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Immigration

## State Department Extends Expansion of Interview Waiver Eligibility

**Legal Update**

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*This article was prepared with the assistance of ABIL, the Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers, of which Loan Huynh, Fredrikson Immigration Department Chair, is a member.*

The Department of State, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, extended until December 31, 2021, a temporary expansion of the ability of consular officers to waive the in-person interview requirement for individuals applying for a nonimmigrant visa in the same classification to those whose nonimmigrant visas expired within 48 months. The temporary policy was due to expire March 31, 2021.

Previously, only those applicants whose nonimmigrant visas expired within 24 months were eligible for interview waivers. This change "will allow consular officers to continue processing certain nonimmigrant visa applications while limiting the number of applicants who must appear at a consular section, thereby reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission to other applicants and consular staff," the Department of State said. Travelers should review the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for details on available services and eligibility information and instructions on applying for a visa without an interview.