



Embassy of the United States of America  
100 Duke & Young Streets, Kingston, Georgetown, Guyana

## **Ask the Consul Installment One Hundred and Sixteen Visa Myth Busters**

This edition of Ask the Consul addresses several myths concerning the non-immigrant visa application process.

**Myth: The U.S. government doesn't care about business travelers and does not understand how important these travelers are to the U.S. economy.**

**FACT:** We assist all legitimate business travelers. All U.S. embassies and consulates have established procedures to expedite interview appointments for business travelers. The State Department's Business Visa Center also helps facilitate visa application procedures for U.S. companies and convention organizers who invite employees or current and prospective business clients to the United States. Please see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov), email [businessvisa@state.gov](mailto:businessvisa@state.gov), or call 202-663-3198 (U.S. number) for more information.

**Myth: You need to know someone in the Embassy to get a visa.**

**FACT:** The applicant's qualifications – as presented during the visa interview – are the basis on which we make visa decision, not who you know. Embassy and consulate officials are prohibited, by law and regulation, from providing unofficial assistance to visa applicants. Knowing someone in the Embassy will not help you get a visa.

**Myth: Understanding the visa application process is extremely difficult.**

FACT: Applicants can easily understand the visa application process by accessing information on the U.S. Embassy Georgetown's website at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/> and at <http://travel.state.gov>. The U.S. government works to ensure that the visa process is as open and transparent as possible. Some who bill themselves as "visa facilitators" profit by making the process appear more complicated than it really is.

**Myth: The Embassy will only give visas to rich people.**

FACT: An applicant's income isn't nearly as important as how well he or she demonstrates his/her intent to comply with U.S. immigration law, including his or her return to Guyana after a brief visit to the United States. Consular officers are trained to look at the totality of the facts presented during a visa interview, not just how much money an applicant has, when determining eligibility.

**Myth: No matter how many invitation letters you bring, you will be refused.**

FACT: The fact is that the face-to-face interaction with a consular officer, while necessarily brief, is more important than any document. No particular document can qualify someone for a U.S. visa. While an invitation letter is sometimes useful, consular officers are trained to focus on the totality of facts presented during the personal interview with the visa applicant when making eligibility decisions.

**Myth: The wait time for an appointment is so long that I'll have to cancel my trip.**

FACT: We do all we can to ensure that travelers make it to the United States in time for meetings, classes, programs, and other events. During the busy summer season, when an increasing number of applicants wish to travel to U.S., appointment wait times grow. We do everything we can to address this problem, and we encourage people to apply in the many months when waits are not long. Every U.S. embassy and consulate worldwide provides mechanisms to expedite appointments in emergency medical, humanitarian, business, and student cases.

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*“Ask the Consul” is a bi-weekly column from the U.S. Embassy answering questions about U.S. immigration law and visa issues. If you have a general question about visa policy please email it to us at [AskGeorge@state.gov](mailto:AskGeorge@state.gov). We select questions every other week and publish the answers in Stabroek News and on our website at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/ask-the-consul.html> . Information about visas and travel can be viewed at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov>, <http://travel.state.gov>, and at <http://www.dhs.gov>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare their own documents and avoid third-party advice. U.S. Consular rules change frequently and non-US government advisors often provide inadequate or inaccurate information. Other than the questions we select, we DO NOT respond to questions sent to Ask the Consul. Please contact the visa inquiries unit (email [visageorge@state.gov](mailto:visageorge@state.gov) or call 225-7965 between 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday) if you have questions about a specific case.*