

Maintaining your Nonimmigrant Status

Your nonimmigrant status and visa status are essential to your ability to work in the United States. It is vital that you realize and accept your role and responsibility in maintaining your status. The Office of International Physician and Scientist Services handles visa maintenance issues for approximately 800 individuals – we need your help in ensuring that your training and/or research is uninterrupted.

H-1B Temporary Workers

Your stay in the United States may be valid for an initial period of 1 to 3 years with the possibility of extension for another one to three years. Your H-1B extension will be prepared by the Graduate Medical Education Department. You will be contacted at the appropriate time. Extensions are contingent upon continued reappointment to your position at Cleveland Clinic. Please note that H-1B regulations permit continued employment beyond the expiration date of your H-1B status only if the extension is filed prior to the expiration.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Sponsored by ECFMG

Your J-1 status will expire annually. If you are reappointed to your GME program, you will be contacted by the Immigration Coordinator regarding applying for your J-1 extension through the ECFMG. Please note that if you are changing programs (within Cleveland Clinic), ECFMG may require additional processing time. It is your responsibility to respond to the Immigration Coordinator quickly and present the items required for your extension.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Sponsored by Cleveland Clinic for Research In the Lerner Research Institute:

Your initial Form DS2019 will be issued for a period of three years with a possible extension to a maximum of five years.

J-1 Exchange Visitor Sponsored by Cleveland Clinic for Research in a clinical department: Your initial Form DS2019 will be issued for a period of one year with a possible extension to a maximum of five years.

Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Holders

You are responsible for filing the application for renewal of your employment authorization document (card) in a timely manner. If your EAD expires and you still have not received the new card, you will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until the new card is issued. Receipts for filing the extension application are NOT acceptable for employment eligibility purposes.

Nonimmigrant Status & Visa: What is the difference?

A **Visa** is the document placed in your passport by the U.S. Consular Officer. This document permits you to **enter** the United States. It may be valid for 6 months or a year or longer. You may be able to use it to enter the U.S. many times or just one time. If your visa expires while you are in the United States, it does not mean that you are out of status or in the U.S. illegally. Canadian citizens are not required to have a visa in their passport before entering the U.S.

Nonimmigrant status is granted when you arrive in the United States. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the point of entry (airport or border) will record your nonimmigrant status, H-1B, J-1 or for dependents H-4 or J-2 and the expiration date in the CBP database.

Therefore, your Visa allows you to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (airport or border) and present yourself to a U.S. Customs Officer, who then grants your nonimmigrant status. Your nonimmigrant status allows you to remain in the U.S. Therefore, it is a Visa, which gets you to the point of entry in the U.S. and the Nonimmigrant Status, which allows you to remain in the U.S.