

Consular Webchat
US Embassy, Damascus
May 20, 2010

Mark Goldrup: Hello everyone, and thanks for attending our web chat. Let's get started!

Question [Ahmad Abo Al Chamat]: Dear consular, I wanna ask first about B1 visa, is right that when you get this visa, and go to the states for sometime, you have then to departure the american land the same period you stayed in? e.g: you stayed there for 6 months, then you have to stay out for six months?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: The period of visa validity which is stamped on the passport is for entry purposes only. The duration of stay will be decided by the immigration officer at the port of entry. Usually this period does not exceed 6 months. If an applicant intends to stay more than 6 month, s/he should apply for an extension through the Department of Homeland Security. Never overstay your visa without first getting an extension. Also, please keep in mind that, even with an official extension obtained, staying in US for more than 6 months may negatively impact the decision on your next visa if it appears that you are attempting to use the B1/B2 and extensions to enable de facto residency.

Question [Hasan Ali]: Can I get the visa after I do the interview?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Yes, if the consular officer determines that you are qualified for the visa, you will be notified immediately after the interview. However, if you are a resident of Syria, your application will be subject to administrative processing afterwards, before the visa can be physically place into your passport.

Question [Saeid azami]: :i'm an iranian can i try for us visa from syria?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Anyone, from any country in the world, may apply at any consular section anywhere else in the world. However, as an Iranian, you should be aware that consular officers who have been trained to speak Farsi and to understand Iranians' social, family and economic ties are located in Dubai and Ankara. If an officer in Damascus without such special expertise is not able to fully understand your ties and purpose of travel, s/he will be obliged to refuse your application. This does happen with some of our Iranian applicants in Damascus. That said, we are more than happy to interview Iranians and frequently issue visas to Iranians who are able to clearly and persuasively describe their ties and purpose of travel. If you choose to apply in Damascus, it is your responsibility to hire an adequate translator.

Question [Ahmad Abo Al Chamat]: 'm asking that coz I'm a final year medical student, and I'm corresponding american medical schools for electives, so may I have the two visas, the same time?

Answer [Jason Smith]: Unfortunately, you cannot have both an immigrant visa and a non-immigrant visa at the same time. U.S. visa law generally states that if you have an intent to immigrate, you should only be issued an immigrant visa. You will only be issued a non-immigrant B1/B2 tourist visa if you can clearly demonstrate it is not your intention to immigrate to the United States. Normally, you are able to

show this with evidence of strong ties to your home country. If you are issued a B1/B2 tourist, and then apply for immigrant visa, your B1/B2 visa will be cancelled.

Question [Ahmad Abo Al Chamat]: just, I don't know how to make benefit of my fiance being a holder of the american natiuonality?

Answer [Jason Smith]: As an American Citizen, your fiancé may file a K1 visa petition for you. The K1 visa is also known as the Fiancé Visa. The K1 visa is for people like you who intend to marry an American Citizen in the United States. The visa will allow you to travel to the United States, with the intention of getting married there. Your fiancé must apply for a K-1 fiancé(e) visa, by filing an I-129F fiancé(e) visa petition with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service in the United States. The USCIS is the sole authority for approving I-129F fiancé (e) visa petitions. To be able to receive a K-1 visa, you must intend to marry within ninety days of entering the United States and reside permanently there. Once you travel to the United States and get married, your American Citizen spouse must then file an adjustment of status for you with the USCIS. If you intend to get married in Syria, and then immigrate to the United States, your fiancé should wait until after you are married, and then file a normal I-130 Immigration Petition with the USCIS. For more information about K-1 fiancé visas please visit: http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_2994.html

Question [sultano]: Is there a visit to the Consular Section to Aleppo

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: The US Embassy owns land and a building that at one time housed a consular section in Aleppo. At some point in the future, that may be reopened. At present, however, there are no immediate plans to reopen the building. It is closed and all consular services are now provided out of the Embassy in Damascus.

Question [marina]: hi i'm an american my fiance is syrian i want to a get visa for him so we can go and visit my family in LA i've been here for 4 months now were going to be living here i just want a visa for him so he can meet my family if you please can help me thank you..

