

FEEES: Changes in Visa and Citizens' Services

- On August 28, the Bureau of Consular Affairs announced changes to the fees for U.S. consular services overseas effective September 12, 2014.
- The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs operates on a fee-for-service basis.
- Based on the most recent update to the Bureau of Consular Affairs' cost-of-service model, we are adjusting the fees to more accurately reflect the costs of providing these services.
 - The fees for most categories of immigrant visas will change, while fees for nonimmigrant visas largely remain the same.
 - We have also revised the fee for the entire process relating to renunciation of citizenship to reflect the real, unsubsidized cost of providing this service.
 - The notice published in the Federal Register on August 28 contains an error. The document states the fee change will go into effect on September 6; however, the effective date is September 12, 15 days after publication in the Federal Register. A Correction Notice will be published early next week.
 - The tables outlining the fee changes are available at travel.state.gov.
 - Public comments will be accepted for 60 days after publication at regulations.gov.

Q: What are the new Nonimmigrant Visa Processing fees?

Nonimmigrant Visa Processing Fees

<i>Type of Visa</i>	<i>Previous Fee</i>	<i>New Fee</i>
Treaty Investor and Trader visas (E)	\$270	\$205
Fiancé(e) visas (K)	\$240	\$265
Border Crossing Card (under age 15)	\$15	\$16

Q: What are the new Immigrant Visa Processing fees?

Immigrant Visa Processing Fees

<i>Type of Visa</i>	<i>Previous Fee</i>	<i>New Fee</i>
Immediate Relative and Family Preference Applications	\$230	\$325
Employment-Based Applications	\$405	\$345
Special Immigrant Visa Applicants (except for Diversity Visa applicants)	\$220	\$205
Determining Returning Resident Status	\$275	\$180
Waiver of Two-Year Residency Requirement	\$215	\$120
Affidavit of Support Review (only when reviewed domestically)	\$88	\$120

Q: What are the new fees for administrative service fees, such as documenting renunciation of citizenship?

Citizens' and Administrative Services

<i>Type of Service</i>	<i>Previous Fee</i>	<i>New Fee</i>
Administrative Processing of Formal Renunciation of Citizenship	\$450	\$2,350
Charge for Consular Time (for fee services performed outside of normal business hours or away from the office)	\$231	\$135

Q: When do the new processing fees go into effect?

- The new fees will go into effect on September 12, 15 days after the day the interim final rule was published in the Federal Register.

Q: What if I already paid my fee for an appointment after September 12?

- Applicants will be charged the fee in effect on the day of payment.
- Fees for American Citizens Services are paid directly to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the date the service is delivered. Fees cannot be paid in advance.
- For immigrant visa fees, the fee charged to an applicant will be the fee printed on the fee bill the applicant receives from the National Visa Center. Receipts for Immigrant Visa application processing remain valid for one year.
- Nonimmigrant visa fees are generally paid in advance of the appointment through a bank contracted to provide fee collection services. Applicants using such a service will pay the application fee valid on the date they make that payment, with receipts valid for one year. For categories in which fees are increasing, receipts for payments made prior to the fee changes will be accepted for 90 days after the fee takes effect, or through December 11, 2014; after that date, applicants will pay the balance of the fee when they appear for their appointment.
- In those countries where nonimmigrant visa fees are paid directly to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, applicants will pay the fee valid on the date of their appointment. Nonimmigrant visa application fee receipts remain valid for one year.
- In categories where fees are declining, no refunds will be available for those who paid prior to the effective date; however, these receipts are valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Q: Why does the Department not issue refunds? I overpaid, and want my money back.

- Application fees are assessed based on the day of payment. Therefore, no refunds will be given. However, receipts for payments made before the fee change will continue to be valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Q: Can I comment on these fees?

- The Department will accept public comments on the rule and the supporting data for 60 days after the date of publication.
- The public may comment on the rule at www.regulations.gov.
- At the close of the comment period, we will review and consider any comments received from the public and the published final rule will include our responses to the comments received.

Q: Why is the Department establishing new, higher fees for certain types of family-based immigrant visas and K (fiancé) visas?

- The August 2013 cost-of-service model update costs showed that certain categories of family-based petitioned visas cost more to process than other categories of visas.
- The new fees reflect the costs of each visa service.

Q: Why is the fee for processing renunciation of U.S. citizenship now \$2,350?

- The 2012 cost-of-service model update demonstrated that documenting a U.S. citizen's renunciation of citizenship requires U.S. consular officers to spend substantial amounts of time to accept, process, and adjudicate cases. In addition to the work done at the embassy or consulate, the case comes back to the Department for a final review and decision, which involves additional resources.
- A renunciation is a serious decision, and we need to be certain that the person renouncing fully understands the consequences. This process sometimes takes multiple appointments to complete.

- For example, consular officers must confirm that the potential renunciant fully understands and intends the consequences of renunciation, including losing the right to reside in the United States without documentation as an alien.
- The fee of \$450 was initially set below cost, representing less than a quarter of the Department's processing costs. The new fee now reflects the service's full cost.

Q: I have already booked an interview appointment to take the Oath of Renunciation after the September fee increase. Can I pay the lower fee?

- Applicants will be charged the fee in effect on the day of payment. Fees for American Citizens Services are paid directly to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the date the service is delivered.
- Fees cannot be paid in advance.

Q: If it costs the Department of State \$2,350 to process a renunciation, why is a Certificate of Loss of Nationality (CLN) free if you commit an expatriating act other than renunciation?

- This fee change applies to documenting renunciation only.

Q: Why is the fee for the minor Border Crossing Card increasing to \$16?

- The increase to the Border Crossing Card fee for minors under the age of 15 reflects a temporary \$1 surcharge on the fees for Machine Readable Visas and BCC application processing, as required by law.
- The addition of this new \$1 special immigrant program surcharge does not affect most nonimmigrant visa fees, as the Department rounded these fees to the nearest \$5 for the ease of converting foreign currencies.
- Because the fee for BCC applications by minors under the age of 15 is statutorily set at \$13, the addition of the \$1 special immigrant program surcharge in addition to the existing \$2 HIV/AIDS/TB/Malaria surcharge will increase the total fee for this service from \$15 to \$16.

Q: Why are you changing the fees only two years after the previous increase?

- The 2012 cost-of-service study demonstrated that the new fees provide a more accurate picture of the net costs to the Department for processing visas.
- Our 2011 cost-of-service study resulting in adjustments to certain visa application fees in April 2012. Our 2012 cost-of-service study in did not necessitate any fee changes.
- The Department conducts a cost of service study annually.

Q: How many visas does the Department process each year?

- In Fiscal Year 2014, the Department of State estimates it will process more than 11 million nonimmigrant visa applications and approximately 600,000 immigrant visa applications.

Q: Any other changes that the public should be aware of?

We revised the hourly rate for the time that consular officers work after hours or away from the office in conjunction with other fees for services performed.