

Updated Policy on Nonimmigrant Visa Applications in a Third Country

December 12, 2025



Effective September 6, 2025 (*updated December 12, 2025*), [the Department of State \(DoS\) announced](#) [1] that non-immigrant visa (NIV) applicants, including those for F-1, J-1, H-1B, E-3, O-1 visas, and their dependents, should schedule visa interviews at a U.S. embassy or consulate in their country of nationality or residence. This update significantly restricts the processing of “third country nationals” (TCNs), a practice that has become more common since the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing applicants to apply for visas outside their home country.

Despite the advisory nature of the language (“should” instead of “must”), the announcement implies that TCN applicants applying outside their home country “might find it more difficult to qualify for the visa.”

Additionally, nationals from countries where the DoS does not conduct routine visa services must apply at designated locations unless they reside in another country (On October 10, 2025, they updated this list to include Burkina Faso):

Designated Locations for Nonimmigrant Visa Processing

NATIONAL OF	DESIGNATED LOCATION(S)
Afghanistan	Islamabad
Belarus	Vilnius, Warsaw
Burkina Faso	Lome
Chad	Yaoundé

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Central African Republic	Yaoundé
Cuba	Georgetown
Haiti	Nassau
Iran	Dubai
Libya	Tunis
Niger	Lome
Russia	Astana, Warsaw
Somalia	Nairobi
South Sudan	Nairobi
Sudan	Cairo
Syria	Amman
Ukraine	Krakow, Warsaw
Venezuela	Bogota
Yemen	Riyadh
Zimbabwe	Johannesburg

Key Changes to the Policy

1. **Residence Requirement:** Applicants must demonstrate residency in the country where they are applying. Those attempting to schedule interviews outside their country of nationality or residence will likely find it much more challenging to qualify for a visa.
2. **Existing Appointments:** Visa appointments scheduled under the old system usually remain valid. Fees paid for these applications are non-refundable and non-transferable.
3. **New Appointment Availability:** Applicants applying outside their country of nationality or residence should expect to wait significantly longer for a visa interview appointment.
4. **Exceptions:** This policy does not apply to applicants for A, G, C-2, C-3, NATO visas, or diplomatic and official visas. Limited exceptions may be made for humanitarian or medical emergencies or for foreign policy reasons.

This policy update supersedes previous guidelines and represents a change in the processing of NIV applications.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this new announcement or were planning to apply for a non-immigrant visa in a third country, please [get in touch with your designated OISS adviser](#) [2].

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Links

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/adjudicating-niv-applicants-in-their-country-of-residence.html> [2] <https://oiss.yale.edu/about/connect-with-oiss#findadviser>