

Embassy of the United States

PRESS RELEASES

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U.S. Mission in India Expands Interview Waiver Program

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In March of 2012, the United States Mission to India unveiled the Interview Waiver Program (IWP) which allows qualified individuals to apply for additional classes of visas without being interviewed in person by a U.S. consular officer. Following the success of the IWP, as part of continuing efforts to streamline the visa process, and to meet increased visa demand in India, the U.S. Mission is pleased to announce an expansion of the IWP. We expect this expansion to benefit thousands of visa applicants in India.

Under the current Interview Waiver Program, Indian visa applicants who are renewing visas that are still valid or expired within the past 48 months may submit their applications for consideration for streamlined processing, including waiver of a personal interview, within the following visa categories:

- Business/Tourism (B1 and/or B2);
- Dependent (J2, H4, L2)
- Transit (C) and/or Crew Member (D) - including C1/D.
- Children applying before their 7th birthday traveling on any visa class
- Applicants applying on or after their 80th birthday traveling on any visa class

Under the expanded program, the following Indian applicants may also be considered for streamlined processing:

- Children applying before their 14th birthday traveling on any visa class
- Students returning to attend the same school and same program
Temporary workers on H1-B visas
- Temporary workers on Individual L1-A or Individual L1-B visas

The renewal application must be within the same classification as the previous visa. If the previous visa is annotated with the words "clearance received," that applicant is not eligible for a waiver of a personal interview.

Not all applications will be accepted for streamlined processing. As always, consular officers may interview any visa applicant in any category. Applicants who are

renewing their visas may still need to make an appointment for biometrics (fingerprint and photograph) collection, and all applicants must submit all required fees and the DS-160 application form.

This initiative is one of many steps the Department of State is taking to meet increased visa demand in India. In 2011, consular officers in India processed nearly 700,000 nonimmigrant visa applications, an increase of more than 11 percent over the previous year. Presently, applicants wait fewer than ten days for visa interview appointments and spend less than one hour at U.S. consular facilities in India. In September 2012, the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to India implemented a new visa processing system throughout India that further standardizes procedures and simplifies fee payment and appointment scheduling through a new website at www.ustraveldocs.com/in.

For more details about procedures for submitting a renewal application, please see <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/in-niv-visarenew.asp>.