



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

## **Installment Eighty**

### **Ask the Consul – Summer Travel**

**Q: It is only April, why should I apply now for a visa to visit the United States in the summer?**

If you have not already done so, now is the time to plan for summer travel, especially if you need to obtain or renew a U.S. visitor's visa. During April and May, the demand is traditionally lower with far fewer applicants applying for visas than during the busy summer months of June, July and August. This means a better availability of appointments and shorter wait times to appear for your interview. Ideally, applicants should make their appointments at least two months before the date that they wish to travel. Applicants who are planning to travel this summer and do not yet have an appointment should make one soon. Planning ahead will help avoid the disappointment and inconvenience of disrupted travel plans.

**Q: How do I apply?**

The best source of guidance on applying for a non-immigrant visa is the website of the U.S. Embassy Georgetown, accessible at this internet address: <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/non-immigrant-visas.html>. On this website you will see a five-step guide to interview preparation. Step 1 is to complete and print your non-immigrant visa application form, the DS-156, accessible on the website. Step 2 is to pay the application fee of \$131 U.S. dollars or Guyana equivalent to Demerara Bank; instructions for making payment are provided on the website. Step 3 is to schedule an appointment through the U.S. Embassy's website. Step 4 is to assemble all of the necessary documents for your in-person interview with an American consular officer at the Embassy. For a visitor's visa, these documents are limited to your passport, your application form (the DS-156), including photographs, and the receipt from Demerara Bank for the \$131 USD application fee. No other documents are necessary for a visitor's visa application and U.S. Embassy policy in Georgetown is to not refer to other documents, but instead assess an applicant's qualification for a visa through the face-to-face interview alone. Finally, step 5 is to appear at the U.S. Embassy at the appointed time and date for your interview with an American consular officer.

**Q: What do I need to bring to the interview?**

A list of specific required documents for different visa categories can be found at the U.S. Embassy website <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/visas/niv.html>. Applicants applying for visitor visas need to bring only their passport and completed and signed application forms, with a correct size photograph and their machine readable visa application fee receipt obtained from Demerara Bank. American consular officers will not review any additional documents related to visa applications; instead, officers will evaluate an applicant's qualifications based on the interview alone. This policy allows for better consideration of the applicant's qualifications. Exceptions to this policy include applications for student and crewmember visas, which carry additional documentary requirements. All applicants should come to their interview prepared to speak about their reasons for visiting the United States and their ties to Guyana. Applicants applying for visas for other purposes, such as student or crewmember visas, should come prepared with all required documents. Applicants should check their passports to make sure they have AT LEAST six months validity remaining and to ensure that their passports are in good condition. The U.S. Embassy cannot issue a visa in a passport that is damaged or mutilated or soon to expire. If you believe your Guyana passport is not in good condition (for example, if the biographical information page is disintegrating or the lamination covering this page is separating), then you should apply for and obtain a new passport with the Guyana Passport Office before you make your visa appointment at the U.S. Embassy.

**Q: What if I need an expedited appointment?**

The waiting period for an interview appointment varies with demand. Typically, the Embassy is able to offer appointments within one to two weeks. However, during certain times of year, like the busy summer season, the wait can be as long as several weeks. Qualified applicants can ensure their ability to obtain a visa in time for their planned travel by requesting their appointments early. Failure to plan ahead for non-emergency travel is not grounds for an expedited appointment; the Consular Section will schedule expedited appointments only in rare cases where a genuine emergency exists. Applicants with emergency travel should first try to obtain a timely appointment through our online appointment system before contacting our visa inquiries unit. If you are experiencing a genuine emergency (for example, death of a relative or urgent business travel in the U.S.), you may contact the inquiries unit at 225-7965 or 225-7966 Monday through Thursday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Friday, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM to request an expedited appointment.

**Q: If I am issued a Visitor Visa, when will the visa be ready?**

Non-immigrant visa applications are subject to a greater degree of scrutiny than in the past. All applicants require a personal interview. Most qualified applicants receive their visas on the following business day; however, some applicants may be informed at the interview that their applications require additional processing. The time needed for

processing these cases is always difficult to predict. Therefore, we recommend that individuals allow ample time before their planned travel date when seeking to obtain a visa.

\*\*\*

*“Ask the Consul” is a 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 each week and publish the answers in Stabroek News and on our website at [http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/guyana/ask\\_con.html](http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/guyana/ask_con.html). For more information about visas please see <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov> or <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/>.*

*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- 12 pm and 1 pm- 4 pm Monday through Friday) if you have questions about a specific case.*