

## DOS Extends Interview Waivers for Certain Nonimmigrant Visa Applicants

On December 23, 2022, the Department of State announced that the Secretary of State made a determination extending the authority of consular officers to waive in-person interviews for certain nonimmigrant visa categories through December 31, 2023. Consular officers are authorized, through December 31, 2023, to continue to waive in-person interviews on a case-by-case basis for certain first-time and/or renewing applicants. These categories of visas include the following:

- Temporary Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Workers (H-2 visas),
- Students (F and M visas),
- Academic Exchange Visitors (academic J visas),
- Certain beneficiaries of approved individual petitions for nonimmigrant temporary worker visas in the following categories:
  - Persons in Specialty Occupations (H-1B visas)
  - Trainee or Special Education Visitors (H-3 visas)
  - Intracompany Transferees (L visas)
  - Individuals with Extraordinary Ability or Achievement (O visas)
  - Athletes, Artists, and Entertainers (P visas)
  - Participants in International Cultural Exchange Programs (Q visas);
  - Qualifying derivatives

The authorization to waive the in-person interview for applicants renewing a visa in the same classification within 48 months of the prior visa's expiration was previously authorized to remain in place until further notice.

These interview waiver authorities have reduced visa appointment wait times at many embassies and consulates by freeing up in-person interview appointments for other applicants who require an interview. Nearly half of the almost seven million nonimmigrant visas the department issued in fiscal year 2022 were adjudicated without an in-person interview. The Department of State is successfully lowering visa wait times worldwide, following closures during the pandemic, and making every effort to further reduce those wait times as quickly as possible, including for first-time tourist visa applicants.

Embassies and consulates may still require an in-person interview on a case-by-case basis and dependent upon local conditions. The Department of State encourages applicants to check embassy and consulate websites for more detailed information about this development, as well as current operating status and services.



Elizabeth A. Olivera

**Associate**

eolivera@cozen.com  
Phone: (312) 382-3139  
Fax: (612) 260-9080



Frances Rayer

**Member**

frayer@cozen.com  
Phone: (215) 665-3704  
Fax: (215) 665-2013

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