



VISA INTERVIEWS WAIVED FOR SOME F-1, H-1B, AND L-1 VISA APPLICANTS IN INDIA

The U.S. Embassy in India has announced expansion of the Interview Waiver Program, launched in March 2012. Expansion of the program will allow qualified individuals to apply for additional classes of visas without being interviewed in person by a U.S. consular officer. The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi expects this expansion to affect thousands of visa applicants in India. Specifically, the expansion of the program may waive the visa interview requirement for H-1B visa holders, individual L-1A and L-1B visa holders, and F-1 students returning to attend the same program at the same school.

Under the current program, Indian applicants who are renewing visas that are still valid or visas that have expired within the past 48 months may request streamlined processing, including waiver of a personal interview, within the following visa categories:

- Business/Tourism (B-1 and/or B-2);
- Dependent (J-2, H-4, L-2);
- Transit (C) and/or Crew Member (D) - including C-1/D;
- Children applying before their seventh birthday traveling on any visa class; and
- Applicants applying on or after their 80th birthday traveling on any visa class.

Under the expanded program, the following Indian applicants may also be considered for streamlined processing:

- Children applying before their 14th birthday traveling on any visa class;
- F-1 students returning to attend the same school and same program;
- Temporary workers on H-1B visas; and
- Temporary workers on individual L-1A or individual L-1B visas.

The “renewal” application must be within the same classification as the previous visa in order to qualify for an interview waiver. Additionally, if an applicant’s previous visa is annotated with “clearance received,” that applicant is not eligible for a waiver of the personal interview requirement.

Not all requests for streamlined processing will be granted. As always, consular officers may interview any visa applicant in any category. Applicants who are renewing their visas may still need an appointment for biometrics (fingerprint and photograph) collection. All

applicants are still required to submit all applicable fees and the Form DS-160 Nonimmigrant Visa Application completed on-line

If you or one of your workers will be traveling abroad and needs a visa, we recommend contacting your FosterQuan immigration attorney before making travel arrangements to discuss any new developments in the law, procedures, or the case.

FosterQuan will continue to monitor the situation and provide additional information in future Immigration Updates©, and on our firm's website at www.fosterquan.com.