



## THE STRAIGHT FACTS ON U.S. VISAS IN INDIA

**Myth: The U.S. government does not care about Indian travelers and does not understand how important these travelers are to the U.S. economy.**

**Fact:** The U.S. government welcomes Indian travelers and continues to improve the process of applying for a visa. We endeavor to protect the U.S. border while facilitating the travel of legitimate visitors. Increased travel strengthens our people-to-people ties and enhances both our economies. India-wide, the four consulates (Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata) and the embassy in New Delhi issued more than 708,700 nonimmigrant visas in FY 2014, up 18.4 percent over the previous year.

U.S. embassies and consulates have established procedures to expedite interview appointments for business travelers. U.S. officials work closely with business groups in more than 100 countries, including India, to streamline the visa process for business travelers. The Department's Business Visa Center can explain visa application procedures to U.S. companies, organizations, and

convention and sporting event organizers who invite employees, current and prospective business clients, partners, or athletic teams to the United States. U.S. businesses and organizations may contact [businessvisa@state.gov](mailto:businessvisa@state.gov), or call 202-485-7675 for more information.

**Myth: It is hard for H1 and L1 applicants to get visas in India.**

**Fact:** India is by far the single largest beneficiary of H1B and L1 visas. The U.S. embassy and consulates in India issued over 101,800 H1B visas in FY 2014, a nine percent increase from the previous fiscal year. Indian citizens also receive more L1 visas than nationals of any other country. Mission India issued more than 17,200 L1 visas in FY 2014, representing 29.6 percent of the worldwide total. To streamline the processing of blanket L1 visas and ensure consistent outcomes, the consulate in Chennai processes all blanket L1 cases for India.

**Myth: Business people often miss appointments and meetings in the United States because they cannot get interviews on time.**

**Fact:** The average wait time for scheduling a visa interview is consistently less than one week, and in some cases only a couple of days. Mission India strives to keep visa appointment wait times very short. During the busiest season of May and June, wait times may increase an additional week or two. Even during the busy season, applicants with urgent business or family travel can request for expedited interview appointments to receive two-day service.

More details can be found on <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/index.html> for nonimmigrant visa applications. This portal has instructions and links to all required steps for nonimmigrant visas. There is information on group appointments and other special services geared for business travelers. For callers in India, call +91 120 4844644 or +91 40 46258222. For inquiries from the United States, call 1-703-520-2239.



**Myth: It is now harder than ever for Indian students to come and study in U.S. universities.**

**Fact:** We welcome all legitimate students to the United States. India has the second highest number of students studying in higher-education institutions in the United States. Indian students make up nearly 12 percent of all international students in U.S. higher education. Consular officers are trained to handle each visa application as an individual case and to issue visas to all applicants who qualify.

**Myth: An applicant needs to know someone in the embassy or consulate to get a visa.**

**Fact:** An applicant's qualifications – as presented in the visa application and at the visa interview – and U.S. law are the only bases on which we make visa decisions. U.S. law prohibits embassy and consulate officials from providing unofficial assistance to visa applicants. Knowing someone in the embassy or consulates will not help you get a visa.

**Myth: The embassy or consulate will only give visas to rich people.**

**Fact:** Consular officers are trained to look at all of the facts presented during a visa interview, not just an individual's financial status, when determining eligibility. While conducting visa interviews, consular officers look at each application individually and consider the applicant's circumstances, travel plans, financial resources, and ties

outside of the United States that will ensure the applicant's departure after a temporary visit.

**Myth: The applicant was refused because the consular officer did not properly look at the applicant's documents and the interview was too short.**

**Fact:** Document review and interview length are less important than the information shared by applicants with consular officers. Officers rely more on the application form and their interviews with applicants than on the documents. Officers aim to conduct efficient interviews, directly focusing on the pertinent issues. Generally, longer interviews are conducted only when necessary. Quicker interviews also allow consular sections to receive more interviewees in a timely manner.

