

UAMS Immigration



Immigration Updates



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COVID-19 Vaccination Required for Green Card Applicants

On September 14, 2021, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that, effective Oct. 1, 2021, applicants subject to the immigration medical examination must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before the civil surgeon can complete an immigration medical examination and sign Form [I-693, Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record](#).

In general, individuals applying to become a lawful permanent resident must undergo an immigration medical examination to show they are free from any conditions that would render them inadmissible under the health-related grounds. USCIS designates eligible physicians as civil surgeons to perform this immigration medical examination for applicants within the United States and to document the results of the immigration medical examination on the Form I-693.

For more information about the Form I-693 or this new requirement, visit the USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-693>.

U.S. Travel Restrictions Expected to be Relaxed in November

The White House told reporters in September that the U.S. is expected to relax travel restrictions for air travelers starting in early November. This change will allow entry for air travelers from 33 countries including China, India, Brazil, and most of Europe. The new rule would require those travelers to show that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and also show results of a negative coronavirus test performed on a specimen taken during the three days preceding their flight's departure from a foreign country traveling to the United States. There has been no official announcement, but if implemented this will greatly ease restrictions for business travelers currently subject to travel bans.

However, given the limited staffing at U.S. Embassies due to the pandemic, foreign nationals may encounter longer waiting times in visa processing. Therefore, we advise to refrain from non-emergency travel. If you do travel, please be sure to make arrangements for a visa appointment in advance, as backlogs around the world vary significantly.

The UAMS Immigration Services Office recommends that you closely review the [U.S. Department of State website](#) for any updated travel restrictions prior to making travel plans or leaving the U.S., as these can change without notice.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at ASKImmigration@uams.edu.

Change of Address Reminder

Have you moved recently? Be sure to update your new address in both USCIS and UAMS databases.

USCIS: Fill out the [AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card](#).

UAMS: Login to [Employee Self Service \(ESS\)](#) ⇒ Personal Information ⇒ Personal Profile.

According to U.S. federal regulation 8 C.F.R. 265.1, all changes of address should be reported to USCIS within 10 days after moving. By updating the address in UAMS system, it can ensure that you receive important benefit and tax documentation from Office of Human Resources.



UAMS Immigration Services
Immigration Attorney Virtual Presentation

Current Travel Restrictions, and Immigrant Visa Backlogs and Strategies

Thursday, November 4, 2021
12 - 1pm

Presented by Ms. Rita Sostrin from Sostrin Immigration Lawyers, LLP. This presentation will provide information about immigration hot topics and travel restrictions. Also, we will discuss current immigrant visa backlogs and how to select the optimal immigrant visa strategy, including the benefits of EB-1, EB-2 and EB-3.

Registration is required. Please register [HERE](#).



Immigration Virtual Office Hour

Sign up for our virtual office hour if you have immigration-related inquiries, such as when to initiate your H-1B extension petition, what to do if your passport is expiring, or how to start a green card process. All conversations are private. Our Virtual Office Hour is at 2pm-3pm on the first Tuesday each month. Sign-up is available all year round at this [link](#). The upcoming sessions are **November 2nd** and **December 7th**. Sign up NOW!



Scam Alert

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security continues to notice an increase in the number of scams targeting foreign nationals in the U.S. Beware of callers claiming to be with any U.S. government agency including Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) or United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The scammers claiming to be SEVP or USCIS representatives are calling foreign nationals to ask for personal information such as Social Security Numbers. The scammers also ask foreign nationals to provide monetary transaction information including credit/debit/gift card numbers, wire transfer accounts, bank routing numbers, or cryptocurrency account numbers. Please be aware that SEVP and USCIS officials will NEVER call and ask for monetary transaction information for any purpose. Normally, SEVP and USCIS officials do not call you. Be cautious and NEVER disclose any personal or financial information to strangers.