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: This is a question many people have. Thanks for bringing it up. Without actually conducting a visa interview with you, it is difficult to predict the likelihood of your fiancé getting a visa. But based on the information you've given me, I can tell you that there are several issues your fiancé will likely be asked to address if he were to apply for a visitor visa. The main issue we look at is what ties a visa applicant has that would compel him/her to return to his/her home country. As an engaged couple, it would be assumed that his primary relationship is to you. If you have only lived in Syria for four months, and are in fact returning to the US for a visit at the same time as your fiancé, you would need to be very careful to explain exactly what it is that makes you confident you will live in Syria permanently after the visit. The officer would likely ask your fiancé to discuss his work and family ties to Syria, what you are doing here, why you want to come back, and why he doesn't want to apply for an immigrant visa.

Question [Iman]: Hello! I'm an American permanent resident. I arrived to Syria last September, I think I can't reenter the states before next summer for family reasons...so what I have to do to keep my rights and my status as a green card holder. I've 2 kids, my husband still in USA

Question [abdalkader]: Hi I need the information about visa for immigration

Answer [Jason Smith]: Hi. Thank you for your question. In general, to apply for an immigrant visa, a foreign citizen must be sponsored by a U.S. citizen relative(s), U.S. lawful permanent resident, or by a prospective employer, and be the beneficiary of an approved petition. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) bears sole authority under U.S. law to approve immigrant petitions. Under certain circumstances, this petition approval authority is delegated to Embassies. To learn more about immigration to the United States, and whether you are eligible, please visit our website at: http://damascus.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas/how-to-file-an-immigrant-petition.html

Question [Osama]: I am from Syria but I am Palestinian and I have travel documents I visited many European countries and I have several Schengen visas, I am studying in ALC, I am 33 years old, and I am a merchant, I need to ask you how I can visit U.S.A for tourism purposes. PLEASE, can you tell me what I need for submit my application in your embassy. Many thanks for help me in advance.

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks for asking our most popular question! Simply, you need to fill out the electronic application and make an appointment through our web site: http://damascus.usembassy.gov/non-immigrant_visas/apply.html The most important thing is to fill out that application fully and accurately. When you show up for your interview, you will be asked to explain your economic, family, and social ties to Syria, as well as your previous travel. You are not required to bring additional documents, but applicants sometimes find it helpful to bring old passports, bank statements, proof of employment, family books, or similar documents that will help corroborate your story.

Question [Iman]: Hello, I'm an American permanent resident, I'm married to an American citizen and have 2 kids. I arrived to Syria, 2010, and haven't been back to the states yet...I want to know please...what I have to do to reenter the states this summer...

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thanks for your question. As a permanent resident, you may return to the United States with a valid Permanent Residence Card ("Greencard") as long as you have been outside of the United States less than one year. If you have been outside of the United States less than one year, but more than six months, the Department of Homeland Security may require you to provide evidence that you did not abandon your residency in the United States. If you recently immigrated to the United States, but did not receive a greencard yet, your valid Immigrant Visa, properly endorsed for admission to the United States by the Department of Homeland Security upon your entrance to the United States, works as a temporary greencard for one year from your entrance. If you left the United States without a greencard or other permission from the Department of Homeland Security to reenter the United States, you should contact the Embassy at IVDamascus@state.gov to schedule an appointment for us to review your case and determine whether we are able to assist you in returning to the United States.

Question [Ahamd Hasan]: how can i get a Scholarship in US to complete MBA

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: To apply for scholarship you have to contact the university in which you intend to study and ask them if they have any available scholarships that would meet your needs and qualifications. Please also contact our Public Diplomacy Section to discuss their guidance for students in your situation. To do so, please visit American Embassy website : <http://damascus.usembassy.gov/> and go to the Culture/Education heading.

Question [Aref]:hello, I am aref i am a forth year student (English Translation Dep) i want to know all the procedures if i want to apply for a scholarship or if want to complete high studies in the us my nationality is Palestinian but i was born in Syria so i hold a temporary id and passport. thnx

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: To apply for scholarship you have to contact the university in which you intend to study and ask them if they have any available scholarships that would meet your needs and qualifications. Please also contact our Public Diplomacy Section to discuss their guidance for students in your situation. To do so, please visit American Embassy website : <http://damascus.usembassy.gov/> and go to the Culture/Education heading.

Question [Guest]:my question is for immigrant Visa Interview Do we need to bring in anything else besides Passport, Pictures, and Medical examination? 2- When is the best time to contact the US Embassy to learn about the Immigrant Visa process? 3- Do I need to call the US Embassy in Syria from the US when my spouse's interview takes place?

