

## Ask the U.S. Embassy

October 14, 2015

### **No sponsor required for visitor's visa**

**Q.** *I want to visit the United States for vacation this year. I'm certain I can find a relative or friend who will allow me to stay at their home, but I do not have a formal invitation yet. Will I need to have a sponsor for my visitor's visa when I interview?*

A. It is a common misconception that you need someone to invite you for a visit to the United States. In fact, there is no such requirement for a sponsor when you apply for a B-1/B-2 visitor's visa for business or pleasure purposes.

What matters for the regular B-1/B-2 visitor's visa is that you have a legitimate purpose of travel and that you qualify independently for the visa regardless of whom you are going to visit. If the reason you want to visit the United States is to visit friends and family, then it stands to reason doing so will be an important part of your legitimate purpose of travel. However, just because a family member or friend has invited you, it does not necessarily assist you to qualify for the visa under U.S. law.

What is of greater interest to the interviewing officer is not so much your reason for going to the United States – it's your reason for coming *back to Jamaica* that you need to demonstrate. That's why a letter of invitation to visit is not at all necessary to apply for a visitor's visa. What is needed is evidence of strong ties to Jamaica – work, study, family, a future in this country. You can demonstrate these strong ties by being prepared to explain to the interviewing officer your current activities in Jamaica and your plans to return to them after a short stay abroad.

Please note that while the regular visitor's visa does not require a sponsor, some other types of non-immigrant visa do require an employer in the United States petition for the visa applicant. Similarly, some student visas require that the traveler be accepted to an accredited school in the United States, which will then help process the formal paperwork needed to apply for a visa.

Travelers on the visitor's visa who are traveling for business purposes may have a work related purpose of travel, such as a work conference or an employer-paid training, which is an important part of why they need to travel. In such cases they will have been invited to the conference or training by their employer.

*You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, [www.kingston.usembassy.gov](http://www.kingston.usembassy.gov) and the website of our authorized service provider at [www.usvisa-info.com](http://www.usvisa-info.com). Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica](https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica) and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.*

*Remember, your appointment time is your arrival time NOT your interview time. Do not show up earlier than your appointment time.*