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Welcome to the T&R Newsletter

September 2021

This month we discuss the Biden Administration's announcement of its intentions to rescind all COVID-19 travel bans starting early November 2021 as well as updates on how the U.S. Department of State is prioritizing Immigrant Visa Applications.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION TO RESCIND COVID-19 TRAVEL BANS

The White House announced earlier this week that it intends to rescind all COVID-19 travel bans starting early November 2021. It is reported that all COVID -19 travel bans will be removed for foreign nationals traveling from China, Iran, the Schengen Area, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Brazil, South Africa, and India. It is uncertain if all travel bans will be rescinded at the same time.

New travel requirements: In place of these travel bans, all international travelers to the United States will require proof that they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as well as proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 3 days of boarding a flight to the United States. There will be some limited exceptions, including children under 12 years old or people traveling from countries where the vaccine is not widely available. They may be required to be vaccinated once in the United States. This vaccination and testing requirement will be for all foreign nationals, and not just those traveling from the current travel ban countries.

Remaining hurdles for travel to the United States: The lifting of the travel bans aids foreign nationals who already have visas in their passports to travel to the United States or for visitors who are from countries where they can use ESTA (travel to the United States for 90 days without a visa). However, for people who still need visas to travel to the United States, there can be long wait times at U.S. embassies around the world that are only open on a limited capacity and have backlogs for visa appointments and issuance.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE ISSUES UPDATE ON APPROACH FOR PRIORITIZING IMMIGRANT VISAS

U.S. embassies around the world are still operating at limited capacities. In its most recent update, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) indicated that the safety of its workers is top priority and embassies will resume all routine visa services as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, embassies are addressing the backlog of immigrant visa cases. The DOS indicated that embassies are scheduling immigrant visa appointments using a tiered approach to triage immigrant visa applications. Where possible, the U.S. consular sections are scheduling some appointments within all four priority tiers every month.

- **Tier One:** Immediate relative intercountry adoption visas, age-out cases (cases where the applicant will soon no longer qualify due to their age), certain Special Immigrant Visas (SQ and SI for Afghan and Iraqi nationals working with the U.S. government), and emergency cases as determined on a case-by-case basis.

NOTE: The guidance also provides for the ability of U.S. consulates to prioritize immigrant visas, as emergencies and on a case-by-case basis, for certain healthcare workers who will contribute to fighting the pandemic.

- **Tier Two:** Immediate relative visas; fiancé(e) visas; and returning resident visas.
- **Tier Three:** Family preference immigrant visas and SE Special Immigrant Visas for certain employees of the U.S. government abroad.

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TROW & RAHAL WEBINARS – THIRD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Please join Trow & Rahal's monthly webinar from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Eastern on the third Friday (usually) of each month. The format of these webinars will include a brief update of any changes in immigration policies, as well as an overview of one important immigration issue or visa category. Upcoming webinars include:

October 15th webinar: This webinar will be held on Friday, October 15th and will provide updates on recent changes. You can register for the webinar using the button below:

[Register Here](#)

Trow & Rahal will continue to provide updates to keep our readers apprised of changes on travel requirements, visa issuance at U.S. Consulates, and all other immigration related matters.



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