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thanks for your questions. When the Immigrant Visa Unit contacts you to schedule your interview, we should have supplied you with a list of required documents you need to bring with you on the day of the appointment. If you do not bring all required documents with you, it is ok, you can submit them to us after the interview by way of DHL. Unfortunately, we will not be able to issue a visa until we have all required documents. We may even request you to submit additional documents at the time of interview, which were not previously requested. This will depend on each individual case. The best way to contact the Immigrant Visa Unit is always by e-mail at IVDamascus@state.gov. If you prefer to call us, please try calling the U.S. Embassy between 2:00pm and 4:00pm, Sunday through Wenesday, Damascus time. But again, we strongly encourage you to contact us by e-mail. The petitioner does not need to contact the U.S. Embassy on the date of the immigrant visa interview. If during the interview we determine that any additional documents are required, or other processing is required, we will always issue a letter explaining what is required before we can issue the visa. If you have questions about this letter, such as clarification about what documents are required, please contact us by e-mail or by phone. Our website, http://damascus.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html, also has additional information about the visa interview process.

Question [SHB]:if I want to apply for a students immigration how can I apply? how much would it cost me? and do I really have a chance to get it or is it impossible??

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: When you say "students immigration," I am assuming you mean a student visa. If that's wrong, please let me know. So ... assuming you are asking about the student visa, the first thing to do is to get accepted into a U.S. university. The university's international office will be able to assist you in starting the paperwork. Once you have received an approval notice, called an "I-20," you will pay a "SEVIS fee," which costs USD 200. The visa itself would cost USD 131 at present (though the fees will change soon). You would fill out a visa application and schedule your appointment through our web site at: http://damascus.usembassy.gov/non-immigrant_visas/apply.html. As far as your chances, yes!! You absolutely have a good chance of getting a student visa. The officer who interviews you will be evaluating your English communication skills to determine whether you are able to succeed in a US classroom. S/he will also want to see that you are a serious student -- you can help demonstrate this by discussing your academic and career goals and previous studies. If you are able to show that you are a serious student with sufficient English, and the ability to pay for your studies, your chances are very good.

Answer [Jason Smith]: In general, to apply for an immigrant visa, a foreign citizen must be sponsored by a U.S. citizen relative(s), U.S. lawful permanent resident, or by a prospective employer, and be the beneficiary of an approved petition. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) bears sole authority under U.S. law to approve immigrant petitions. Under certain circumstances, this petition approval authority is delegated to Embassies. Unfortunately Embassy Damascus is not a refugee processing post and is unable to assist individuals with claims to persecution.

Question [suzan]:how can apply for visa for immgration?

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thank you for your question. In general, to apply for an immigrant visa, a foreign citizen must be sponsored by a U.S. citizen relative(s), U.S. lawful permanent resident, or by a prospective employer, and be the beneficiary of an approved petition. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) bears sole authority under U.S. law to approve immigrant petitions. Under certain circumstances, this petition approval authority is delegated to Embassies. Please visit our website for more information: http://damascus.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html

Question [SB]: I'm a gay guy who lives in Damascus and as you all know being gay is something difficult here in the Syrian Culture would you consider that to help in getting me an immigration??

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: I am certain there are many people who would like to know the answer to this question, so thanks for bringing it up. As far as a B1/B2 "tourist" visa is concerned, your sexual orientation is a non-issue and is none of the officer's business unless you want to discuss it. The only way this would factor into the decision is if it seemed that you were so eager to get away from Syria that you wouldn't want to come back. Officers look for ties that would compel you to return to your home country after a brief visit to the US. If you in fact are looking to leave permanently, the B1/B2 visa is not appropriate, and I would refer you to the guidance provided by my colleague, Jason.

