

TRANSCRIPT–NON-IMMIGRANT VISA WECHAT WITH CONSULAR OFFICERS
U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL VANCOUVER
AUGUST 21, 2013

Washington DC: Are you a U.S. visa applicant living in Canada? Are you confused about how the U.S. visa process works? Then join U.S. Consulate Officers in Vancouver to get your questions answered online on Wednesday, August 21 at 11:00am Vancouver time/ 2:00 Washington time.

Hello and welcome to U.S. Consulate General Vancouver's live chat regarding your visa questions. We will begin in about 15 minutes, at 11:00 a.m. Vancouver time. Thanks for joining early. We have already received several questions and the Consular Officers will attempt to respond to as many as possible during our hour together. Please stand by, we will begin shortly.

Washington DC: Thank you everyone for submitting your questions and comments. We have collected them all and will respond shortly.

Consular Officer 1: Hello everyone. Thanks for joining us today. We appreciate the high level of participation and hope to answer many of the questions posed. Please remember, today we are discussing non-immigrant visa issues. For those of you who may have immigrant visa questions please go to <http://canada.usembassy.gov/contact/public-inquiry-form.html> for more information.

1. Abhinav: HI SIR/ MAM, MY NAME IS ABHINAV , IAM IN VANCOUVER, CANADA, ON WORK PERMIT WITH AN INDIAN RESTAURANT , WORKING AS COOK FROM 1 YEAR NOW , I WANT TO VISIT THE USA, AS A TOURIST , SO PLZ ADVICE ME HOW TO APPLY, WHERE, ? CAN I APPLY MY SELF, WITH THE GUIDENCE PROVIDED FROM YOUR CONSULATE . HOW MUCH IS THE FEES, I HAVE TO PAY, I CAME TO KNOW THAT US GIVES NOW 10 YRS TOURIST VISA , IS THAT SO , CAN I GET THAT , HOW MUCH TIME IT WILL TAKE ,, I HAVE MY UNCLE IN L.A, I WANT TO MEET HIM , PLZ ANS MY QUIRES, I WILL BE THANK FULL TO YOU . MY E MAIL ABHINAV BHATNAGAR81@YAHOO.CO.IN, THANKS

Consular Officer 2: Thank you for your question. Yes, you may apply yourself. There is no need to use a special visa service. The process of applying for a non-immigrant visa to the United States includes three distinct steps:

- A. Completing an online application called the DS-160 (<https://ceac.state.gov/genniv>)
- B. Scheduling an appointment for a visa interview (https://usvisa-info.com/en-ca/selfservice/ss_country_welcome)
- C. Attending an in-person interview and presenting the requisite documents.

Please note that after completing the DS-160, the applicant will electronically submit the application and will be provided with a confirmation page that includes only limited biographical information and a bar code. Applicants must bring this confirmation page with them to their

interview. A separate DS-160 application form must be completed for each family member seeking a visa. If the online application has not been completed fully and properly the applicant's case cannot be processed and a new interview appointment will be required.

The fee for a B1/B2 visa is USD \$160. If the officer determines that you qualify for a visa to visit the United States, the officer will determine the length of the visa. Successful applicants may pick up their visa at the LOOMIS office 3-5 business days after they are approved.

2. Danny: Hi, I have finished my Ds-160. Where can I to get an interview and pay the application fee, please?

Consular Officer 2: Hi. Danny. I just answered your question above. Please see the instructions. Thanks for your questions!

3. Asal: hi, my US b1/b2 visa just approved yesterday, but I forgot to ask since when it going to be valid! So, because I want to buy my ticket I need to when is the exact valid entry date! Can you please help me with that?

Consular Officer 2: The B1/B2 visa is valid from the time it is approved. However, we recommend that applicants wait to schedule their travel until they have their visa in their hands because there may be occasional unexpected delays in printing the visa.

4. Patrick: after the interview with the Consulate officer, how long will it take to get my passport back?

Consular Officer 2: Hi, Patrick. We attempt return passports with approved visas to applicants within three to five business days. There are times when a visa may take longer to process, but the officer should tell you after the interview if it will take longer than the standard 3-5 business day wait.

