

Visitor Visa (B-2) for Family and Friends

Follow these steps to help family and friends to apply for a visitor visa:

1. Check if your guests are eligible to apply for the visa waiver program (ESTA)
2. If your guests are not eligible for the ESTA program, they may apply for the B-2 visitor visa.
 - Your guests should review the information on visitor visas by the U.S. Department of State and refer to the website of the U.S. Consulate where they will apply to learn about the current forms, fees, and processing times.

If your guest is not fluent in English, you may need to translate the information or recommend that they contact the nearest U.S. consulate to request a translated version before applying for the visa. They should read the information before submitting their application for the visa.

3. Your guests will need the following documents to apply for a visitor visa:
 - Proof of their strong ties to their home country. (See gray box in right column for more information.)
 - Enrollment confirmation from the Registrar's office or copy of UMB appointment letter
 - Financial support documents
 - Copy of your visa (Canadians are exempt from the visa requirement), I-94 card/record and I-20 for F-1s, DS-2019 for J-1s, or I-797 approval notice for H-1Bs.
 - Your invitation letter (Turn this page over for the template on the back-side of handout.)

What kind of documents would demonstrate proof of strong ties to their home country?

- An employer's letter describing the employee's position, annual salary, company permission for the trip, and the expected return date to employment
- Evidence of substantial property and investments in their home country
- Records of other trips abroad and return

Please be aware that your family and friends may be denied a B-2 visa if they have relatives who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. For further immigration advice, consult with a licensed immigration attorney.

Note: If you are on a UMB-sponsored visa (i.e., F-1, J-1, or H-1B), the Office of International Services can write a letter that is limited to confirming your UMB-sponsored visa status, however, the U.S. government has indicated that such letters do not impact the visa issuance decision. Log in to Sunapsis, if you wish to request such a letter for each individual.

Disclaimer: The materials in this handout have been prepared for general informational purposes only. They do not constitute legal advice or serve as a substitute for legal counsel.

Sample Invitation Letter (B2)

[Date]

U.S. **[Consulate or Embassy]**

Nonimmigrant Visa Section

[City, Country location of U.S. Consulate or Embassy]

Dear Consular Officer:

My name is **[name as it is on your passport]**. I am currently a **[graduate/undergraduate student or job title]** in **[name of school or department]** at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, in **[immigration e.g. F-1, J-1 or H-1B]** status, which is expected to continue until **[end date on your I-20, DS-2019 or I-797]**.

I would like to invite my **[relation - full name]** to visit me in Baltimore to **[state the purpose of the trip]** for the period from **[date]** to **[date]**.

Host **(You)** Information

Name:

Current Address:

Passport Number:

Valid until:

Current Immigration Status:

Date of Initial Entry to the U.S:

Relationship to guest:

Visitor Information **(*write a separate letter of invitation for each visitor)**

Name:

Current Address:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Nationality:

Passport Number:

Valid Until:

Source of Funding During Stay in U.S:

Thank you for your consideration.