

Embassy Kinshasa Tourist/Business (B1/B2) Visa FAQ

What types of travel can a B1/B2 visa be used for?

- B1/B2 visas are valid for a broad range of travel. The most common types of travel for B1/B2 visa holders are: tourism, visiting family, business meetings, and attending conferences. For more information about what types of travel qualify for a B1/B2, visit travel.state.gov

What are the legal requirements to obtain a B1/B2 visa?

- In order to obtain a B1/B2 visa, you must convince the consular officer that you have a residence outside of the United States which you do not plan to abandon, that your stay in the United States will be temporary, and that your trip will be for the sole purpose of engaging in legitimate activities relating to business or pleasure. Furthermore, you must not be subject to any other legal ineligibilities, as determined by the consular officer.

What is the process to apply for a B1/B2 visa?

- Visit the following website and follow the instructions there: <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-cd/niv>

How long does the application process take?

- The time it will take for the Consular Section to process your visa application can vary depending on:
 - the completeness of your visa application
 - the amount of verification your visa application requires can affect the amount of time it take to process your application
 - Consular Section may find that you need to provide further information before a decision can be made on your application

If you wish to view the estimate on how long you will have to wait to get an interview appointment, please visit the U.S Department of State online tool at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/wait-times.html>. This online tool will also tell you how long it will take for your visa to be processed at the Consular Section, after a decision is made by a Consular Officer to issue the Visa. Please note that the processing time does not include any time required for administrative processing.

How long am I allowed to stay in the United States with a B1/B2 visa?

- Applicants should be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry into the United States. Legally, the visa specifies the period during which the bearer may apply at the port-of-entry to enter the United States. The period of time you are permitted to remain in the United States is determined by the US Department of Homeland Security upon your arrival. However, staying longer than you indicated during your visa interview may affect your ability to qualify for visas in the future.

What is the difference between 1 or 3 months visa validity in your passport and the length of stay in the U.S.?

- Legally, the 1 or 3 months B1/B2 visa validity specifies the period during which the bearer may apply at the port-of-entry to enter the United States. **This is not your length of stay in the U.S.** The period of time you are permitted to remain in the United States is determined by the US Department of Homeland Security upon your arrival. Please know that the expiration date of your visa will be either three months or one month (at your choice) after the visa is printed. If you attempt to travel after your visa has expired, you will be denied entry by an immigration officer at the port-of-entry.

Can I travel to the United States in order to give birth there?

- It is legal to travel to the United States to give birth as long as the primary purpose of travel is not solely so that the child can acquire American citizenship at birth. You must convince the consular officer that no suitable, specialized healthcare is available in your country and that you have already arranged for specialized medical care. You should tell the consular officer during your visa interview that this is your intent and demonstrate that you can pay all of the costs for your and your child's medical care in the United States.

What if my visa expires while I am in the United States?

- Your visa must only be valid when you request entry to the United States at a Port of Entry. The US Department of Homeland Security will determine the length of time you may legally remain in the United States.

Can I have someone help me fill out the application?

- Yes. However, in the DRC there are many cyber café employees and other individuals who purport to be able to help people get visas. We highly encourage all applicants to do as much of the application process as possible themselves, and to carefully maintain control of all documents and information given to anyone helping prepare an application. Cyber cafes often make mistakes or provide bad advice that negatively affects visa applications.

Who can accompany me to the visa interview?

- In general, only Visa applicants with scheduled appointments are allowed to enter the Consular Section. Parents or legal guardians are allowed to accompany minor children. For special instructions concerning translators or caregivers, please contact KinshasaNIV@state.gov.

Why do US visas for Congolese citizens have such short validity? Can I get a visa that is valid for more than three months?

- The US Department of State follows a strict policy of reciprocity with regard to the validity of and fees charged for visas. This is true for all countries around the world. The cost and validity of a U.S. visa for DRC citizens matches what the DRC government provides to U.S. citizens.

How much does a visa cost for Congolese citizens?