5. Rory: My parents are visiting Canada from France. They have new electronic passports and we are travelling to Las Vegas September 4, 2013 by entering the U.S. at Blaine by car and going to Bellingham Airport. They were told they could get a ESTA authorization but it does not allow for entering by car?

Consular Officer 2: ESTA authorization is required for travel on commercial carriers. If you are a citizen of a Visa Waiver country, and you are traveling by land to the United States, you do not have to apply for ESTA. For more information, please see the State Department and Customs and Border Protection web pages about Visa Waiver travel and ESTA:

https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/1094/~do-i-need-to-apply-for-esta

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/faq_vwp.xml

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html.

6. Truonghaiyen: Hi My name is Truong Hai Yen (Alex) I am an exchange student from Singapore who come to University of British Columbia (Canada) this

August. During my time in Vancouver, I would love to visit the US. I am currently hold an Single-entry to Canada. Will this type of visa sufficient for me to enter the US for a short visit and then return to Canada? Thank you. If not, what should I do to apply for visa to the US. I would also like to use this visa to serve as a transit visa to US should my return flight pass the US?

Consular Officer 3: Alex, your question actually has a three part answer. First, in order to visit the U.S. you would need to apply for and obtain a U.S. tourist visa. Second, your single-entry Canadian visa will allow you leave for a short trip to the U.S. and return to Canada even though it is single-entry. The Canadian government allows travelers with a single-entry visa to cross the U.S. border and return to Canada (provided you do not leave North America), though you should always check with the Canadian officials before doing so. Lastly, if you are issued a U.S. tourist visa, you would also be able to use that visa to transit back to Singapore assuming the visa has not expired by the time you'd like to travel. Lastly, as a citizen of Singapore, you may be eligible to travel on the visa waiver program. Please refer to http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html for more info.

7. Val: I am citizen of Ukraine, but in Canada study, can I apply for tourist visa to travel to USA for short period of time?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Val, yes, you can apply for a tourist visa to travel to the U.S. for a short visit. Keep in mind that you must still demonstrate strong ties to both Canada and the Ukraine to qualify for a tourist visa.

8. Baljinder kahlon: For non-immigrant visa what is reason to visit USA it did not give me any option visitor visa? I am trying to fill the application since march 2013 because when I fill the application many time I selected exchange visitor visa at the end it ask me student information. Please help me best answer for D-160 application I am Canadian immigrant want visit USA. if you e-mail me at jaskahlon47@gmail.com that would be great ,thanks

Consular Officer 3: Hi Baljinder, a non-immigrant visitor visa to the U.S. is called a B2 or B1/B2 non-immigrant visa. The "exchange visitor" option you have been selecting is used mainly for short-term educational exchange programs, not tourist travel, which is why you've been seeing additional questions for student info. Choose the B2 option on the DS-160 and it should allow you to answer the questions about your proposed trip to the U.S.

9. feifeisophie_song@hotmail.com: Can Visitors of Canada apply for US Visas when they are in Vancouver, please? And is the possibility of successfully receiving a US Visa high for these applicants? Thanks.

Consular Officer 3: With rare exceptions, visa applicants temporarily visiting Canada should apply at the U.S. Consular Section in their country of residence. Visitors typically have greater difficulty establishing eligibility for a U.S. visa in Canada than would be experienced in the applicant's home country, and a substantial percentage of visitors to Canada

are denied visas under these circumstances. Consequently, we strongly urge visitors to Canada to apply for U.S. visas in their country of residence.

10. Maria: Hello, I want to apply for a tourist visa, I submitted the DS-160 requiring a transit visa. Is it possible to change it to visitor? I have not taken my appointment yet.

Consular Officer 3: Hi Maria. You are able to change your preference from a transit visa to a tourist visa even if have already submitted your DS-160. Please explain to the consular staff and officer the day of the interview that you would like a B1/B2 visitor visa.

