

Publications

Stateside Visa Renewal Pilot to Begin in January 2024

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On December 21, 2023, The Department of State (DOS) announced that its stateside visa renewal pilot program is set to begin in January 2024. The pilot program will accept applications from January 29, 2024 to April 1, 2024, and it will be limited to applicants currently in H-1B status. No other visa categories, including H-4, will be eligible to participate in the pilot program.

Further, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- The applicant is seeking to renew a prior H-1B visa;
- The prior visa was issued (1) by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Canada with an issuance date from January 1, 2020 through April 1, 2023, or (2) by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in India with an issuance date from February 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021;
- The applicant is not subject to a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (reciprocity fee);
- The applicant is eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview. Applicants are generally eligible for interview waivers if (1) they were previously issued a nonimmigrant visa in any classification, not including B visas, (2) they are applying to renew their visas within 48 months of their most recent nonimmigrant visa's expiration date, (3) they have never been refused a visa or the refusal was overcome or waived, and (4) they have no apparent or potential ineligibility;
- The applicant has submitted ten fingerprints to the DOS in connection with a prior visa application;
- The prior visa does not include a "clearance received" annotation;
- The applicant does not have a visa ineligibility that would require a waiver prior to visa issuance;
- The applicant is the beneficiary of an approved and unexpired H-1B petition;
- The applicant was most recently admitted to the U.S. in H-1B status;
- The applicant is currently maintaining H-1B status in the U.S.;
- The applicant's period of authorized admission in H-1B status has not expired; and

- The applicant intends to reenter the U.S. in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad.

Interested applicants must submit an online application via the [DOS Bureau of Consular Affairs' website](#) beginning January 29, 2024. DOS will initially make a total of approximately 20,000 visa renewals available in the Stateside Visa Renewal Pilot program. Each week, the DOS will release 2,000 application slots for applicants with H-1B visas issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Canada, and 2,000 application slots for applicants with H-1B visas issued by a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in India. The application slots will be released on January 29, February 5, February 12, February 19, and February 26 and the online portal will be locked after all available weekly slots have been filled. Applicants who are unable to apply on a specific application date may attempt to apply on any of the remaining dates. The application process will close entirely once all slots are filled, or on April 1, 2024, whichever comes first.

Eligible applicants will complete and submit Form DS-160, pay a non-refundable visa fee online, and will be required to send in their valid passport, a passport-style photo, and other required documents as part of the application process. Applications will be processed in the order they are received and the average processing time is expected to take six to eight weeks once all required documents are received by the DOS. Requests for expedited processing will not be considered. The DOS anticipates adjudicating all applications by May 1, 2024 and applicants will be able to review the status of their application via [CEAC's website](#).

If you have questions about the visa renewal pilot program, contact your Vorys attorney.