Apply for U.S. Social Security Number

Due to COVID-19, the Social Security Administration Office (SSA Office) in Little Rock is open by appointment only. Here are some important tips for you to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN):

- You can apply for the SSN after you have been present in the U.S. for at least 10 days.
- If you are on a J-1 visa, please make sure your record is validated in SEVIS before you start the application.
- Make sure to put a valid U.S. address on the SSN application form because the Social Security card will be mailed to you at that address.
- Do not mail original documents to the SSA Office.
- You must request an appointment by phone before you go for the appointment in person.

Work Authorization: Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and Form I-20



If your current work authorization is based on an EAD card or a Form I-20, please make sure to renew the document accordingly when it is about to expire. You must notify the immigration team about your new work authorization so that we can reverify your new work authorization. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact us at Askimmigration@uams.edu.

Arkansas Gems:

Mount Magazine State Park

At the peak of the state park experience is Mount Magazine, Arkansas's highest point at 2,753 feet. People come for the sweeping views alone, but there is much to see and do from this unique spot. Mount Magazine State Park is a place of relaxation, exploration, nature study, and is within the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. It is a destination for outdoor sports and extreme adventures with mountain biking, horseback riding, backpacking, and ATV riding. Mount Magazine is the state park system's most dramatic location for technical rock climbing, and it's one of only two parks to offer hang gliding launch areas. Scenic overlooks, hiking trails, picnic area, pavilion, and visitor center with gift shop add to the amenities. A wide variety of programs led by park interpreters highlights the mountain's natural diversity.

The Lodge at Mount Magazine features 60 guest rooms, Skycrest Restaurant, a conference center, business center, heated indoor swimming pool, fitness center, and game room. From its setting on the mountain's south bluff, the lodge offers breathtaking views of the Petit Jean River Valley and Blue Mountain Lake in the distance. Its beautiful setting and first-class facilities make the lodge a top choice for romantic getaways, weddings, conferences, and corporate retreats. The conference space can be divided into three meeting rooms or opened up for banquet-style seating for up to 192 people. Skycrest Restaurant seats up to 125. Thirteen cabins share the same view as the lodge. Choose from one-, two-, and three-bedroom options with fully equipped kitchens, fireplaces, and covered decks with outdoor hot tubs. There are also 18 campsites on the mountain (two Class AAA and 16 Class AA with tent-only options).

Things to do in Mount Magazine State Park



Horseback Riding

The highest peak in Arkansas is the site of Huckleberry Mountain Trail, one of several multi-use Arkansas horse trails spanning 34 miles used for ATV riding, mountain biking, backpacking, and horseback riding in Arkansas. The trail can be accessed at the northeast rock quarry. Three loops cross creeks and connect Mount Magazine with Huckleberry Mountain. Camping on Mount Magazine is allowed on the portions of these Arkansas horse trails that are within the Ozark National Forest.

Hiking and Backpacking

Join a park interpreter, or explore and discover the mountain on your own. Trails provide hours of enjoyable hiking, biking, and horseback riding through the forest. For thrill-seekers who want to experience extreme adventure, there is rappelling and rock climbing on 200-foot high bluffs. Take a leap from Mount Magazine with your hang glider and soar with the birds over the vast Arkansas River Valley. Mount Magazine is Arkansas's only state park where adventure sports enthusiasts can hang glide, go rock climbing, and rappelling in the same park. Hang gliders can also launch from nearby Mount Nebo State Park.





Rock Climbing

Mount Magazine, Arkansas's 2,753-foot high point is the most dramatic location for technical rock climbing in Arkansas. This flat-topped mountain, with its rugged bluffs, deep canyons, and natural diversity, is the highest peak in Arkansas. Traditional Arkansas bouldering and sport climbing, as well as rappelling, is allowed in a designated area on the mountain's south bluff overlooking the Petit Jean River Valley. This 1,500-foot wide stretch of sandstone boasts more than 100 routes up to 80 feet high, ranging from 5.5 to 5.12c

in difficulty, with plenty in the 5.10 and under range as well as plenty of Arkansas bouldering areas.

