



H-1B Domestic Pilot Program Eligibility & Application Process

BIG PICTURE

The U.S. State Department (the Department) will allow certain H-1B visa holders to renew their visas in the United States as part of a pilot program. No other visa classes (such as H-4) will be considered. Applications will be accepted from **January 29 to April 1, 2024.**

Participation in this pilot will be limited to those who (se):

- Are seeking to renew an H-1B visa;
- Are seeking to renew an H-1B visa that was issued by Mission Canada with an issuance date from January 1, 2020, through April 1, 2023, or by Mission India with an issuance date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021;
- Are not subject to a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (Note: This is commonly referred to as a “reciprocity fee”);
- Are eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement;
- Have submitted ten fingerprints to the Department in connection with a previous visa application;
- Prior visa does not include a “clearance received” annotation;
- Do not have a visa ineligibility that would require a waiver prior to visa issuance;
- Have an approved and unexpired H-1B petition from the USCIS;
- Were most recently admitted to the United States in H-1B status;
- Are currently maintaining H-1B status in the United States;
- Period of authorized admission in H-1B status has not expired; and
- Intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad.

NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS

Each week, the Department will release approximately 2,000 application slots for those whose most recent H-1B visas were issued by Mission Canada and approximately 2,000 application slots for those whose most recent H-1B visas were issued by Mission India. Once the limit is reached, the online portal will lock until the next tranche of application slots are released. The application period for the pilot will close when all application slots are filled or on April 1, 2024, whichever comes first.

Application slot release dates are January 29, February 5, February 12, February 19, and February 26.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Go to <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html>.
2. Select the host country post of your most recent H-1B visa issuance (either Canada or India).
3. Complete the self-assessment.

If eligible for the program:

1. Electronically complete and submit Form DS-160, Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application.
2. Pay the required \$205 non-refundable and non-transferrable Machine-Readable Visa (MRV) application processing fee. Instructions will be provided.
3. Mail passport and other required documents for processing. Instructions will be provided.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

Applications will be considered in the order received. Applicants may check the status of their application at: <https://ceac.state.gov/CEACStatTracker/Status.aspx?App=NIV>.

The average processing time for a domestic visa renewal application is expected to be six to eight weeks from when the Department receives the passport and other required documents. Processing of all applications should be completed by May 1, 2024. No requests for expedited processing will be considered.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- A completed and electronically filed DS-160, Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application.
- One photograph (taken within the last six months), which meets the specifications at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/photos.html>.
- A passport for travel to the United States, valid for at least six months beyond the visa application date, and contains a blank, unmarked page for placement of a visa foil.
- The original or a copy of the applicant's current Form I-797, Notice of Action.
- The original or a copy of the applicant's Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (available at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> or on the Form I-797).

VISA AND DOCUMENTATION RETURN

Issued visas, passports, and other documents submitted by the applicant will be returned via the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial courier.

VISA REFUSALS OR REQUESTS FOR REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

If an applicant is found to be ineligible for the program, the applicant will need to submit a new DS-160 visa application with a new MRV fee payment at an embassy or consulate overseas. The Department will not transfer applications to an overseas embassy or consulate or refund the MRV fee for applications returned or refused under the pilot program.

SOURCE: [2023-28160.PDF \(FEDERALREGISTER.GOV\)](#).

Erickson Immigration Group will continue to monitor developments and share updates as more news is available.

Please contact your employer or EIG attorney if you have questions about anything we're reporting or case-specific questions.

We're here to answer questions, provide support, and be your partner.

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