

## Publications

### Changes to Interview Waiver Eligibility at Consular Posts and Immigration Fee Changes

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On July 25, 2025, the U.S. Department of State announced a new policy that will significantly limit the eligibility of visa applicants to obtain visas without consular interviews. The new policy will go into effect on September 2, 2025. Applicants in most visa categories, including renewal applicants who were previously eligible for interview waivers, will be required to attend in-person consular interviews under the new policy. All visa applicants can also expect a new visa integrity fee to go into effect once the Trump administration takes formal steps to implement this fee, which was authorized by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA).

The administration already narrowed the eligibility criteria for visa interview waivers that were in place under the previous administration, and the new update introduces further limitations. Affected visa categories include, but are not limited to, H-1B, L-1, E-1, E-2, O-1, TN, F-1, J-1, and their dependents. The interview requirement also extends to applicants who are renewing their visas in the same category. Additionally, applicants under the age of 14 or over the age of 79 will now be required to attend in-person interviews, eliminating previous age-based exemptions.

The interview waiver will remain available under limited circumstances, including renewal applicants for B visas who meet certain conditions and applicants for diplomatic or official visa categories. To be eligible for an interview waiver, B visa applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Renewing a full validity B-1, B-2, B1/B2 visa, or a Border Crossing Card/Foil;
- Applying within 12 months of the prior visa's expiration;
- Had been at least 18 years old at the time of the prior visa's issuance;
- Applying in applicant's country of nationality or residence;
- Has never been refused a visa (unless such refusal was overcome or waived); and

- Has no apparent or potential ineligibility.

The new policy will be effective September 2, 2025. Consular officers always had and will continue to retain the discretion to require in-person interviews on a case-by-case basis for any reason, even if the applicant meets the new eligibility criteria.

In addition to changes to interview waiver eligibility, visa applicants and applicants for admission at the border are expected to see additional immigration-related fees. While some fees related to asylum and other forms of humanitarian relief have already gone into effect, others are awaiting implementation by the administration. These changes include a new additional \$250 visa integrity fee that will be charged to all nonimmigrant visa applicants (including employment-based categories) when a new visa is issued, and an increase in the Form I-94 fee for travelers entering the U.S. through a land border from \$6 to \$24. The administration has not publicly announced a timeline, but the change can go into effect at any time.

Visa applicants and employers who employ visa holders should anticipate longer appointment backlogs and processing delays at many consulates, particularly those with high application volumes.

Vorys attorneys are tracking these new changes to the visa interview waiver policies and the upcoming fee changes.