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Ds 261 form pdf

If you are applying for a green card from outside the United States, you will be preparing the DS-260 online application. It also means you are nearing the end of what may have been a lengthy wait and often exhausting process. Generally, it's time to prepare the DS-260 online application once an immigrant visa is available and you've submitted all of the other documents that will support the application. This article provides you a general explanation of the steps leading up to the DS-260 application and an overview of what to expect after completing it.Online DS-260 ExplainedThe DS-260 Immigrant Visa Electronic Application is the U.S. State Department's process for applying for permanent residence in the United States. While certain individuals already present in the U.S. may be able to apply through adjustment of status, individuals outside the U.S. must go through consular processing. The DS-260 online form is the path to submit this formal request for an immigrant visa. Individuals with an immigrant visa are known as permanent residents and will be issued a green card once inside the United States.What Happens Before Preparing the DS-260Prior to filling out the DS-260 online, you must go through several steps. In fact, an immigrant visa must be available to start the application. In order for an immigrant visa to be available to you, a visa petition must be filed, approved, and current.There are various ways foreign nationals may be eligible for an immigrant visa. Most commonly, U.S.-based family members file a petition (Form I-130, Petition Alien Relative) or U.S.-based employers file a petition (Form I-140, Petition for Alien Worker). CitizenPath's online immigration services can help your relative easily and affordably prepare the family-based petition. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services must approve the petition. Depending on the qualifying relationship, the I-130 processing time will vary significantly.For immediate relatives (spouse, children (under 21) and parents of U.S. citizens), the process is relatively quick because an immigrant visa is always available. There is no cap. However, the preference categories may take longer. Some of these categories may take several years.After approving the petition, USCIS will forward your case to the National Visa Center (NVC). The NVC will coordinate your case before it reaches the U.S. embassy. They help you make sure you have all the forms and documents needed to support your DS-260 online application. For immediate relatives, it may take a month after approval to reach step 3. However, preference categories that still are not current, may have cases that wait at the NVC for a long time. Every month, the State Department does communicate where they are in the queue. For more information on what is "current," learn how to read the visa bulletin.Next, the National Visa Center will invite you to fill out the DS-260 online form. You'll need to wait until you get their specific instructions. In order to start, you must have your NVC case number, NVC invoice ID number and beneficiary ID number.RECOMMENDED: Family-Based Immigration OverviewHow to Fill Out the DS-260 (Immigrant Visa Application)Select an Agent with Form DS-261The online DS-261 is a simple electronic form that allows you to designate a person to receive communications. It tells the State Department how to communicate with you during the application process.Although you may assign yourself as an agent, it is common practice to designate an attorney or family member (often the petitioner) as a contact. You may also receive communications. But assigning another contact will help keep them knowledgeable of your case.Pay the FeesNext, the NVC will require you to pay two mandatory fees online. There is a DS-260 online processing fee ($325) and a fee to process the affidavit of support ($120). The total fees are $445.You will not be able to access Form DS-260 until NVC processes your payments. After submitting your payments online, it may take one week to process.At this point, family-based applicants generally must submit a Form I-864, Affidavit of Support. The person who filed the I-130 petition will also fill out the I-864 affidavit for you. In short, Form I-864 is a contract between the petitioner (sponsor) and the U.S. government. The sponsor agrees to repay the government should you ever depend on the U.S. government for public benefits (welfare).If the sponsor needs help preparing the document and gathering supporting documents, CitizenPath can help. Designed by immigration attorneys, our online service makes the form easier and helps eliminate common mistakes that cause delays and denials. We even guarantee that USCIS will accept your affidavit. You'll get the neatly prepared form and custom filing instructions.Filling Out Form DS-260 OnlineWhen NVC informs you it is time, you may prepare the DS-260 in the Consular Electronic Application Center (CEAC) of the Department of State. Remember, you'll need your case number and other details before you can start.You'll find that most the questions are straight forward, but these tips may help you navigate the process:Be prepared to use English. So if you're not comfortable reading English, get someone like your petitioner to help you. If you are listing addresses or names that aren't in the Roman alphabet, you must transliterate them.List all children. Regardless of their ages, list all of your children, including stepchildren, legally adopted children and biological children. To qualify as a step child, generally the child must have been under age 18 at the time of the parents' marriage.Be truthful. Always provide honest answers when preparing U.S. immigration forms. Immigration officials are well trained to find discrepancies. If you feel your answer to a question will create a problem, speak to an immigration attorney.Review your social media. The U.S. government will ask you to disclose your social media accounts and