AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

#AILAStandsWithImmigrants



Expediting NIV Appointments



The COVID pandemic has made international travel unpredictable. The conditions in every country are different and change quickly, making getting a visa appointment more complicated.

Consulates must balance expanding routine visa services with limited resources, other responsibilities, and country conditions. As a result, timely visa appointments are not always available and the rules for requesting an expedited visa appointment are different from consulate to consulate.

How to Request an Expedited Visa Appointment

We encourage you to consider the following guidelines for requesting an expedited visa appointment:

1. **Have realistic expectations**
   - First, consult https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html to find the Visa Wait Times for the consulate where you intend to apply. Every consulate updates the wait times on a regular basis. Check the visa wait times as soon as you know that you need to travel. At best, you may not need to request an expedited appointment. At worst, you will know how long the backlog is and have maximized the time you have to prepare a request.
   - Before you request an expedited appointment, you must file a nonimmigrant visa application and pay all application fees.
   - A request may be denied—even an urgent and compelling request—if the consulate does not have the staff or resources.
   - Even if the expedite request is granted, this does not always mean that you will get an immediate appointment. For example, if routine appointments are being scheduled six months out, an expedited appointment may still be three or four months away.
2. **Be prepared to thoroughly explain and prove the urgency of your travel**
   - Unforeseen emergency travel for humanitarian reasons (such as urgent medical care or family crisis) is more likely to qualify for an expedited appointment. Plan in advance what you are going to say and have documentation available to support your request.
   - Keep in mind that each consulate makes its own guidelines for expediting appointments, and you should prepare your request with those guidelines in mind. Check the consulate's website to see what requirements it has. You can find consulate websites at https://www.travel.state.gov under "Find U.S. Embassies and Consulates."
3. **Work with your attorney to meet the consulate's requirements**
   - Your attorney is your ally. Your attorney will typically have experience with other clients' requests for expedited appointments and familiarity with the experiences of their colleagues. Working with an attorney gives you access to that experience and the best chance for success.
   - The attorney can help you prepare the request for an expedited appointment and can also discuss your legal options if the expedited request is denied or if the appointment is scheduled later than you would like.

If you would like more information on this issue or would like to retain our services, we encourage you to contact our office at LLG Attorney at Law, APC at 760-517-7861.

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