- Before your interview, pay the visa application fee of \$160 at EcoBank, per the instructions on the application website. The \$160 application fee is nonrefundable. Effective March 2, 2020 DRC citizens will not pay reciprocity fees at any U.S. Consulate for most types of non-immigrant visas. Applicants will continue to pay the appropriate MRV fee for their visa type.

What documents should I bring to the interview?

- Generally, the only documents needed for a B1/B2 visa interview are your current passport and your DS-160 interview appointment confirmation page. It is often helpful to bring expired passports which show your prior travel history. Furthermore, if you are attending meetings or a conference, a document confirming your registration may also be helpful. It is not necessary to bring civil documents, such as your birth certificate, marriage certificate, or police certificate.

Do I need to have any documents translated into English?

- It is not necessary to have documents translated if they are written in French. For any other language, please have them translated.

The consular officer told me that I am not qualified for the visa – what does that mean?

- Most often, B1/B2 visa applications are refused under Section 214(b) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act. This law requires consular officers to assume that all non-immigrant visa applicants are intending immigrants, until convinced otherwise by the applicant during the interview.

Why did the consular officer refuse my visa without even looking at my documents?

- The consular officer examines your application and passport when you are called to the window for an interview. That information, along with the information obtained during the interview, is usually sufficient for a decision to be made. If an officer believes that a document (such as a letter from your employer or inviter) will be informative, he or she will request it. It is important to note that documents presented are only one of many factors consular officers consider when determining an applicant's eligibility for a non-immigrant visa. It is known that many documents in "visa packages" are either fraudulent or exist for the purpose of the visa interview alone, and thus are dubious in their authenticity.

If my visa application was refused, can I apply again?

- You may apply as many times as you wish. However, applying again does not mean that a different decision will be reached. It is not recommended to apply repeatedly unless your personal circumstances or purpose of travel have changed significantly.

My visa application was refused. Is there an appeal process?

- No, the decisions of consular officers are final and cannot be appealed. You may apply again if you think the decision was made in error. However, applying again does not guarantee a different decision.

I don't speak French or English; can I do my interview in another language?

- It is best if you are able to speak French or English during your interview. We have a limited ability to support interviews in Lingala, Swahili, Tshiluba, and Kikongo but cannot guarantee that this will always be possible.

I need to travel urgently, how soon can I get an appointment?

- It is possible to request an expedited appointment. However, we only approve such requests in extremely urgent circumstances. The best way to ensure that you receive your visa in time is to plan ahead and allow plenty of time for the process. If you are granted an expedited appointment, please be aware that visa processing can take some time. We cannot guarantee that your visa will be ready immediately. In order to request an expedited appointment, log in to your application and follow these steps: Select the "Request Expedite" link on the "Application Summary Page" and follow the instructions.

What are the requirements for the photo I have to submit with my application?

- Your photo must have been taken within the past six months. The photo should measure 50mm x 50mm and have a white background. Furthermore, you cannot wear glasses in the photo. Failure to present a photo that meets these requirements will delay the processing of your application.

I live in the United States and want my relatives to visit. How can I help them get a visa?

- The best way to help your relatives is to ensure that they are well prepared for their interview and can accurately explain the details of their proposed travel. However, all visa adjudications are based on the information the applicant presents during their interview with a consular officer and their own personal circumstances.

I am planning to travel with relatives or business partners, can we apply as a group?

- Yes, it is preferable that you apply and interview at the same time with all members of your family or group.

I missed my interview appointment. Is it possible to reschedule?

- Please try to ensure that you are on time for your scheduled interview. If it is not possible to come as scheduled, you can request a new appointment by following these steps: log in to the visa application system, go to the "My Account" home page, select "Missed My Appointment" link and follow the instructions.

Can I send someone else to pick up my visa after the interview?

- Yes, you can send a representative to collect your visa. Ask the consular officer at the end of the interview, and they will provide you with a form which gives a third party permission to collect the visa. Your representative must bring that form, along with your appointment confirmation page when they come to collect the visa.

I applied for visas with my family. Do we all need to come back to pick them up, or can just one of us come?

- One person may collect the visas for the entire family, so long as they have the confirmation pages for everyone.

What documents do I need to bring in order to pick up my visa?

- Only the confirmation page, which you brought to the interview, is necessary.