



Immigrant Visa Process for Parents of US Citizens

STEPS and TIMELINE:

1. The US citizen files an I-130 immediate relative petition for each parent at the appropriate “US Citizenship and Immigration Services” office in the US. As of May 2012, it is taking about 5 months for this petition to be approved.
2. Once the I-130 petitions are approved, US Citizenship and Immigration Services will send the approved petitions to the US Department of State’s National Visa Center. The National Visa Center will send the US citizen a bill for immigrant visa fees and affidavit of support fees. Once the fees have been paid, the Nat’l Visa Center will release a list of forms and documents that must be returned to them.
3. Once these items are returned to the Nat’l Visa Center, the Nat’l Visa Center will review all documents to determine if the file is complete and ready for interview scheduling. If so, then the Nat’l Visa Center will schedule an interview for the parents at the appropriate US Embassy. The US Citizen is not required to attend this interview. (The timing of the interview varies for each client, depending upon the backlog at that particular Embassy.)
4. The Nat’l Visa Center forwards the file to the Embassy for parents’ visa interview. At that time, parents will receive instructions on completing immigration medical exams in their country and on any other documentation that is specific to the US Embassy where parents will be interviewed. (Budget approximately \$250 for each medical exam.)
5. You should expect that it will take at least 3-5 months (sometimes longer) for the approved I-130 petition to make its way from USCIS to the Nat’l Visa Center and then to the US Embassy (steps 2-4 above).
6. If everything goes well at the interview, the Embassy will issue immigrant visas to parents, usually within a week after the interview. Parents will have up to 6 months after the visas are issued to enter the United States.
7. On the day parents enter the U.S. with immigrant visas, they become “Lawful Permanent Residents.” Parents will receive Permanent Resident cards (a.k.a green cards) in the mail within a month or so after their arrival. Since parents will now be Lawful Permanent Residents, they can accept employment immediately & can travel abroad right away. [Note that a Permanent Resident can abandon their residency if they stay out of the US for a long period of time. It is important to consult with an immigration attorney if your parent wishes to take a long trip or live a significant part of the year in his or her home country.]

If all goes well, we estimate approximately 10 months from the time the US Citizen files I-130 petitions until parents are granted immigrant visas.

This process is only for parents who are not living or present in the US. If your parent is in the US, the process may be different.