11. Fei Luo: Hello, I am a Chinese student studying in Canada now, for one of my course in University of Victoria; I need to take a field trip to America: The Mountain Washington. What kind of visa do I need to apply? I will only enter US for less than a week and when I tried to fill in the Electronic form... it asked me to fill in the address in US that I will be staying... however, it's a field trip and we will be camping along our way, so I don't really have a address for that question... What should I do now?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Fei Luo, You should attempt to fill the address information out with as much information you can. We understand that sometimes it is difficult to know an exact address, but a hotel address where you might stay or even the address of the camp grounds would be good in your situation.

12. Jonathan: hello, I'm a Canadian permanent resident and a Mexican citizen. My only question is this: I lost my passport with my American visa in it over the weekend. How do I report this to the Embassy? Where do I call?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Jonathan, If you have a lost or stolen passport that contained a U.S. visa, please write immediately to VancouverFPU@state.gov to give the details of your case. This not only helps us, but also helps to protect your identity in case someone else attempts to use your lost or stolen passport and U.S. visa. In order to replace the lost or stolen visa, you will need to first obtain a new passport and then apply as if you were a new visa applicant.

13. Jeremy.R: Hi, I am French from France. I am currently studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Victoria, BC. and I was wondering if I can easily get a temporary working permit (for a co-op/internship job).

Consular Officer 2: Thanks for your question, Jeremy. Applicants who seek to perform internships or other work in the U.S. require a visa that allows for employment. The most common visa class for students who would like to intern in the U.S. is the J-1 exchange visa, where an applicant is sponsored by an organization or academic institution in the U.S. For more information about J-1 visas, please see http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html.

14. Josh: How long will I be without my passport for? Is the Visa stamp given at the interview?

Consular Officer 2: We attempt return visas to applicants within three to five business days. There are times when a visa may take longer to process, but the officer should tell you after the interview if it will take longer than the standard 3-5 business day wait.

15. Nitin: Hi Officer, My name is Nitin. I have applied for US Student (F-1) visa from India as I have secured admission in university of Texas, Arlington. But my visa got rejected two times (May 23, 2012 and November 27, 2012.) on the grounds of 214(b) rejection. Then I applied for a Canada student visa, and fortunately I got it and now I am full time student in University of Victoria. So my question is will you please tell me that If I apply for a visitor visa from here(Canada),what are my chances of getting a US visitor visa, Will my previous rejections hinders my chances of securing a visitor visa to USA?

Consular Officer 1: If you feel circumstances have changed regarding your application, you are welcome to reapply. Your prior refusals may or may not impact your chances. If you reapply for a visa after being found ineligible, with the exception of 221(g) "document pending" refusals, please be advised that you must submit a new visa application and pay the visa application fee again. If you were found ineligible under section 214(b) of the INA, you should be able to present evidence of significant changes in circumstances and ties to Canada since your last application in order to be found qualified.

16. Suresh: Dear Sir/Madam, does the Vancouver consulate offers H-1B visa stamp via dropbox? If so what is the eligibility criteria, please let me know. Thanks.

Consular Officer 3: Hi Suresh, No, the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver does not accept H1B visa applications by dropbox. You must schedule an interview with a consular officer.

17. Andy: Hello officer, I have a question, I had a first H1 b visa stamp in my passport sometime 2006 and had expired last 2009. It was done in my home country of origin. Currently, I have a new H1 B approval from USCIS for the extension which is valid until 2016. I am currently a permanent resident of Canada and had never violated any immigration law in the U.S. My question are the following: 1. I wanted to apply for a second visa stamp for the current approval...do I need to go back to my country origin or I can do it in Vancouver, Canada this time since this is my renewal and at the same time am already a resident of Canada? 2. What documents do I have to bring when applying for visa stamp? Thank you very much and appreciate your inputs.

Consular Officer 2: Thanks for coming back today for the chat, Andy. Yes, you may apply here in Vancouver. You are not required to return to your home country. If you are applying for an H1B visa, please bring your approved petition to the interview. You should also bring any previous petitions showing your status in the U.S. Additional documents are at the discretion of the consular officer.