will review your online presence. Be on your best behavior when posting information online.Review you answers. Before submitting the application, take the time to review your answers. If necessary, you'll be able to save your progress.Upon completion, you'll have an opportunity to print the online DS-260 confirmation page. Take this page with you to your consular interview. If your information changes before you interview, that's okay. It's common for people to change jobs, have new child, or open another social media account. Simply provide an update to the consular officer at your interview.Sample DS-260Never prepare your application based on a sample. But a sample DS-260 may be helpful to give you a preview of what to expect or give you context for a particular question. You can access the Department of State's official sample DS-260 application here.What to Expect After Filling Out the Online ApplicationYou're not quite done. Before the NVC will schedule your immigrant visa interview, there are a few final steps.You and each family member immigrating with you must submit civil documents. Civil documents include items such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, and police records that support the information provided on your online DS-260. You must gather, scan, and then upload these documents to the CEAC website. Your civil documents must be issued by the official issuing authority in your country. If these documents are not in English, you must also include a certified translation.Prepare for Your Visa InterviewAfter the NVC schedules your visa interview appointment, they will send you, your petitioner, and your agent/attorney (if applicable) an email noting the appointment date and time. Before you may attend the interview, you'll need to do a few more things. Wait until you get your interview appointment letter. The letter will contain more specific guidance. U.S. embassies in different countries may have slightly different requirements. So place close attention to your particular letter. In general, you must:Schedule and attend a medical examination. Each family member that will immigrate must get ae medical exam performed by a U.S. government-approved doctor.Register for courier service. The embassy needs you to register with an approved courier service so that they may return your visa stamped passport to you.Gather required documents for interview. Take original or certified copies of all civil documents that you already submitted to the NVC. Further, take any other documents requested in your appointment letter. Generally, you do not need to take financial support documents unless you have additional evidence that may help your case.Entering the United States on an Immigrant VisaIf the consular officer approves your online DS-260 application, that means you've been granted permanent resident status in the United States. For now, the consulate will place an I-551 stamp inside your passport to indicate you're a permanent resident.There is one final fee – an immigrant fee of $220. Pay this fee at your earliest convenience. It goes toward the production of your new green card. Use the stamp in your passport to initially enter the U.S. If you've paid the immigrant fee, your green card should arrive within a few short weeks of entry.The DS-260 online visa application comes near the end of the consular process. While important in its own right, many of the steps and ancillary responsibilities during the path to a green card are equally important. Most people can prepare the online DS-260 without significant problems. For petitioners, CitizenPath can help you ensure the petition (Form I-130) leading to a green card is prepared correctly and the Affidavit of Support (Form I-864) meets the criteria outlined by the government.About CitizenPathCitizenPath provides simple, affordable, step-by-step guidance through USCIS immigration applications. Individuals, attorneys and non-profits use the service on desktop or mobile device to prepare immigration forms accurately, avoiding costly delays. CitizenPath allows users to try the service for free and provides a 100% money-back guarantee that USCIS will approve the application or petition. We provide support for the Family-Based Immigrant Visa Petition (Form I-130), Affidavit of Support (Form I-864), and several other USCIS forms. Effective September 1, 2013, Form DS-261 replaced the paper-based Form DS-3032 when selecting an agent or attorney to act on your behalf for the visa center processing of an immigrant visa or green card being issued through a U.S. Embassy/Consulate. The DS 261 is a fully integrated online electronic visa application form used to collect the necessary application information from persons seeking immigrant visas and his/her agent or attorney. This online form is completed and submitted online to the Department of State via the Internet through the Consular Electronic Applications Center (CEAC). The form may be partially completed, saved online to finish, and submitted later; or the forms can be completed and submitted in a single session. If the DS 261 is completed and an agent or attorney is authorized to act on your behalf, then the agent or attorney can do the following: access your on-line case file, submit Form DS-260 immigrant visa application for all traveling immigrants, submit the visa fees on-line, make case inquiries to the visa center on your behalf, receive emails from the visa center on your behalf and submit documents to the visa center on your behalf. In the situation where you want to change your agent or attorney, then simply complete a new Form DS-261 on-line and submit it on-line to the visa center. On Form DS 261, an agent can be a family member acting on your behalf because you don't have access to a computer or an agent can be a professional such as an attorney. Beware of using immigration service providers and designating a service provider as your agent on Form DS-261. Many immigration service providers are known to take visa fees from clients but not submit it