

Which Path to the U.S. is Right for Me?

Common Immigration Routes for Founders, Investors, and Employees

Category	Immigration Route	Eligibility	Steps	Benefits
INVESTORS	TEMPORARY E-2 VISA	If you are from a country that has a treaty with the US, you can invest approximately \$100-200k to develop and direct a US company.	Apply for visa at the U.S. consulate in your home country. If you are in the U.S. and don't plan to travel you can also do a change of status domestically.	Permitted to stay 2 years at a time. Can be renewed indefinitely. Your spouse can get a work permit.
	PERMANENT EB-5 GREEN CARD	Invest \$1M in a US company and hire 10 workers; or locate company in a poor/rural area and only invest \$500k. Regional centers available for passive investors.	Initial petition with USCIS (17 mos.), spend 2 years in US as a conditional lawful permanent resident, apply to remove conditions (17 mos.), become full-fledged lawful permanent resident.	Green card for permanent residence for spouse and dependent children. Can live in US indefinitely. Eligible to become citizen after 5 years.
MULTINATIONAL MANAGER/EXECUTIVE	TEMPORARY L-1A VISA	Managers and executives who have worked 1 out of the last 3 years can come to the US to work in a new or established parent, subsidiary or affiliate company.	File petition with USCIS, takes 1 month but premium processing (15 days) available. Change of status if in US or apply for visa at consulate.	Initially approved 1 year for new company or 3 years for established company. Can extend up to 7 years. Your spouse can get a work permit.
	PERMANENT EB-1C GREEN CARD	Managers and executives who have worked 1 out of the last 3 years can come to the US to work in a new or established parent, subsidiary or affiliate company if company has done business in US for more than 1 year.	File petition with USCIS (no premium processing); can concurrently apply to adjust status if in US if visa number available or subsequently apply for immigrant visa at consulate.	Green card for permanent residence for spouse and dependent children. Can live in US indefinitely. Eligible to become citizen after 5 years.
EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY	TEMPORARY O-1A VISA	Individuals of extraordinary ability - win a major international award or meet at least 3 of 10 criteria related to sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics.	File petition with USCIS, premium processing (15 days) available. Change of status if in US or apply for visa at consulate.	Can renew indefinitely. Note: must be sponsored by employer. Spouse cannot obtain work permit.
	PERMANENT EB-1A GREEN CARD	Individuals of extraordinary ability - win a major international award or meet at least 3 of 10 criteria related to sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics.	File petition with USCIS; premium processing (15 days) available. Adjust status if in US or apply for immigrant visa at consulate.	Can self-sponsor (don't need employer sponsor). Green card for permanent residence for spouse and dependent children. Can live in US indefinitely. Eligible to become citizen after 5 years.
TALENT	TEMPORARY H-1B VISA	For an employee of a US company working in a specialty occupation (Bachelors or equivalent) related to field of study.	April 1: Employer files petition in lottery; October 1: Employee's start date.	Valid up to 3 years with possible 3 year extension; dual intent to pursue green card ok; further 1-year extensions are possible if green card process is pending.
	TEMPORARY J-1 VISA	Trainees must have a college degree and 1 year work experience. Interns are studying or graduated within one year.	Host company can obtain sponsoring organization to implement program. After documents are obtained, individual can apply for visa at consulate.	Training program lasts up to 18 months; internship lasts up to 12 months. Can be paid by company.
	PERMANENT EB-2/EB-3 GREEN CARD	The employment-based second preference is for individuals with advanced degrees or exceptional ability. The employment-based third preference is for other professionals and workers.	PERM labor certification to test labor market to find qualified US workers; employer files petition; employee files for adjustment of status or immigrant visa interview at consulate.	Green card for permanent residence for spouse and dependent children. Can live in US indefinitely. Eligible to become citizen after 5 years.
	PERMANENT EB-2 NIW GREEN CARD	If you are exceptional or have an advanced degree and you work in an area of area of substantial intrinsic merit, with national impact, and that skipping PERM would be in the national interest.	Can self-file petition with national interest waiver. Can concurrently apply to adjust status if in US if visa number available or subsequently apply for immigrant visa at consulate.	Green card for permanent residence for spouse and dependent children. Can live in US indefinitely. Eligible to become citizen after 5 years.

USE THIS SNAPSHOT TO GET AN OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE OPTIONS FOR RELOCATING TO THE US. CONSULT AN EXPERIENCED IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY TO DETERMINE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR SITUATION.