18. Kitsbiker71: I contacted a visa preparer who says it costs \$500 for a tourist visa but you say it only costs \$160. Why is that? The preparer says he knows someone at the consulate and the process will go smoothly. Is that true?

Consular Officer 1: It is normally not necessary to use a private service or advisor to apply for a non-immigrant visa to visit the United States. Everyone who is applying for a U.S. visa at any U.S. Consulate in Canada can schedule an appointment themselves by going to https://usvisa-info.com/en-ca/selfservice/ss_country_welcome, there is no need to pay any additional fees beyond those listed on the official website. The visa application fee for a business/tourist (B1/B2) visa, which is also called the Machine Readable Visa (MRV) Fee, is currently USD \$160. Please be advised that no private organization or person offering to help with visa issues has a special relationship or connection to the U.S. Consulate General. You should ask questions of people who make promises that sound too good to be true or claim to have a special relationship with the U.S. government. Do not trust people who guarantee results or faster processing. If you are not eligible for a visa, using a consultant or service will not change that fact.

19. Vivian: Hi Sir/Mam, I am doing a job about network security in Vancouver. Is it possible for me to get a visitor visa in US? I heard network security is a sensitive major. Thank you very much.

Consular Officer 1: Your question is very specific and the determination of whether a particular applicant is eligible for a visa is made on a case-by-case basis. Some cases, however, require further administrative processing that can take several weeks to complete. This can only be determined at the time of your interview. This should not discourage you from applying for a visa.

20. Erika Cedillo: Hi, my name is Erika. My husband, older daughter and myself (all Mexican citizens) we have a visitor's visa to the US B1/B2, we just received our permanent residence from Canada and I want to know if we need to change our US visas, some officials at the border have said we need to change them and some others say we don't. What should we do? Thank you!

Consular Officer 3: Hi Erika, This is really a question for our colleagues with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the border. Those officials have responsibility for admitting travelers into the United States. Border Crossing Cards are issued to Mexican citizens residing along the U.S.-Mexico border. You are welcome to apply for a B1/B2 visa if you would like. If approved, your visa would be annotated as a "permanent resident of Canada."

21. Tia: I can't open either of these links: 1. Completing an online application called the DS-160 (<https://ceac.state.gov/genniv>) 2. Scheduling an appointment for a visa interview (https://usvisa-info.com/en-ca/selfservice/ss_country_welcome)

Consular Officer 2: Sorry you are having trouble with the links. This information is also available on the US Embassy Ottawa's web page about

scheduling an appointment:

<http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/scheduling-an-appointment.html>.

22. Jean Lomas (Simon Fraser University): Hello, we frequently receive questions from our students regarding the section of the DS-160 form that asks for the details/address of where they will stay in the United States. If a person has not yet finalized travel plans due to not yet having a visa, what would you advise that they enter in this field of the application?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Jean, This question actually relates to a previous question and other questions we are seeing. The address section of the DS-160 is meant to provide as accurate information as possible. That said, we understand that plans change and that you may make multiple trips to and within the U.S. that have different addresses associated with them. Attempt to list the most accurate address for the next planned trip in the U.S. (even if it is a tentative hotel) and just explain to the officer during the interview that your address plans may change or be fluid.

23. Dev: Hey! I forgot to add my picture to the form, now I can't even start a new application because it is attached with my passport number. Is it a problem I can explain at the interview?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Dev, Do not worry about forgetting to attach a picture. Please just bring a passport style photo with you the day of your interview and we can scan the picture manually into your case.

24. Ramtin: Hi there, my visa application for student visa got rejected for three times almost 6 years ago. I had an admission at that time. However, I decided to come to Canada and do my graduate studies here. Since then, I never applied for any US visa. I was wondering what would be the chance of getting rejected if I apply for visitor Visa. Just to let you know that I am now a permanent resident in Canada

Consular Officer 3: Hi Ramtin, The criteria to qualify for a student visa are very different from a tourist visa. The consular officer will assess your current situation in Canada to make the determination if you now qualify for a tourist visa to the U.S. Your past refusals for a student visa do not necessarily disqualify you from now qualifying for a tourist visa.

