



U.S. Department of State: Consular Affairs

20h · 🌐

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Immigrant Visa Backlog

Q: Why are there still immigrant visa interview backlogs?

A: Our number one priority is the safety of our applicants and our staff. The IV interview backlog has developed because of limitations in staffing and other COVID-related operational constraints preventing us from processing the same volume of applicants as pre-pandemic. In addition, Presidential Proclamation 10014 and geographic COVID proclamations restricted visa processing for many immigrants for nearly a year; it will take time to process the cases that were impacted by these travel restrictions.

Q: What are you doing to decrease the backlog?

A: We are committed to decreasing this backlog by prioritizing certain visas, creating efficiencies in the visa process, and utilizing all available resources until our task is accomplished. Applicants should check the website of their nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for updates on what visa services are currently available.

Q: Are virtual/Zoom interviews available for Immigrant Visa applicants?

A: No. Current regulations require all immigrant visa applicants to appear in person before a consular officer.

Q: I live near a U.S. Consulate, but they do not process Immigrant Visas at that particular location and therefore I am forced to travel a long distance to appear for my interview. Why don't you process IV interviews at every U.S. Embassy/Consulate?

A: As the best use of limited U.S. government resources, immigrant visa processing is consolidated in certain embassies and consulates. The Department of State continuously reviews the services we provide to best balance our service standards with efficient use of resources.

Q: What are regional COVID-19 restrictions?

A: The geographic COVID-19-related Presidential Proclamations 9984, 9992, and 10143, which suspend entry into the US of foreign nationals who have been physically present in China, Iran, Schengen Area, UK, Ireland, Brazil, and South Africa in the 14 day period before seeking entry into the US, remain in effect.

As of April 8, 2021, all IV applicants and K fiancé nonimmigrant visa applicants are excepted from the geographic COVID-19 PPs and may be processed.

Family-Based Categories:

Q: I have been waiting for an immigrant visa appointment. What should I do?

A: Immigrant visa applicants who are eligible for interview will be scheduled for appointments according to our existing phased resumption of visa services guidance: <https://travel.state.gov/.../visa-services-operating...>

Q: How are immigrant visa applications being prioritized?

A: Posts that process immigrant visa applications are prioritizing visa categories in accordance with our phased resumption of visa services guidance. For more information, please see: <https://travel.state.gov/.../visa-services-operating...>

Q: I believe I qualify for an immigrant visa, but I would be traveling from a country subject to a regional COVID visa restriction. What should I do?

A: As of April 8, 2021, all immigrant visa applicants are excepted from the geographic related COVID-19 Presidential Proclamations.

Q: I was refused an IV due to Proclamation 9645 or 9983. Can I re-apply for my visa?

A: On January 20, the President ended the travel restrictions under PPs 9645 and 9983 that suspended entry into the US of certain nationals from Burma, Eritrea, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Nigeria, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Venezuela, and Yemen. IV applicants who were refused under PP 9645 or 9983 and were determined not to qualify for a waiver before January 20, 2020, may reapply for a visa by submitting a new visa application (DS-260) and paying a new visa application processing fee. IV applicants who were refused due to either P.P. 9645 or 9983 and whose eligibility for a waiver was still being evaluated as of January 20, 2021, will continue to have their applications processed without needing to submit a new application/fee.

K Visas:

Q: When can I schedule my K fiancé visa interview appointment?

A: K visa applicants will continue to have their applications prioritized in accordance with the prioritization guidance found here: <https://travel.state.gov/.../visa-services-operating...>. Please check the website of the Embassy or Consulate to see whether routine visa services are being provided. If you have already submitted all of the required documents, monitor your email for an appointment and further instructions.

Q: I am a plaintiff in Milligan v. Pompeo - can I schedule my K visa interview?

A: K1 applicants who are named plaintiffs in Milligan v. Pompeo should contact the nearest Embassy or Consulate for guidance on scheduling a visa interview. The court order does not require that plaintiffs be given special priority ahead of other K1 applicants.

Diversity Visas:

Q: I was issued a Diversity Visa in FY 2020, but my visa expired and I was not able to travel to the US. What can I do?

A: Individuals whose DV2020 visas have expired may not be issued replacement visas. However, by virtue of the court's orders in Gomez v. Trump, individuals who received DVs in FY 2020 as a result of the orders in that case may travel to the US on that expired diversity immigrant visa. However, these visa holders are encouraged to travel on these expired visas as soon as possible.

Q: I was selected for DV2020, but was unable to schedule my interview. Can I schedule an interview?

A: Unfortunately, no. DV2020 selectees who were not issued visas before the end of FY2020 cannot be interviewed, scheduled, or reconsidered for visas now, as, by law, those selectees were only eligible for issuance of a visa through the end of the 2020 fiscal year, which ended on September 30, 2020. You may enter to be selected for a future DV program.

Q: I was refused a DV because of PP10014. Can I re-apply for a visa under the DV2020 program?

A: Unfortunately, no. DV2020 selectees who were not issued visas before the end of FY2020 cannot be interviewed, scheduled, or reconsidered for visas now, as by law those selectees were only eligible for issuance of a visa through the end of the 2020 fiscal year, which ended on September 30, 2020. You may enter to be selected for a future DV program.

Q: I was selected for DV2021. Can I schedule my interview?

A: DV applicants for the 2021 fiscal year will be scheduled for an interview based on a post's capacity and available resources. Applicants should wait for a notification of interview appointment. U.S. Embassies and consulates are able to accommodate such scheduling according to our existing phased resumption of visa services.

Q: Will DV2021 selectees be scheduled for an interview prior to the end of the 2021 fiscal year? Will they be prioritized as the deadline draws nearer?

A: DV2021 selectees may only be interviewed in the 2021 fiscal year. Applicants should wait for a notification of interview appointment. U.S. Embassies and consulates will schedule appointments as resources and local conditions allow according to the resumption of visa services framework.

Employment Based:

Q: When can I schedule my Employment Based Immigrant Visa interview? Is my application being prioritized?

A: While posts that process immigrant visa applications will prioritize immediate family members of U.S. citizens including intercountry adoptions, fiancé(e)s of U.S. citizens, and certain Special Immigrant Visa applications, we recognize the importance of employment based immigrants. All immigrant visa applicants who have not yet been interviewed or scheduled for an interview will have their applications processed according to our existing phased resumption of visa services framework.



FREQUENTLY  
ASKED QUESTIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE