



FAQ's

General Immigration Issues

The following questions and answers are very general in nature. You are strongly cautioned not to rely on any of these answers as legal advice. All situations involve different facts which may lead to a different legal conclusion. The following information is submitted solely for discussion purposes and is not intended as legal advice and should not be relied on for that purpose.

General Immigration Issues

1. What is a visa?

A visa is essentially a travel document issued by an American Consulate outside the U.S. (there are no American Consulates in the U.S.) which allows an individual to travel to the U.S. and request admission to the country. Once admitted to the U.S., the visa is not important until the person leaves.

2. What if my visa expires?

If you are in the U.S. it does not matter if your visa expires. A valid visa is only required when you are trying to enter the U.S.

3. What is "status"?

Status is your right to remain in the U.S. You must have valid immigration status at all times. This is reflected on your "I-94" card which you are given each time you are inspected and admitted to the U.S. When you are physically in the U.S. you must have a valid "I-94" card but you do not need to have a valid visa.

4. What is a passport?

A passport is also a travel document like a visa. However, the true purpose of a passport is to confirm to the U.S. government (or any government) that if you violate the laws of a foreign country, your country of citizenship will take you back. In other words, the passport guarantees the U.S. government that there is some place to send you if you must be removed from the U.S. A valid passport is required at all times while in the U.S.; a valid visa is not.