

Embassy Bern Resumes Limited Visa Services

Starting July 15, 2020, Embassy Bern will resume processing of limited categories of non-immigrant visa applications. At this time, we are prioritizing services for citizens and residents of Switzerland.

National Interest Exceptions

The following categories of travelers may now qualify for national interest exceptions (NIEs) under Presidential Proclamation 9993, which has suspended routine travel from the Schengen Area to the United States:

- **Public Health:** Travel as a public health or healthcare professional or researcher to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, or to continue ongoing research in an area with substantial public health benefit (e.g. cancer or disease research).
- **Students:** All students, and their dependents, traveling to the United States on an F or M visa to pursue a full course of study or on a J visa to participate in an exchange program as a bona fide student.
- **Academics:** All exchange visitors and their dependents traveling to the United States on J visas in the following categories: Professors, Research Scholars, Short Term Scholars, or Specialists.
- **Investors:** Travel in connection with investment or trade in the U.S. economy that generates a substantial economic impact, including investors and treaty-traders on E visas and the senior-level employees who provide strategic direction or expertise essential to the success of the investment, and their dependents.
- **Economic:** Temporary travel that provides a substantial economic benefit to the U.S. economy, including:
 - **Technical experts and specialists** to install, service, maintain, or receive training for vessels, machinery and other specialized equipment used by U.S. and foreign firms with a substantial investment in the United States. Travel is temporary in nature and for a defined period of time.
 - **Senior-level managers and executives**, and their dependents, who provide strategic direction necessary for the success of the company or venture.
 - **Professional athletes, dependents, and essential staff** who enter the United States to participate in major sporting events, which bolster the

Application Process

Travelers who believe they fall under one of the exception categories above should apply for their visas as normal. Please [click here](#) to begin your application process. Applicants who already have a pending visa interview appointment but desire an earlier interview should request an expedited appointment. A final determination regarding each applicant's qualifications for a visa and for the NIE will be made by a consular officer at the time of the interview. Some conditions apply to travel, which will be explained at the interview.

Other Exceptions

Embassy Bern will continue to process official and diplomatic visas pursuant to usual processes. In addition to the NIE categories listed above, Presidential Proclamation 9993 also provides a list of enumerated exceptions, which includes air and sea crew members and spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. If you believe that you qualify for an exception, please make an appointment. For additional questions, please contact the consular section at BernNIV@state.gov.