25. Will: Dear officer, I'm a Canadian permanent resident, and will apply for a B1/B2 US visa in Canada. If my application is approved, is 10-year period of validity guaranteed? Thanks! Will

Consular Officer 2: Permanent residents in Canada may be eligible for a B1/B2 visa that is valid for 10 years. However, we cannot guarantee that a 10 year visa will be approved. Visa length is at the discretion of the officer and will be determined at the time of the interview.

26. Ayo: hi, I'm a PhD student attending a conference in the US in December, I will be presenting at the conference and want to bring my wife and daughter with me. My daughter is 1 year old and was born in the US. My wife and I graduated last year with our masters from a US university and moved here for

my PhD. presently, I still have a US student visa which expires next year. Do I need to apply for another visa, if so what type? Second, would there be any restrictions for my wife and our daughter to come with me? Third, what duration of visa should I specify considering that I might be traveling frequently for conferences in the US? How soon can I apply, the conference is early December?

Consular Officer 2: Thank you for participating in the web chat, Ayo. Since you are no longer a student in the U.S., you may not travel on your student visa. You should apply for a B1/B2 visa that is valid for business and tourist travel—this is the appropriate visa category for presenting at an academic conference. Your wife’s citizenship is not clear in your question. She may also need to apply for a tourist visa if her situation is similar to yours. If your child does not yet have a U.S. passport, then you may apply at the Consulate in Vancouver with the American Citizen Services Office. We suggest applicants allow plenty of time before their proposed travel in case additional processing is required. You may apply anytime, please let the officer know about your planned travel date and they will process the case accordingly if you qualify.

27.Dev: Thanks, I haven’t yet fixed an interview. Does it take a lot of time to get an interview date (like a long waiting list?)

Consular Officer 1: Wait times vary throughout the year, and sometimes are busier than other. We usually recommend you apply at least 30 days before your planned travel date. Even then, there are times where a case may be delayed longer than one month. It is always best to apply as early as possible to ensure there is enough time to process your visa application.

We are getting many great questions – thank you! We appreciate the high level of participation and hope to answer many of the questions posed. Please remember, that this is a public forum and we are prioritizing those questions that apply to everyone. We may not have time to respond to individualized question regarding your specific situation.

28. Vivian: Hi, I am applying for PR in Canada. When applying for a visitor visa in US, need I show strong ties to my original country? Thank you.

Consular Officer 3: Hi Vivien, Yes, if your status in Canada is not permanent you will need to prove strong ties to your home country as well. This is why we also recommend that whenever possible, applicants who are visitors to Canada should attempt to apply in their home country.

29. Dev: Just to be on the safe side, where can I find all the documents checklist so that I know I am ready for my interview? Are there any other things one should know before going for the interview?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Dev, All applicants should bring their passport, DS-160 confirmation page, and evidence of status in Canada (permanent resident card, visitor permit, study permit, work permit, etc). Applicants may also bring proof of their ties/residence in a country outside the U.S. and proof of their financial situation. Applicants applying for study or cultural

exchange programs should bring their I-20/DS-2019 and SEVIS payment receipt. Employment visa applicants should bring their approved petition or other employment documents appropriate to the specific visa class. For a full list of the documents required for each visa class, please see:

<http://canada.usembassy.gov/visas/visas/categories-and-requirements.html>.

30. VICTOR: Dear Sir or Madam, I would like to ask, my tourist us visa was denied yesterday, it is not the best time to apply again soon? Should I wait some time?

Consular Officer 3: Hi Victor, If you were refused under INA Section 214(b), you should present evidence of significant changes in circumstances and ties to Canada since your last application in order to be found qualified during your next interview. While you are welcome to apply again at any time, we usually recommend applicants wait until there has been a substantial change in their circumstances.

