

Subject: Important Update: Nonimmigrant Visa Processing Location Changes

Dear International Community,

We are writing to share a series of important updates from the U.S. Department of State (DOS) that significantly affect nonimmigrant visa processing abroad. These changes may impact how and where you apply for a visa, the processing timeline, and your international travel plans.

◆ **New: Visa Processing Location Policy**

Effective September 6, 2025, all nonimmigrant visa applicants must apply at the **U.S. embassy or consulate in their country of nationality or bona fide residence**.

What this means: U.S. embassies and consulates will no longer routinely accept applications from individuals not residing in the host country. This applies across all visa types, including students, scholars, and work-based visa holders.

📍 **Designated Application Locations**

If you are from a country without routine visa services, you must apply at a **specific designated location**. For a full list of affected posts, please visit [this link](#).

⚠️ **Key Points:**

- **Residence Requirement: Applicants** must be able to demonstrate residence in the country where they are applying, if the place of application is based on their residency.
- Visa fees are **non-transferable** between countries.
- **Wait times** may be significantly longer at certain posts.
- **Existing nonimmigrant visa appointments** will generally not be cancelled.

✖️ **Elimination of Dropbox (Interview Waiver) Program**

Effective September 2, 2025, the DOS has **eliminated most visa "dropbox" (interview waiver) appointments**. For additional information on the elimination of this program, please refer to our [previous communication](#).

🔄 **Recap: Enhanced Vetting for F, M, and J Visa Applicants**

Earlier this year, the Department of State also introduced new procedures for student and exchange visitor visa applicants. For additional information on the new enhance vetting process, please refer to our [previous communication](#).

✅ **Appointment Scheduling Resumed**

What You Should Do

- **Apply at the correct U.S. Embassy/Consulate** based on your country of nationality or residence.
- **Do not assume interview waivers** will be granted — plan for in-person appointments.
- **Prepare for delays** in F, M, and J visa approvals due to enhanced vetting.
- **Monitor official embassy websites** for location-specific guidance.
- **Contact our office** with any questions or if you are impacted by these changes.

Please note: You are **not required to travel solely for the purpose of renewing a visa stamp** in your passport. Individuals may remain in the U.S. with an **expired visa stamp** as long as they are maintaining a **valid nonimmigrant status**. A valid visa stamp is only required **when re-entering the United States** after travel abroad.

We will continue to monitor guidance from the Department of State and will share updates as they become available. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please contact the UAMS Immigration Services team for support.

Warm regards,

UAMS Immigration Team