
INFORMATION ON OBTAINING B-1 OR WB STATUS

When applying for the B-1/B-2 visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate and/or obtaining entry to the U.S. by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, the scientist should present an original letter from the NIH Division of International Services (DIS) or Institute/Center(IC) B-1/WB Delegate, on NIH letterhead, stating the purpose of the visit. For additional information on the B-1 Visitor for Business, see the U.S. Department of State website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visitor.html>

ENTRY INTO THE U.S. IN B-1 STATUS

When you arrive at a U.S. Port of Entry (POE), the foreign scientist should request that the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer indicate “**B-1**” on the Form I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record) and request a duration of stay that reflects your NIH invitation letter. To assist the CBP Officer, the scientist should present the letters from the NIH host, DIS, and the home country employer or supporting entity (if applicable).

B-2 (Visitor for Tourism) status is **NEVER** appropriate for **ANY** foreign scientist carrying out research activities in NIH's laboratories for any period of time under any circumstances. An individual coming to NIH for an interview **CANNOT** be reimbursed for travel or per diem expenses if he/she was admitted to the U.S. in B-2 status.

B-1 Visitors for Business must depart the U.S. or file an application for an extension of stay on or before the expiration date on their Forms I-94. There is no grace period for individuals in B-1 status. Therefore, failure by the Business Visitor to depart the U.S. or timely submit an application for an extension of stay will result in an unlawful overstay.

NOTE: Canadian citizens do not need to apply for a B-1/B-2 visa to enter the U.S. When coming to NIH, however, they must undergo U.S. customs and immigration inspection **AND** obtain evidence that they were admitted in B-1 status. Therefore, when entering the U.S., Canadians must obtain either a Form I-94 OR an entry date-stamp in the passport marked “B-1” to indicate that they were admitted in B-1 status.

ENTRY INTO THE U.S. IN WB STATUS: B-1/B-2 VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP)

Eligible nationals who wish to come under the VWP do not need to obtain a B-1/B-2 visa from a U.S. Consulate to enter the U.S. ([see list of countries currently participating](#)).

An individual who is a national of a participating country (regardless of place of residence) may seek admission under this program provided that the individual:

1. Seeks admission to the U.S. for a period not to exceed 90 days
2. Possesses a passport that meets VWP requirements
3. Has obtained approval via the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) at least 72 hours prior to travel to the U.S.
4. Arrives via a VWP signatory airline carrier

5. Has a return or onward ticket from the U.S.
6. Does not terminate their travel in contiguous territory (e.g. Canada, Mexico) or adjacent islands unless the traveler is a resident of one of those areas.
7. Arrives aboard a carrier that has signed an agreement with the U.S. Government to participate in the VWP

The individual must also meet all eligibility requirements, funding, and documents to obtain Business Visitor status, as discussed on the DIS website: <http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/AdministrativeStaff/Pages/B-1TemporaryVisitors.aspx>.

When you arrive at a U.S. Port of Entry (POE), the foreign scientist should request that the CBP Officer provide an entry date-stamp in the passport to indicate “**WB**” (Visa Waiver for Business) as his/her immigration status and include the period of admission specified in the NIH sponsor's letter of invitation (not to exceed 90 days). To assist the CBP Officer, the scientist should present the letters from the NIH host, DIS and the home country employer (if applicable).

Visa Waiver for Tourism (WT) status is **NEVER** appropriate for **ANY** foreign scientist carrying out research activities in NIH's laboratories for any period of time under any circumstances. An individual coming to NIH for an interview **CANNOT** be reimbursed for travel or per diem expenses if he/she was admitted to the U.S. in B-2 status.

WB Visitors must depart the U.S. on or before the expiration date listed on their entry date-stamps in the passport. There is no grace period for individuals in WB status. Therefore, failure by the Business Visitor to depart will result in an unlawful overstay.

There are several very important restrictions that apply to those who come under the VWP. Most important are that once in the United States, an individual **CANNOT** apply for:

- a change of immigration status

OR

- an extension of stay in the U.S. beyond the 90-day limit under the VWP.

Therefore, if there is any possibility that the individual will remain at NIH beyond 90 days, he/she should apply for a B-1/B-2 visa at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in his/her home country and enter the U.S. in B-1 status.