31. Andy: Do we need to email the consulate about PIMS before interview? Thanks office?

Consular Officer 2: No, you do not need to e-mail the Consulate about PIMS prior to your interview. Please make sure your petition number is entered correctly in your appointment profile and DS-160.

32. Darlene White: Sorry, My question is simply at what point can I apply for an appointment at the Vancouver Consulate, and how? I have the form and pictures all filled out.

Consular Officer 3: To schedule a visa appointment, please visit the U.S. Visa Service website. Appointment services for non-immigrant visas -- tourist, student, work, temporary workers, exchange, etc. -- are provided at no additional charge. Please consult our Embassy's consular services website for information on fees. Visa applications are accepted by appointment only. Please Note: Vancouver does not process immigrant visas, all inquiries must be directed to the U.S. consulate in Montreal.

33. Benoit: Hello sir! I have a question concerning the hb1 visa. How can I obtain it for working for a law office in the US? Is it like applying for a TN visa? What do I need to get an Hb1 visa? And finally for how long is it valid?

Consular Officer 3: In order to work under H1B status in the U.S., you must first obtain an approved H1B petition through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The employer in the U.S. will have to initiate this process for you. You must bring this approved H1B petition with you to your consular interview in order to apply for the H1B visa. If you are a Canadian citizen, however, you only need the approved petition, not the H1B visa itself. The validity of the visa depends on the length of the approved petition by DHS.

34. Guest171: Hi, I submitted my non-immigrant visa application for renewal and after that I realized I typed the place of birth wrong, do I need to submit a

new application or shall I proceed with the visa fees and schedule an appointment?

Consular Officer 3: No, you do not need to submit a new application. Simply tell the consular staff and officers the day of your interview about the mistake and they can manually correct it for you.

Consular Officer 1: We only have about ten minutes left in our webchat. We really appreciate your participation and the great questions. The officers are working hard get to as many of your questions as possible.

35. Dev: Hey! Thanks for all the answers! Firing just one more question, the application asks the time period of stay and I said 10 years thinking that it will give me a visa that would be valid for 10 years. But, I was applying for a tourist visa only and hoping to visit US on vacations to visit cousins. What should I do now, just explain my mistake in the interview? The time period is also not sure depends on how long my holidays are so what should be an ideal answer?

Consular Officer 3: Yes Dev, The best strategy is to always explain yourself fully during the consular interview and admit freely to any mistakes or misunderstands you may have had about the form.

36. Jim: My kids got I-20 to study in Seattle; Do I need sign as parent or leave for the Guardian to sign?

Consular Officer 2: Thanks for your question, Jim. If your child is under 18, you should sign the I-20. If your child is a Canadian citizen, there is no need to come to the Consulate. Your child may apply for their status directly at the border.

37. Kitsbiker71: My U.S. visa is still valid by my passport has expired. My I still use my U.S. visa or do I have to apply for a new visa in my new passport?

Consular Officer 1: Yes, as long as your name has not changed and the purpose of travel is consistent with the existing visa classification; but you must travel with the visa in the old passport together with the new passport.

Consular Officer 1: Several of you have asked whether you have to come in person to interview or if you can I mail the application/passport. The answer is YES, you must come in person for your visa interview. The U.S. Consulate in Vancouver does not accept applications by mail. But If you and your children are applying together, and if your children are under age 14 and physically present in Canada, your children do not have to come for a visa interview, but please bring their passports, a valid photo, and the DS-160 confirmation page. Their applications will be processed together with your application.

Consular Officer 1: Thank you all for joining us today, our webchat has now concluded. Were' sorry we were not able to get to some of your questions. If there's a question that you have not had answered today during our webchat, please go to our official website. If you don't see the information you are

looking for, you can submit questions to <http://canada.usembassy.gov/contact/public-inquiry-form.html> . We hope, too, to continue with these webchats on a more regular basis in the future. We are eager to help and answer as many questions as possible.

Consular Officer 1: Thanks again for all your great questions! We will have an unofficial transcript of this webchat available and posted here with the next few days.