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Inviting Relatives and Friends: B-2 Tourist Visa

Many students wish to invite friends and family for a short visit to the United States. The B-2 visitor visa is a good choice for visits of 6 months or fewer in duration or for family members who do not qualify for an F-2 or J-2 dependent visa (such as parents, siblings, cousins, etc.). The most important part of the B-2 visa application at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad will be the applicant's demonstration of ties to the home country (List B below), the short duration of the trip, planned return to the home country, and ability to cover expenses. However, as a student, you can provide supporting documents for the B-2 visa application (List A below). This is not a comprehensive list of all documents required for the B-2 visa. Comprehensive information can be found on the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate where the visa application will be made.

A. To invite your relatives (any family members other than your spouse and children) and friends to the U.S., you may send the following to the person(s) invited:

1. A letter of invitation written by YOU in English, stating that you would like to invite the person for a visit. The letter should include:
 - a. name and relationship to you of the visitor(s)
 - b. the length of the visit
 - c. who will provide financial support for the visit (if you, provide evidence of support – see below)
 - d. the purpose of the visit, e.g., to attend graduation
2. If the visit is to attend your graduation ceremony, you can print out your expected graduation date from the verification section of Student Information Online: <https://s3.as.cmu.edu/sio/index.html>.
3. Evidence of your student or scholar status such as a copy of your I-20/DS-2019 and/or a verification of enrollment from the HUB: <https://s3.as.cmu.edu/sio/index.html>.
4. If you will support the person's visit financially, you should provide evidence of financial support (a bank statement, your assistantship letter, your sponsor's letter, etc.).

B. Your family members or friends should also bring “proof of ties” to home country with them when they apply for the visa stamp at the U.S. consulate, such as:

- copies of deeds to any property (land, house, apartment) they own in their home country
- bank statements of any accounts they maintain at home
- if they are employed, they could bring a letter from the employer stating they will return to the job after the U.S. visit
- all other documentation as specifically required by the Embassy or Consulate (check website for the necessary documentation: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>)

Additional information about the B-2 Visa:

- Visitors in B-2 status may have a difficult time changing status in the U.S. to a different visa category. B-2 visitors are advised NOT to enroll in classes at a U.S. university or college.
- B-2 visitors may apply for an extension of stay with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services by filing an I-539 and demonstrating finances and purpose of the extension. The Form I-539 form, instructions and fees can be found at www.uscis.gov.
- Note: The length of the visa does not equate to the length of stay. When visitors enter the U.S., their documents will be inspected by a U.S. border official. The officer will determine the amount of time the visitor will be permitted to remain in the U.S. and write that date on the I-94 Arrival/Departure record. The maximum period of admission for a regular B-2 visitor is 6 months.

For detailed information about the B-2 nonimmigrant visa, go to: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit.html>

If your friend is a citizen of a country in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), check the State Department's website (Note: a visa waiver visitor may NOT change status from within the U.S. under any circumstances):

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

For students and scholars who wish to invite spouse/children, check the OIE web page:

<https://www.cmu.edu/oiie/families/visa.html>