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H-1 visa stamping experience in Toronto

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Submitted by Chief Editor on Dec 10th 2012

Name:

Team member

Country:

United States

Here is a recent visa stamping experience narrated by one of our team members.

I went for an H-1B visa stamping at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, Canada, in November 2012. This was my first H-1B visa stamping. I wanted to share my experience with you and hope that it will be helpful in providing some insight into the entire process.

Scheduling the Interview

The official website for Toronto Consulate is <http://toronto.usconsulate.gov/> ^[2]. All the basic information about various visa types is available at this website. After going through the relevant information, I scheduled my visa interview by making an appointment online at <http://usvisa-info.com/> ^[3]. This link enables you to make an online payment, submit the applicable DS-160 Form, and electronically attach your photograph. Once you submit the application, the website will direct you to print a confirmation page that you are required to carry with you at the time of interview. The website also asks you to indicate the location where you want to pick up your passport.

Obtaining Canadian Visa and Crossing the Border by Car

Unless you are visa-exempt, a visitor's visa to Canada is required to secure entry to Canada. A Canadian visa can be obtained by electronically filing the applicable forms and mailing your passport and supporting documents to the respective Canadian Consulate in your jurisdiction. Generally, an in-person interview is not required and, if approved, the Canadian Consulate will mail you the passport with a visa stamp. More information can be found at <http://www.cic.gc.ca> ^[4]. A valid I-94 or other evidence of lawful status in the U.S. is one of the requirements for obtaining a tourist visa to Canada. I had already obtained the visa. I drove to the Buffalo/Niagara border and easily secured an entry into Canada. The officer simply looked at my passport and put an entry stamp on my passport.

Please note that while driving into Canada, you will not face any U.S. immigration authorities, and you should never surrender your I-94 in case you are questioned by immigration. The reason is that, upon your return to the U.S., immigration will ask you for your original I-94 before giving you entry. Canadian immigration authorities may or may not check your baggage and car to ensure that you are not carrying any food products or prohibited items. I

crossed around 3:00 a.m., and there was no traffic at the port of entry. I was able to cross the border in less than ten minutes.

Entering the Consulate

My appointment time was 9:45 a.m. Consulate had instructed me previously, while submitting the application, to arrive no more than 20 minutes early. Therefore, I reached there between 9:25 to 9:30 a.m. There was a long waiting line in front of me. There was a person in charge checking the appointment page and passports for all the applicants standing in the line. He asked me to step out of the line and join the line again at 10:00 a.m. because of the waiting times. Therefore, there is no point in arriving earlier for the interview. Just arrive 20 minutes before as directed by the Consulate. In addition, if you are interviewing in the winter, please make sure to dress up warmly, because it gets pretty cold in Canada in the winter, and you might have to stand in line for several minutes, if not hours.

Once your turn comes and you reach near the window, they will again check your confirmation page and passport. Then you enter the consulate, and they will scan you and your carry-ons for security clearance. Once you have passed through security clearance, you will be directed to a desk, where the person in charge will again check your paperwork and direct you to the main hall where interviews are being conducted. Once you enter that room, you straightaway get into a line to reach one of the windows, where the person in charge will collect your appointment confirmation, passport, and related visa petition (I-797 in case of H-1B). They will give you a slip assigning you a number.

Fingerprinting

Once you have received the slip assigning your number, you will sit in the waiting area with digital screens placed in front directing the candidates to appear at specific window for fingerprints. When my number came up, I went for the fingerprints. The person in charge informed me that there was some problem with my photograph, and I needed to retake the photograph. There is a photo booth in the same hall that you can use to get new photos. Make sure you carry Canadian \$10 or lower bills or coins, as the machine does not accept higher bills. I provided my new photograph, and they took my 10-finger scan.

The Interview Process

After fingerprinting, I again went back to the seating area and waited for my number to appear on the screen. When my number appeared, I went to the specified window and greeted the officer. The interviewer asked me questions related to my field of study, the nature of my employment, and information about my employer. The officers were very polite and gave me time to look for and provide them with the requested documents. Within two or three minutes, the interviewing officer asked me to collect my passport from the pick-up location. It was a great relief.

My advice is to be confident and polite with the officer. Just let him do his job and answer only the questions he is asking. Mostly, people were dressed up in formal attire. It is not a requirement, but, in my opinion, it definitely is more presentable to dress up formally. The interview was quick, but I would say that the entire process lasted for about two to three hours.

Collecting Passport and Re-entering the U.S.

I interviewed on Monday, and was able to collect my passport at the designated location only on Thursday. They will send you an email containing the tracking information once your passport is ready to be picked up. You will need to carry a photo ID to pick up your passport. After picking up my passport, I again drove back to the Niagara border. There was a large waiting line during the daytime. When my turn came, I presented them with passport containing my visa, original I-94, and H-1B petition (a copy is fine). The officer asked me a simple question on what was the purpose of my visit. My answer was that I will be working on H-1B and gave my employer's name, city, and state. I was given an entry without any

problem.

Nonimmigrant Visas:

General Nonimmigrant Visa [5]

H Visa [6]

Source URL (retrieved on 20 Sep 2020 - 14:56): <https://immigration.com/community-stories/general-nonimmigrant-visa/h-1-visa-stamping-experience-toronto>

Links:

[1] <https://immigration.com/community-stories/general-nonimmigrant-visa/h-1-visa-stamping-experience-toronto>

[2] <http://toronto.usconsulate.gov/>

[3] <http://usvisa-info.com/>

[4] <http://www.cic.gc.ca/>

[5] <https://immigration.com/visa/nonimmigrant-visas/general-nonimmigrant-visa>

[6] <https://immigration.com/visa/nonimmigrant-visas/h-visa>