
2. **If your inquiry concerns a visa case in progress overseas, you should first contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate handling your case for status information. [Click here](#) [8] for a list of U.S. Embassy or Consulate websites so that you can choose the Embassy or Consulate Internet site you need to contact.**

Government Links

This section focuses on articles and reports related to A, G and NATO Visa from government agencies such as the USCIS, DOS, DHS, CBP and ICE.

1. [Employees of International Organizations and NATO](#) [9]- **DOS**
2. **Frequently Asked Questions** on [Diplomatic and International Organization Visas](#) [10] - **DOS**
3. **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** - Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. The visa allows a foreign citizen to travel to a port-of-entry in the United States, such as an international airport, a seaport or a land border crossing, and request permission to enter the U.S. Immigration inspectors with the Department of Homeland Security's, Customs and Border Protection, will permit or deny admission to the United States, and determine your length of stay in the U.S. on any particular visit. Upon arrival, G-5 and NATO-7 visa holders will be enrolled in the [US-VISIT](#) [11] entry-exit program.
4. **Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** - To find out more detailed information about admissions and entry in the U.S., select [Admissions](#) [12] to go to the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection Internet site.
5. **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**- G1-4 and NATO 1-6 visa

holders are exempt from entry into the US-VISIT program. In addition, some G-5 and NATO-7 travelers will also need to register their entry into the U.S. and departure. Select [Special Registration](#) [13] program.

- Embassy's Consular Section Website-** As part of the visa application process, an interview at the embassy consular section is required for most visa applicants. For those applying for G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1, NATO-2, NATO-3, NATO-4, NATO-5 and NATO-6 visas, embassies and consulates generally do not require an interview; however, a consular officer can request an interview. Additionally, G1-4 and NATO1-6 visa applicants are exempt from the fingerprint scan requirement. Personal employees, attendants and servants of G and NATO visa holders, that is, applicants for G-5 and NATO-7 visas, are required to be interviewed. Additionally, as part of the visa interview, a quick, two-digit, ink-free fingerprint scan will be completed. Please contact the [embassy or consulate](#) [8] in your home country for more information. Visa application forms should be delivered to the embassy or consulate in the country in which you are a resident.

Nonimmigrant Visas:

A Visa [14]

Source URL (retrieved on 2 Jun 2020 - 10:51): <https://immigration.com/visa/a-visa-overview>

Links:

- [1] <https://immigration.com/visa/a-visa-overview>
- [2] <http://www.immigration.com/visa/g-visa/g-visa-overview>
- [3] <http://www.immigration.com/visa/n-visa/n-visa-overview>
- [4] http://travel.state.gov/visa/forms/forms_1342.html
- [5] <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/104770.pdf>
- [6] http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html
- [7] http://travel.state.gov/visa/visaphotoreq/visaphotoreq_5334.html#nonimmigrant
- [8] <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- [9] http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2638.html
- [10] http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2639.html
- [11] http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/content_multi_image_0006.shtm
- [12] http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/legally_admitted_to_the_u_s.xml
- [13] <http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm>
- [14] <https://immigration.com/visa/nonimmigrant-visas/a-visa>