Question [Ali Abu Hanish]: I am working with an international organization based in Aleppo Syria called ICARDA which is part of global alliance of agricultural centers called CGIAR and sponsored by the World Bank, my question is some of our staff has to visit US for duty, meeting, conference,.. etc. Do you have

any procedures to facilitate the visa application process by let us to apply one month before the visit instead of three months? Can you provide us with best practice for such cases?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: We see many applicants from ICARDA and similar organizations going for the types of visits you describe. By far, most applicants in such circumstances are able to demonstrate strong ties and clear purpose of travel and are issued visas. However, as you may be aware, US law requires administrative processing and clearances for all residents of state sponsors of terror. Because Syria is a state sponsor of terror, this applies to all Syrian nationals and foreign residents other than accredited diplomats. The factors that can influence the length of time required for this processing are varied and impossible to describe in this forum. Typically, we are able to complete the processing much more quickly than three months, but we use three months as a rule of thumb to help you avoid making travel plans that you later have to change because the visa is not ready. In all cases, we work to get it done as quickly as possible, so special procedures for certain applicants are not warranted. From what I have seen during my time in Damascus, if you apply for your visa at least one month in advance, you will rarely face problems. Whether “rarely” is good enough is up to you. Our advice is to plan as far in advance as possible. The closer you get to your departure date, the higher the chances that the mandatory administrative processing will not be completed in time.

Question [Elham Halabi]: I have applied to visit my brothers in USA, but i was refused because i have no evidence that I will come back to syria such as Bank Account. How can i apply to visit them and assure that my application will be accepted. what are the evidence that will assure it is just a visit for no more than 3 month? Thank you

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks for the question. It is unlikely that your bank account was a significant factor in the decision. Consular officers look at your overall life circumstances and determine whether, in their view, you have sufficient social, economic and family ties to compel your return to Syria after a short visit. Typically, the most important “evidence” is the applicant’s ability to clearly describe these ties – work, family and other relationships, membership in social organizations, other connections that would be difficult to leave behind. Previous travel may also help. If you were previously refused, the best advice we can give you is to wait until your life circumstances have significantly changed before applying again. If you believe the refusal was simply due to miscommunication or a bad decision, you are more than welcome to reapply and attempt to explain your ties more clearly the second time. To make the process more fair, our policy is to allow you to speak with a different officer the second time around. If you feel the officer’s Arabic is not sufficient, please ask him/her to use a translator to help ensure your statements are fully understood.

Question [sf]: i am a syrian physician working in the US on H1b visa, i am planning to get married in the summer, can my wife get her H4 visa even if my h1 stamping is delayed for security check, and how if i have travel document with valid H1 from the immigration, is it enough for her to get her H4, appreciate your response.

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Because your wife is considered as one of your dependants by American law, she cannot have her H4 visa until your H1b visa is actually issued. Her visa status is derivative from

yours. For your 2nd question, if you have the form I-797 (notice of action) approved by Department of Homeland Security, your wife may apply to get the H4 visa.

Question [Iman]: Hello, Mr, Mark, did you receive my question, I couldn't see anything

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Which question was yours

Question [Yasmine]: Is it true that there is something called a fiancée visa? How can someone (non-US citizen in Syria) visit his fiancée in the states? How long does the process take?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks for the question Yasmine. Yes, there is a fiancée' visa and it is very popular! It is called the K1 visa and it allows you to enter the United States for 90 days to decide if you want to marry your fiancée. It generally takes about 6-8 months to process. You can find more information about the K1 here: http://damascus.usembassy.gov/fiancees_visas.html

Question [marina 2]: hi mr. mark did you get my question?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks Marina, yes I did get the question. Unfortunately, we were having some technical problems at the beginning of the chat, so you may not have seen it. Please scroll up to the top of the "Q&A" window and then scroll down. You will find your question answered there.

Question [omar]: I'm Iraqi living in Syria and my family living in the U.S.A they went to the U.S.A as a refugee I have been registered in the U.N My question is how could I join to my family could please help me.

Answer [Jason Smith]: If you are under 21 years old, your family who went as refugees are in the United States can file an I-730 for you to join them, as long as you are under 21 years of age, and are unmarried. If you are over 21, and unmarried, your family can file an immigration petition for you once they adjust status and become legal permanent residents in the United States. To benefit from this immigration petition you need to remain unmarried. If you are married, your family can only file an immigration petition for you once they naturalize and become American Citizens.

Question [Barnadette Nader]: My appointment for Immigrant visa was in 2008 and my case is still pending under administrative processing status. My inquiry is: Are the immigrant visas of this category suspended, and may your section expect approximately when my case will be completed I appreciate your co-operation.

