

Domestic Visa Renewals to Resume in Department of State's Limited Pilot Program

January 22, 2024



After nearly two decades, [the Department of State announced](#) [1] that they will accept and process domestic visa renewals for certain H-1B visa applicants from January 29 until April 1, 2024, or until all application slots are filled, whichever comes first. [A Federal Register notice was also published on December 21, 2023](#) [2].

[The Department of State has issued additional information and FAQs on the pilot program](#) [3]. You can click the **"Am I Eligible for Domestic Renewal"** portal at the link above and use the online navigator tool to assess your eligibility to participate in the domestic renewal pilot program.

Participation in the pilot program will be limited to applicants who(se):

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- Seek to renew an H-1B nonimmigrant visa *only* (no other visa classifications, including H-4 visas for dependent spouses and children, will be processed through this pilot program).
- Prior H-1B visa that is being renewed was issued by:
 - U.S. Mission Canada with an **issuance** date of January 1, 2020, through April 1, 2023; or by
 - U.S. Mission India, with an **issuance** date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.
- Are not subject to a nonimmigrant visa issuance fee (commonly referred to as a “reciprocity fee”).
- Are eligible for a waiver of the in-person interview requirement.
- Have submitted ten fingerprints to the Department in connection with a previous visa application.
- Prior visa does not include a “clearance received” annotation.
- Do not have a visa ineligibility that would require a waiver prior to visa issuance.
- Were most recently admitted to the United States in H-1B status.
- Are currently maintaining H-1B status in the United States.
- Have an approved and unexpired H-1B petition.
- Period of authorized admission in H-1B status has not expired.
- Intend to reenter the United States in H-1B status after a temporary period abroad.

[How to Apply](#)

There are several steps to apply for this pilot program:

1. Use the [“Am I Eligible For Domestic Renewal” online navigator tool](#) [3] to assess your qualifications for participation in the pilot program.
2. If you meet the requirements for participation, follow the instructions in the portal to complete and submit an Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (form DS-160).
3. Use the online portal to pay the required, non-refundable, non-transferrable Machine-Readable Visa (MRV) application processing fee of \$205.00.
4. Follow the instructions on the portal to mail your passport and other required documents for processing. The following documents must be submitted, via U.S. mail or commercial courier service:
 - A completed and electronically filed Form DS-160.
 - One passport-size photograph that meets the Department of State specifications.
 - A passport valid for at least six months beyond the visa application date and containing a blank, unmarked page.
 - A copy of your valid, unexpired USCIS H-1B petition approval on Form I-797.
 - A copy of your valid, unexpired [Form I-94 arrival record](#) [4].

The Department of State will make available a maximum of 20,000 application slots during this limited pilot program: Approximately 4,000 per week total applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by either U.S. Mission Canada or by U.S. Mission India within the issuance date ranges indicated above.

Application slots will be released on the following entry period dates:

- January 29, 2024
- February 5, 2024
- February 12, 2024
- February 19, 2024
- February 26, 2024

[Estimated Processing Time](#)

The Department of State estimates the processing time will take six to eight weeks from the date the applicant's passport and other required documents are received by the Department.

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Links

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/department-of-state-to-process-domestic-visa-renewals-in-limited-pilot-program.html> [2] <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/21/2023-28160/pilot-program-to-resume-renewal-of-h-1b-nonimmigrant-visas-in-the-united-states-for-certain> [3] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/domestic-renewal.html#:~:text=The%20Department%20of%20State%20has,are%20filled%2C%20whichever%20comes%20first.> [4] <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>