



## INVITING A RELATIVE (OTHER THAN A SPOUSE OR CHILD) OR FRIEND TO VISIT YOU IN THE UNITED STATES

**VISA** In most cases, your friend or relative will need a visitor's (B) visa for entry to the United States. Citizens of certain countries **do not** need visitor visas for a trip of 90 days or less because of the Visa Waiver Program. For more information about the Visa Waiver Program, please visit <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.

**WHO ISSUES THE VISA** Visas are issued through the consular section of a U.S. Embassy, or by a U.S. Consulate. Please note that it may be difficult to obtain a visa in a country other than the applicant's home country.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES** Please look at the web site of the appropriate US Consulate for detailed application instructions. You can find a link to the web sites at: <http://www.usembassy.gov>

Optional documentation can include the following:

1. Letter of invitation from you, or any other information to show the purpose and duration of the visit. Your letter can provide information regarding the duration of the visit, where they will stay (with you?), and what kinds of things you might do with them (travel around Florida, attend graduation, etc.). If the friend or relative is coming for graduation, you might send a graduation announcement, printed information showing the date of graduation, or evidence that you have applied for graduation
2. **Copy of your I-20 or DS-2019.** If you think the application would be stronger with evidence that you are a student, you can send a copy of your I-20 with the letter of invitation and certification of enrollment letter. (You can get this letter from the Registrars Office.)

3. **Proof of funding for the visit.** If you are going to provide support for the visit, you should explain this in your letter of invitation. You should also provide evidence that you have the financial resources to support your friend or relative during their visit. This could be a statement from your bank showing the amount you have on deposit, and/or a letter from your academic department confirming the amount of your assistantship. If your friend or relative is buying the ticket and bringing money with them, they should submit proof of their ability to support themselves.
4. **Evidence of the applicant's ties to the home country.** This is important. Your friend or relative should include information showing employment, bank accounts, relatives, property, personal obligations, or any other evidence of firm ties to the home country. If an interview is part of the application process, the applicant should be prepared to answer questions regarding ties to the home country.

*Note: Many visa applications are denied on the basis of Section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. That section states, "Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for a visa, and the immigration officers, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a nonimmigrant status..." If the visa officer is not satisfied that the visa applicant has strong ties to the home country, the visa will be denied. At times, this determination can seem quite arbitrary and difficult to overcome.*

*If a visa is denied the applicant should inquire about the specific grounds for denial [e.g. section 214(b)] if they are not clear, and about reapplication procedures. Consular officers are not required to reexamine visa cases unless there is new evidence to overcome the basis for the refusal.*

*In most cases, the visa will be issued without any difficulty. Still, it is advisable for the applicant to be prepared and to submit a good application at the time of the initial application.*