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thank you for your question. Unfortunately, we can never predict how long administrative processing can take. The good news is, that as long as the case is under administrative processing, the petition remains valid and the visa is still available. You can always monitor the progress of your case pending administrative processing on our website at <http://damascus.usembassy.gov/iv-processing.html>. Unfortunately we cannot answer questions about specific Immigration cases during this webchat. If you have questions about a specific immigration case, please contact us by e-mail at IVDamascus@state.gov, and include your DMS case number, and your name as spelled in your passport.

Question [marina 2]: mr. mark he actually applied but he got refused by telling him that i have to apply a fiance visa for him but the case is for the fiance visa i have to be living in the us but im gonna be living here with him he wants to visit my family with thats all what can we do?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: I see. In a case like that, it is difficult to get a tourist visa because your fiance has strong relationship ties (you) to the United States. At the same time, you are right that the K1 requires you to be in the United States. I guess the good news is that your fiance was not refused immigration, but only a brief trip for tourism. If he is not able to demonstrate sufficient ties to compel him to return to his home country after a short visit, the immigration path would still be open to you. If you are a resident of Syria (having lived here longer than six months) you would be able to apply for an immigrant visa ("green card") after you are married.

Question [Iman]: Tahnk you...yes, I left the state and I'm a green card holder for 5years.. so If for family reason I won't be able to go this semmer...waht i've to do to reentre the states next summer...I don't abondent the residency and I would never...I want to keep it, I've an americian husband and american kids..thank you

Answer [Jason Smith]: If you are a Legal Permanent Resident, and you remain outside the United States for more than one year, you are considered to have abandoned your status and your residency in the United States. You cannot travel to the United States with your greencard after that time. If however, there are circumstances beyond your control which make you stay outside of the United States for more than one year, you may contact the Embassy when you are preparing to return to the United States to determine whether you are eligible to get a new Immigrant Visa as a Returning Resident. For more information, please check our website at http://damascus.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas/returning-resident-aliens.html. If you are deemed to have lost your permanent residency status, and are married to an U.S. Citizen, your spouse can always file a new immigration petition for you when you are ready to return to the United States.

Question [omar]: How long that immigration petition takes time

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: The answer depends on exactly what type of immigrant visa you are applying for and your relationship to the petitioner. If you are the parent or spouse of an American Citizen living in Syria, you can apply at the US Embassy any time and the processing of your case can begin immediately. On the other hand, if you are an adult sibling of an American citizen, it may take upwards of 10 years. For a specific question about your particular circumstances, please email ivdamascus@state.gov

Question [shami]:yes my question to mr jason smith please my separation with my family is taking atoll on my life here I am taking a leave from my job to be with my family

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thank you for your question. Unfortunately, we cannot ever tell how long administrative processing will take. The Petitioner is not required to be present for this processing, and we will issue the visas without the petitioner being present. This of course is a difficult decision that every individual will have to make on their own.

Question [Ahmad Hasan]: I am now study accounting in the UAE and i need only one years to graduate. Do you have universities give full scholarships to compelet my education?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks for the question, Ahmad, but unfortunately I don't have access to that kind of information. Each university and scholarship-offering organization would have its own standards for scholarships. I would recommend starting by talking with the financial aid office at a university where you are interested in studying in the US.

Question [Yasmine]:To go back to Marina's question: if you want to visit the US with your fiance or husband (if we get married in Syria), what type of visa would you recommend he apply for?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: You should apply for a B1/B2. But again, please be aware that your fiance will need to demonstrate the ties that would compel him to return. The officer would very likely also want to know how established you, as an American, are in Syria. You would probably need to discuss how long you've been in Syria, whether you own any property here, whether you work here, etc. Overall, the officer will be looking to see how tied the both of you are, as a couple to Syria. The fact that one of you is an American Citizen creates a question about how tied you can be. This is not impossible to overcome, but it is a question that would need to be addressed for a simple tourist visa application.

Question [marina]: he has a good income here he can't leave it behind and his all family is here as well thats why he just wants to visit because my family doesn't know him and we want to do the wedding this summer but we cant because my family didn't meet him yet and they can't come because of their work ties ..

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks for the follow-up, Marina. Many people leave behind good incomes to start over in the United States. This does not mean fiances can never be issued a tourist visa, but only that the officer will be looking at the applicant's overall circumstances, previous travel, etc., not only at one factor such as income. An internatonal wedding is a logistically complicated thing and, unfortunately, we are not able to issue visas to everyone who would like one. Each visa type has a different burden of proof that is placed on the applicant. It is possible that there is not a visa type that would suit your travel preferences and for which you would be able to meet the corresponding burden of proof. For that reason, I would suggest considering other visa types.

