

**Subject: Update on U.S. Immigrant Visa Processing (No Impact to Nonimmigrant Visas)**

Dear UAMS Community,

The U.S. Department of State has issued a notice titled “**Immigrant Visa Processing Updates for Nationalities at High Risk of Public Benefits Usage.**” This update reflects a change in U.S. visa policy affecting immigrant visa issuance for certain foreign nationals. Please see the official U.S. Department of State notice (link below) for a list of all included countries.

**This announcement does *not* apply to nonimmigrant visas. There is no impact to individuals holding or applying for nonimmigrant visa categories, including H-1B, J-1, F-1, O-1, TN, E-3, or other temporary visa classifications commonly used at UAMS.**

**Key Points of the Announcement:****1. Pause in Immigrant Visa Issuance**

Effective January 21, 2026, the U.S. Department of State will pause the issuance of immigrant visas for nationals of a designated group of countries identified as having a higher likelihood of public benefits usage. During this pause, consular posts will continue to schedule immigrant visa interviews, but no immigrant visas will be issued to applicants from the affected nationalities.

**2. Scope of Impact**

- a. This policy **only applies to *immigrant visas*** (i.e., visas that lead to lawful permanent residence) for citizens of the listed countries applying for immigrant visas at a U.S. Embassy or Consular Office.
- b. The pause does **not** extend to nonimmigrant visas, including employment-based temporary visas such as H-1B, J-1, F-1, O-1, TN, etc.
- c. There is **no change** at this time to the visa status of individuals already in the United States on valid nonimmigrant work authorization. Current international employees at UAMS holding nonimmigrant visas are **not affected** by this announcement.
- d. No existing immigrant visas have been revoked; the pause affects issuance, not previously valid visas.

**What this Means for UAMS:**

- **International faculty, staff, researchers, and trainees working at UAMS on temporary nonimmigrant visas should continue their roles without disruption** as this policy does not change their visa category or employment eligibility.
- Several of these 75 countries are also currently subject to the administration’s previously announced travel restriction and pause on USCIS benefits. However, individuals from countries only subject to this pause on immigrant visa issuance abroad **are still eligible to consular process nonimmigrant visas, and to apply for and receive USCIS benefits,**

**including petitions for immigrant visas and adjustments of status (in-country permanent residence applications), if eligible.**

- Individuals who believe they may be impacted by this visa suspension should consult with their personal immigration attorney or qualified immigration counsel for guidance specific to their circumstances.

**Resources for Further Information:**

- The official U.S. Department of State notice: [\*Immigrant Visa Processing Updates for Nationalities at High Risk of Public Benefits Usage.\*](#)
- [Department of State Directory of Visa Categories](#)

Please contact [AskImmigration@uams.edu](mailto:AskImmigration@uams.edu) if you have questions about how this policy might affect specific individuals or cases at UAMS.