Hang Gliding

Arkansas hang gliding enthusiasts have flocked to the highest peak in Arkansas for many years. Rising high above the Petit Jean River Valley and Arkansas River Valley, 2,753-foot Mount Magazine has near-perfect conditions for flight, making it one of the best hang gliding locations in Arkansas. Hang gliding only happens when the Mount Magazine weather is right but this has been one of the most popular hang gliding locations for a long time. So even if you like to keep both feet on the ground you can still enjoy watching the hang gliders take to the skies.



Mountain Biking



For Arkansas mountain biking enthusiasts, the Huckleberry Mountain Trail is a challenging 34-mile trek down the mountain and into the adjacent Ozark National Forest. One of the more challenging Arkansas mountain bike trails, this multi-use trail is also used for horseback riding, ATV riding, and backpacking in Arkansas. The trail's three loops cross creeks and connect Mount Magazine with nearby Huckleberry Mountain. Camping is allowed on the portions of the trail that are located on national forest lands for anyone interesting in multi-day Arkansas mountain biking trips.

Source: <https://www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/mount-magazine-state-park>

Upcoming UAMS Holidays

Thursday, November 11, 2021 Veteran's Day

Thursday, November 25, 2021 Thanksgiving Day

Thursday-Friday, December 23-24, 2021 Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Friday, December 31, 2021 New Year's Eve

Upcoming Immigration Event

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Immigration Attorney Virtual Presentation

12PM - 1PM

Immigration Spotlight

What is H-1B status?

The H-1B visa program is a nonimmigrant visa category that allows U.S. employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations within which the position requires at least a bachelor's degree or the equivalent. The employer must agree to pay the prevailing wage for the position or the actual wage, whichever is higher.

Sponsorship Duration



The initial duration of an H-1B visa is three years, which may be extended one time, for a maximum total of six years. If the person has a labor certification pending for 1 year or an approved Form I-140, the person's H-1B status can be extended beyond the six-year limit on an annual basis, until their permanent residency applications have been adjudicated.

Position Eligibility

Under United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations, a "specialty occupation" is ". . . an occupation that requires theoretical and practical application of a body of specialized knowledge; and attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States."

The position must meet one or more of the following criteria to qualify as a specialty occupation:

- Bachelor's or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum entry requirement for the position;
- The degree requirement for the job is common to the industry or the job is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
- The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position;
- The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that the knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree. H-1B status is an employer-sponsored non-immigrant status for employment in occupations that require specialized knowledge.

Beneficiary Eligibility

In order to qualify in the H-1B visa category, the beneficiary must have earned a bachelor's degree or higher in a specific specialty (e.g., Biology, Mathematics, Public Health, etc.), and meet the qualifications for the position in which they will be hired.

Fees

Required by USCIS, the employer must pay for all required filing fees incurred for H-1B sponsorship.

- I-129 Filing Fee: \$460 – Always applies.
- Fraud Prevention and Detection Fee: \$500 – Only applies if foreign national is new to UAMS or new to the H status.
- Premium Processing Fee: \$2,500 – Optional. Guarantees a 15-business day response from. The response may be an approval, a request for evidence (RFE) or a denial. If an RFE is given, once UAMS provides a response to the RFE, the 15-business day processing clock restarts.



The H-1B Sponsorship Process at UAMS

UAMS Immigration Services works with the hiring department and the foreign national employee to apply for H-1B status. All H-1B processes are initiated by the hiring department using our Immigration Tracker software. We then provide instructions on next steps to the hiring department and employee, which includes providing documents and requesting filing fee checks. H-1B process should be initiated with our office at least 2 months in advance of the start date to ensure no delays in the employee starting work.

If you are interested to know more about the H-1B sponsorship, contact us at Askimmigration@uams.edu or go to: https://hr.uams.edu/talent-management/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2020/09/H-1B-Main-Information-Page_0719_2021-updates.pdf



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