Question [omar]: I want info about the Processing refuge center can the help me

Answer [Jason Smith]: Unfortunately, the American Embassy in Damascus is not a refugee processing post. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has primary responsibility for assistance to and protection of refugees. Persons who want to claim refugee status should go to the nearest office of UNHCR for assistance. UNHCR is responsible for designating persons as refugees and locating suitable resettlement opportunities. The UNHCR office in Damascus is located at Kafar Souseh, Kanawat Basatin, near Al Daker Mosque. UNHCR's telephone number is 011-213-9961/2/3.

Question [marina]: when he went for his appointment that was a month ago he had all kind of owned property docs here but they didn't ask for it

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Again, as with the question about income, a single factor may not be enough. Many people living in the United States own property overseas. The issue has more to do with the applicant's overall life situation. Marriage to an American citizen represents a powerful tie to the United States and it is often difficult for such visa applicants to demonstrate they have sufficient ties to Syria to allow a tourist visa to be issued. I'm not saying it never happens, but it is difficult.

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Everyone, thanks for participating in our web chat. We hope this has been useful. Because of the technical problems at the beginning, we've extended the chat for 15 minutes. We will close the chat five minutes from now, so please give us any final questions now. Thanks!

Question [marina]: whats the solution mr. mark what can i do?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Your fiance may apply again if he thinks the wrong decision was made, but unfortunately I'm not in a position to give you a solution. As I said, it may be that your fiance is simply unable to meet the standard required for a tourist visa. It is unfortunately the case that not everyone is qualified for the type of visa they would like.

Question [Yasmine]: You recommended that the fiance apply for other visa types. Could you give us other visa types? I know you also recommended B1/B2. Anything else? And what might the difference between them be? Thanks!

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: Thanks Yasmine. Please scroll back through the chat, where you can find B1/B2, K1 and other visa types discussed with you and Marina. I do hope you are able to find a solution that works for you!! I went through the exact same thing when I got married, and know it can be difficult. Aside from the two visa types you've mentioned, the other option would be an immigrant visa (green card), which you could apply for after you are married.

Question [Iman]: if we will need further information later..do you have a fixing date for another web chat

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: We haven't yet scheduled our next web chat, but you can reach us any time by email at nivdamascus@state.gov (for non-immigrant visas) or ivdamascus@state.gov (for immigrant visas).

Question [marina]: how long will it take after we get married?

Answer [Mark Goldrup]: If you have been in Syria for at least six months, you would be considered a resident and could apply immediately. The processing time after that is usually 2-4 months.

Question [WD77 2]: I've to know wither to file a petition on my brother (US citizen) or a parent (green card holder), I'm single and might get married in future, do I lose the petition if I filed on a parent, and can I file on both a brother and a parent, thanks

Answer [Jason Smith]: If your parent files a immigration petitioner for you as a single adult child of a Legal Permanent Resident, and you then marry, your petition is cancelled. Once your parent becomes

an American Citizen, the petition will no longer be cancelled if you get married. Both parent's and siblings can file petitioner - there are no limits on the number of petitions you could benefit from. If your sibling applies for you, and you then marry, it only extends the processing time by a year or two.

Mark Goldrup: Thanks again everyone for your participation. The web chat is now closed for further questions. We will answer the questions already submitted.

Question [shami]: for how long the IR visa will be valid for

Answer [Jason Smith]: An IR visa is valid for six months once it is issued. The petition is valid for only one year following the availability of the visa and scheduling of the interview. If you take no action within one year, then the petition will be cancelled. However, if you attend the interview and then are temporarily refused for additional documents, you must submit those documents within one year of the interview. If you are refused for administrative processing, your petition remains valid until the processing is complete.

Question [WD77 2]:Also, if I've filed a petition on a parent and got married do I fall automatically from category F1 to F3 or do I've to apply for a new petition file.

Answer [Jason Smith]: If your petitioning parent was an American citizen when they filed a petition for you as an F1, and you then marry, the petition is automatically upgraded to an F3. However, you must inform the USCIS, or National Visa Center, or US Embassy, that you have married, so that we know to change your visa classification.

Answer [Jason Smith]: Thank you all for participating. We will be posting the transcript of this web chat soon. We hope to see you again in the future.