

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2025-146 | August 7, 2025

United States – Department of State Visa Bonds and Interview Waiver Update

On August 5, 2025, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) issued a Temporary Final Rule introducing a 12-month visa bond pilot program¹. Effective August 20, 2025, nationals from countries identified as having high visa over-stay rates, insufficient screening procedures, and offering citizenship-by-investment programs may be required to post a visa bond. The bond amounts can be \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000 depending on individual circumstances, and will serve as a prerequisite for B1/B2 visa issuance.

As of this publication, the DOS website has identified two countries that will be subject to visa bonds: Zambia and Malawi². Visa applicants will not be able to apply for a waiver of the bond requirement. However, consular officers may recommend a waiver if they determine that there is an urgent humanitarian need for an individual to secure a B1/B2 visa.

Similarly to the Visa Integrity Fee (see [GMS Flash Alert 2025-139](#)), according to the DOS, the goal of this policy is to promote visa compliance. The program is set to conclude on August 5, 2026.

On July 25, 2025, the DOS announced that it would begin restricting eligibility for visa interview waivers as of September 2, 2025.³ It also highlighted that there would no longer be a blanket waiver of the visa interview for children under 14 and adults over 79, unless they meet certain conditions.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Foreign nationals planning to travel to the United States should remain cognizant of the increasing costs and additional steps recently imposed associated with U.S. travel and the conditions required to renew a visa. Visa compliance has been an ongoing concern, with heightened emphasis placed on fostering adherence to immigration laws and requirements.

Visa Bond Background

The Visa Bond pilot program was initially introduced in 2020, but was not implemented due to the reduction in travel resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, the U.S. government has introduced several

initiatives targeting visa compliance aimed to hold foreign governments accountable for their own screening practices. The Visa Bond program follows the Visa Integrity Fee of \$250 introduced in the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA) for nonimmigrant visa applications. The Visa Bond pilot program imposes a significant burden to a B1/B2 visa applicant, given that it can reach up to \$15,000 based on the consular officer's determination. Affected applicants must also submit Form I-352 agreeing to the terms of the bond and post payment through the U.S. Department of the Treasury's website.

Designated Ports of Entry for Visa Bond Participants

Countries that are subject to the visa-bond requirements must enter and depart the U.S. through one of the following designated international airports:

- Boston Logan International Airport (BOS);
- John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) in New York;
- Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD).

Bond Cancellation and Breach

According to the DOS announcement⁴, the bond money will be returned to the applicant once the visa holder:

- departs the U.S. on or before the date he or she is authorized to remain in the U.S.; or
- does not travel to the U.S.; or
- is denied admission at the U.S. port of entry.

If the visa holder violates the conditions of his or her visa or applies to adjust status (including asylum claims), the bond deposit will be considered forfeited. While the detailed process for the return of the bond remains uncertain, the DOS has indicated that the applicant will receive the full bond amount along with a "Notice – Immigration Bond Cancelled" (Form I-391) once the conditions of the bond agreement have been fulfilled, based on the information reported through the Arrival and Departure Information System (ADIS).

Alternatively, an applicant may pursue a manual cancellation of the bond by requesting an appointment with a consular officer at a U.S. consulate abroad within 30 days of his/her departure. The consular officer will approve the appointment if he or she determines that the applicant's departure was not recorded in ADIS.

Update to Department of State's Waiver of Non-Immigrant Visa Interviews

The Department of State announced that as of September 2, 2025, there will be a change to those foreign nationals eligible for a waiver of their non-immigrant visa interview.⁵ All foreign nationals, even those under 14 and over 79 years old, will require a visa interview with a consular officer, except for those that fall under the following categories:

- Applicants classifiable under the visa symbols A-1, A-2, C-3 (except attendants, servants, or personal employees of accredited officials), G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, NATO-1 through NATO-6, or TECRO E-1;
- Applicants for diplomatic- or official-type visas; and
- Applicants renewing full validity B-1, B-2, B1/B2 visa, or a Border Crossing Card/Foil (for Mexican nationals) within 12 months of the prior visa's expiration, and who were at least 18 years old at the time of the prior visa's issuance – specifically, these applicants must:
 - apply in their country of nationality or residence;

- have never been refused a visa (unless such renewal was overcome or waived); and
- have no apparent or potential ineligibility.

Nota Bene: Consular officers maintain the discretion to require in-person interviews on a case-by-case basis for any reason.

KPMG LAW LLP INSIGHTS

The new bonds and the tightening of visa interview waiver eligibility align with the current administration's broader goal of enhancing border security and discouraging non-compliance with terms of authorized stay in the United States.

Individuals – and the employers for which they are taking international travel into the U.S. – who may be concerned with the added difficulties in traveling to the U.S. due to the new bond requirements and/or restrictive interview waiver requirements, are encouraged to connect with an attorney to discuss further.

FOOTNOTES:

1 See *Federal Register* (online), "[Visas: Visa Bond Pilot Program](#)," a Rule by the State Department on 08/05/2025.

2 See DOS, "[Countries Subject to Visa Bonds](#)," (Last Updated: August 5, 2025).

3 See DOS, "[Interview Waiver Update July 25, 2025](#)."

4 See DOS, "[Countries Subject to Visa Bonds](#)," (Last updated on August 5, 2025).

5 See DOS, "[Interview Waiver Update July 25, 2025](#)."

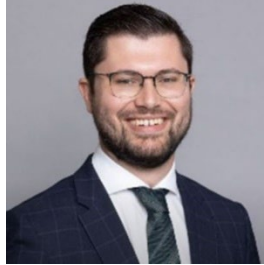
* * * *

Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Canada:



Laura Wong
Manager, U.S. Immigration
KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada
Tel. +1 416-468-7166
Laurawong1@kpmg.ca



Alexander Tolic
Manager, U.S. Immigration
KPMG Law LLP – Tax + Immigration,
Canada
Tel: +1 416-468-7553
atolic@kpmg.ca

** Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Canada.

© 2025 KPMG LLP, an Ontario limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved.

www.kpmg.com

Some or all of the services described herein may not be permissible for KPMG audit clients and their affiliates or related entities.

Learn about us:



kpmg.com

© 2025 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. USCS001250-2F

The KPMG name and logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KPMG International. The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organization.

KPMG LLP is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 147 countries and territories and has more than 219,000 people working in member firms around the world.

Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

GMS Flash Alert is a publication of the KPMG LLP Washington National Tax practice.

KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee and does not provide services to clients. No member firm has any authority to obligate or bind KPMG International or any other member firm vis-à-vis third parties, nor does KPMG International have any such authority to obligate or bind any member firm. The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation.