

Update on Visas for Medical Professionals

Last Updated: April 8, 2020

Despite the worldwide suspension of routine visa services, U.S. embassies and consulates will continue to provide emergency and mission critical visa services to the extent possible, given resource constraints and local government restrictions. Medical professionals with an approved U.S. non-immigrant or immigrant visa petition (I-129 or I-140 with a current priority date, or similar) or a certificate of eligibility in an approved exchange visitor program (DS-2019), particularly those working to treat or mitigate the effects of COVID-19, should review the website of their nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for procedures to request an emergency visa appointment. Local government restrictions may limit the ability of some embassies/consulates to process emergency visas at this time. Applicants' travel may also be subject to local laws, regulations, and travel restrictions.

For those foreign medical professionals already in the United States:

J-1 Alien Physicians (medical residents) may consult with their program sponsor, ECFMG, to extend their programs in the United States. Generally, a J-1 program for a foreign medical resident can be extended one year at a time for up to seven years.

Note that the expiration date on a U.S. visa does not determine how long one can be in the United States. The way to confirm one's required departure date is here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>.

Those who need to extend their stay or adjust their visa status must apply with USCIS. Their website is here: <https://www.uscis.gov/visit-united-states/extend-your-stay>.