on-line to the visa center. It is recommended to use a reputable immigration attorney when choosing to designate an agent on Form DS-261 to act on your behalf during the visa center processing of the immigrant visa or green card. Our office is experienced in completing Form DS 261 and acting on our clients behalf is submitting all required documents and fees to the visa center. We would be happy to help you! Travel.State.Gov > U.S. Visas > Forms > Online Immigrant Visa Forms The process of sponsoring an overseas family member for U.S. immigration begins with the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident filing paperwork. The immigrating family members must, however, step in at some point to prepare and submit various forms and documents of their own. This article focuses on that part of the process—specifically, after the U.S. citizen or resident has filed a visa petition, on Form I-130, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has approved it. This USCIS approval is important, but doesn't give the immigrant any immediate rights to U.S. entry. It's up to the would-be immigrant to prove to the U.S. government that he or she can be approved for U.S. admission. (Note: This article does not discuss the green-card application process for immigrants who are already lawfully in the U.S. and who wish to apply for permanent residence without departing, using a procedure called "adjustment of status.") Forms and Fees Needed to Help Transfer Immigrant's Case to U.S. Consulate When the U.S. relative filled out the I-130 petition, the information there included the incoming immigrant's address. That told the U.S. government which consulate would be most appropriate or convenient. An office known as the National Visa Center (NVC) will then take over, and be responsible for transferring the file to that consulate. To prompt the NVC to act, the immigrant must visit the Consular Electronic Application Center (CEAC) and complete Form DS-261, Online Choice of Address and Agent. Choosing an "agent" means deciding to whom and how all the important notices from the U.S. government will be sent—to the immigrant or to the petitioner, via regular mail or email. Next, the NVC will send the U.S. family member petitioner a bill for the Affidavit of Support review ($120 as of 2021) and send either the immigrant or agent a bill for the immigrant visa processing fee ($325 per immigrating family member—2021 figure). Once the fees are paid, the immigrant must submit Form DS-260, the online immigrant visa application. This asks biographical questions, such as addresses where the immigrant has lived and worked, as well as questions to determine the immigrant's admissibility to the United States. (See How to Fill in Online Form DS-260 for Consular Visa Processing.) The DS-260 is submitted only online, in English. The immigrant will need to print out the confirmation page to bring to the visa interview. After the NVC is satisfied with the various documents and fee payments, it will schedule an interview and transfer the visa file to the U.S. consulate. The immigrant will receive further instructions and a checklist on what else the NVC needs before the interview. Forms And Documents Needed Once Immigrant's Case File Is at U.S. Consulate Here's a summary of what the immigrant will need to give to either the NVC or to the consulate in order to prepare for the visa interview: Confirmation page for Form DS-260 (filed online). Copies of current passports. Birth certificates for everyone immigrating, with English translations if they are not in the language of the country in which the interview will be held. Police clearance certificates for each immigrating person over age 16, from the country of nationality or current residence if the applicant has lived there for more than six months or been arrested there, and from any other country where the applicant lived for more than one year or been arrested. Marriage certificate, death certificate, divorce or annulment decree—whichever shows the immigrant's current marital status and history. Any military records, including certified proof of military service and of honorable or dishonorable discharge. Certified copy of court and prison records if any immigrant was convicted of a crime. Affidavit of Support; either on Form I-864 or, if only one person is being sponsored and the petitioner can meet the sponsorship requirements based on his or her income alone, a shorter version called I-864EZ. If exempt from the affidavit of support requirement, the sponsor should instead fill out Form I-864W. Financial documents to support Form I-864, including sponsor's employment verification letter or other proof of income such as a "year-to-date" pay stub, latest U.S. income tax transcript and W-2s (or the last three years', if it will strengthen the case), and if the sponsor is relying on assets to meet the U.S. poverty guidelines, proof of assets, such as bank statements. Forms and Documents Immigrant Must Bring to Visa Interview at U.S. Consulate The final set of documents each family member who is immigrating will likely be required to prepare and bring to the interview at the U.S. consulate includes: Two color photographs, passport style. Current, original passports for everyone in family who is getting an immigrant visa (they must not expire earlier than six months after interview date). Medical examination report. During the exam, each immigrant will undergo blood tests and X-rays. U.S. income tax transcripts from immigrants who have worked in the U.S., as proof of having filed income tax returns for every year worked. Visa fees, if not already paid, or a receipt showing the fees were paid online. See The Day of Your Consular Interview for a U.S. Visa for what happens next. And if you're approved, there will be one more fee to pay, either before or after you reach the United States. It's called the immigrant fee, and is necessary to pay to USCIS before it will actually produce your green card.

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