



state department updates guidance on third country national visa processing

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On September 6, 2025, the State Department issued guidance on which country foreign nationals can apply for a nonimmigrant visa ("NIV") such as H-1B, L-1, F-1, O-1, TN, and J-1 at U.S. Embassies/Consulates abroad. This guidance was later updated on October 10, 2025[1], and limits third-country national ("TCN") nonimmigrant visa processing, except in a narrow set of circumstances as detailed below.

What is TCN processing?

TCN processing is when an individual applies for a U.S. visa in a country other than their home country. Although TCN policies vary widely between consular posts, previously TCN processing provided the option to schedule visa appointments at consular posts with shorter wait times or that were more convenient.

What has changed?

The State Department now directs foreign nationals to schedule NIV appointments at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate in their country of nationality or residence. Applicants must demonstrate residence in the country where they are applying, if the place of application is based on their residency. Applicants who schedule NIV interviews at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate outside of their country of nationality or residence should expect to wait significantly longer for an appointment and might find that it will be more difficult to qualify for the visa. Fees paid for such applications will not be refunded and cannot be transferred.

The State Department confirmed on October 10, 2025 that existing appointments will generally not be cancelled.

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What if the U.S. Government does not conduct NIV interviews in my home country?

If the U.S. Government does not conduct routine NIV operations in a country, there are designated locations for NIV processing, which are listed here:

NATIONAL OF

DESIGNATED LOCATION(S)

Afghanistan

Islamabad

Belarus

Vilnius, Warsaw

Burkina Faso

Lome

Chad

Yaoundé

Cuba

Georgetown

Haiti

Nassau

Iran

Dubai

Libya

Tunis

Niger

Lome



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Russia

Astana, Warsaw

Somalia

Nairobi

South Sudan

Nairobi

Sudan

Cairo

Syria

Amman

Ukraine

Krakow, Warsaw

Venezuela

Bogota

Yemen

Riyadh

Zimbabwe

Johannesburg

Are there any exceptions?

Yes. This guidance does not apply to applicants for A, G, C-2, C-3, NATO visas, applicants for diplomatic-type or official-type visas (regardless of classification), or applicants for any visa for travel covered by the UN Headquarters Agreement. Rare exceptions may also be made for humanitarian or medical emergencies or foreign policy reasons.



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How can employers prepare?

This will greatly affect nonimmigrant visas holders. In addition to the rollback of NIV interview waivers in September 2025, almost all foreign nationals should travel to their home country to attend a visa appointment to obtain a new visa stamp. As more NIV applicants will be required to attend an interview, employers should expect longer visa appointment wait times and increased travel burdens.

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/adjudicating-niv-applicants-in-their-country-of-residence.html>