

VISA APPLICATIONS – B-1 (Business Visitor)

Steps to Apply for your Visa:

1. Go online to <http://www.usembassy.gov/>, which is a listing of all the different U.S. Embassies worldwide. Select the city where the Embassy where you will apply is located. You will be directed to the main website for the Embassy. Go to the Consular Section, and review the local procedures for visa applications for B-1 Business Visitor Nonimmigrant visas.
2. The U.S. Consulate website has on it an electronic DS-160 Standard Visa Application Form. You must complete this form online – there no longer is any hard copy application form. The DS-160 form is extremely long. To complete it, you need your passport and full information about your travel plans, destination, funding details, and more. It has both “save” and “time-out” functions, so you should save your data periodically throughout your completion of the form. If your activity in the form stops for 20 minutes, it will terminate your access, and you might lose the data you have submitted to that point if it has not been saved. You also have the option to upload a digital photograph directly to the Department of State using the application interface online. When you hit “Submit” at the end of the DS-160, the information in the form will go directly to the Department of State and will be available to the Consulate where you will apply. Fermilab’s Visa Office has some guidance about the visa application process at http://wdrs.fnal.gov/visas/visa_apps.html. For B-1 Visa Applications, begin reading the guidance at Step #3. (Skip Steps #1 and #2.) Please also note that Step #3 online has suggestions for the data to input into the DS-160, relating to Fermilab contact information.
3. In most countries, the online application system will assign to you the date of your appointment at the Consulate for your interview. In some countries, you might have to call a local number to get the appointment scheduled. In either case, the appointment date should be the earliest appointment date possible - at least 4 to 8 weeks prior to the date you want to actually enter the U.S. If you are worried that the appointment date issued to you is too late to allow for the visa to be issued before your planned travel to the U.S., check the Consulate’s website to see whether there are instructions for getting an expedited appointment. There also might be a number to call to speak to the appointment reservation system (which usually is a private company unrelated to the U.S. Consulate itself). In some Consulates, it is possible to check back each day to see if appointments on earlier dates have become available due to cancellations. If you do not find any way of obtaining an earlier date, please email sazama@fnal.gov.
4. On the date of your interview, arrive at the Consulate with all the necessary paperwork, as listed below. Many other people will be assigned the same date and time. You will not be permitted into the Consulate until your specific appointment time, so there is little point in arriving very early. Do not,

however, arrive late. You must wait outside the Consulate until they admit you, so be prepared for weather, etc.

It often is helpful to bring with you an original and one copy of each document, so that you can show the original to the Consular officer and then give them the copy, thereby eliminating the need for them to make copies themselves.

Please note: U.S. Embassies worldwide have instituted stringent security policies. As a result, the following are prohibited: electronic devices of any kind (including cellular telephones), backpacks, suitcases, attachés or briefcases, strollers, or similar items (for example, many embassies prohibit any more than one baby bottle). Security personnel will not store items for visa applicants and will confiscate all weapons. Accordingly, if you bring to your interview an item that cannot be allowed into the building, you will lose it permanently or be refused admission to the building. If you have concerns about whether a specific item will be allowed into the building, please contact the consulate.

Typical Documents You Must Take to the Consulate for your Interview Appointment

- Your current passport, valid for at least six months longer than the anticipated stay in the U.S., and with at least three free/unmarked pages. If you have held previous passports that expired within the last 5 years, please also take them to the Consulate on the day of the interview, just in case.
- Signed Invitation Letter from the Symposium being hosted by Fermilab.
- Signed Letter from your host institution.
- Evidence of strong ties to the country where you currently reside, to show that when your activities in the U.S. end, you will leave the U.S.:
 - Evidence of ongoing studies or employment at your host institution.
 - Evidence of income, such as earnings statements, if any.
 - Evidence of immediate family (such as parents) in your host country (if applicable).
 - Evidence of ownership of property, if any.
- Your current CV
- Your current publication list
- Other evidence of your credentials, such as copies of degrees or diplomas, if you currently are a student, and if these are accessible.

Again, this list is what *typically* is required by Consulates, but you must check with the specific Consulate where you will apply to confirm if additional documents are needed.

The Interview

When you are called for your interview, you will hand over all of the necessary documents to the consular officer. The officer will ask you questions about your proposed visit to the U.S., and possibly your credentials and current activities at your host institution. Please try to answer the questions using simple terms, and not scientific terms. If you are not sure of what a question means, ask for clarification. The officer must understand what it is you do now and what you will do while in the U.S., and confirm that the activities are not potentially threatening to U.S. national security. If they cannot understand you, or are alarmed by the information you provide, there is an increased risk of *additional* security clearances.

During your interview, you will be fingerprinted. Many applicants for visas also are subjected to certain “administrative processing” – which involves the completion of certain security checks by government agencies outside of the Department of State. There are many reasons that administrative processing might be required. It might be because of internal US government rules, current US international policy, a pattern of answers that you gave, or the nature of your work within the field of particle physics. The determination of whether to require administrative processing is completely unrelated to whether you have had a visa issued previously, and unrelated to whether you have otherwise led a blameless, innocent life.

In the great majority of cases, security clearances are completed within a few days of your interview. In a *very* small percentage of cases, however, the Consulate might need a Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) from the Department of State's (DOS) Visa Office in Washington, D.C. Obtaining the SAO might take 2 to 4 weeks. In rare circumstances, the SAO might be adverse, in which case, further information is required. In this case, obtaining the necessary final security clearance might take several weeks or months. Because the security protocols are based on mathematical variations of your name or other biographic data, or on other objective circumstances, an SAO might be required (and might be adverse) even if your character, criminal record and immigration history are completely problem-free.

If it appears that you will be subjected to additional security clearances, or if issuance of your visa takes an excessive amount of time (i.e. longer than 1 month), please email sazama@fnal.gov. US law prohibits altering the process by which administrative processing is completed (it cannot be speeded up or shortened in any way, by anyone) but we can monitor the process for you and ensure that it progresses efficiently. The Consulate cannot issue the visa until all security clearances are passed.

Visa Issuance

Assuming the security clearances are successful, and you have a successful interview, you will be approved your visa. You then must arrange with the Consulate for the return of your passport with the new visa, as well as your other paperwork.

Admission to the U.S.

Following the issuance of the visa, you may enter the U.S. When you do so, present your passport with the new visa inside it. The immigration officer at the airport might ask a few questions about the Symposium, or about other aspects of your life (such as about your school or your employer). Be concise and precise with your answers. When satisfied, the officer will issue you an "I-94 Arrival Departure Card," which is a small white cardboard card that is stapled into your passport. The officer will handwrite onto the card the visa classification granted to you, and the end date of your "authorized stay" in the U.S. The officer must write "B-1" on the card, and not "B-2". If the officer writes "B-2" point out that this is an error and that you are attending a Symposium, which is a business activity, and politely ask the officer to correct the card. The end date of your authorized stay is the last day you are permitted to remain in the U.S. You must leave the U.S. on or before this end date. This card is the only evidence of your authorized status in the United States, so ensure that it is safe.