

MIGRATION

Infante & Perez Almillano has experts in migration topics, whereby we can offer our clients advice related to the authentication of their migration "status" in our country and, at the same time, guide them on the kind of visa they can choose, according to their needs.

SYSTEMS OF VISAS

The norms regarding migration which regulate the entry, stay and departure of foreigners at Panama, and they provide for the following visas:

1. Visas for Temporary Visitors;
2. Visas for Immigrants and;
3. Short stay.

The immigrant visas grant the residence to the foreigner in two (2) stages: Provisional and Permanent.

Provisional Stay

Once the immigrant visa request has been submitted and having been approved by the National Migration Office, the foreigner is granted a provisional stay for two (2) years.

Permanent Stay

After the term of two (2) years has expired, the application must be submitted to the National Migration Office to obtain the permanent stay, which will give the foreigner the right to live indefinitely in Panama, and to obtain his/her personal identity card, which we will explain later.

TYPES OF VISA

They are requested according to the activity and the length of time the foreigner wishes to stay in the Republic of Panama:

Immigrant Visas (Which Grant Permanent Stay)

- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit in the capacity of Married person to National citizen.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit Self-Economic Solvency.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit As Dependent of Resident Relative.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Macro Business Investor.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Forest Investor of the Macro Business.

- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit for Being as Retired person who lives off the income from investments.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Retired Person who receives a Pension.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Personnel hired by the Panama Canal Authority.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Investor of the Panama - Pacific Economic Area.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as permanent Personnel hired by the developer, operator or by the Panama - Pacific Economic Area Agency within the ten per cent of common workers.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Investor in Processing Zones.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Investor of Call Centers for Commercial Purpose, "Call Center" for Export.
- Immigrant Visa and Residence Permit as Investor of the Cinematographic and Audiovisual Industry.

Temporary Visitors (Temporary Residence Permit)

- Temporary Visitor for foreigners hired by private companies within the ten per cent of common personnel.
- Temporary Visitor under the Marrakech agreement.
- Temporary Visitor as manager, trust-worthy worker, technician or expert.
- Temporary Visitor as a student.
- Temporary Visitor as a missionary or a religious person at the service of the catholic and orthodox church.
- Temporary Visitor as ministers, rabbis, leaders of religious associations or denominations.
- Temporary Visitor due to Humanitarian reasons.
- Temporary Visitor due to family relocation.
- Temporary Visitor hired by the State.
- Temporary Visitor of personnel from companies that have contracts with the State.
- Temporary Visitor for personnel hired by Ambassadors, Consulates or delegations of Foreign Governments that work without diplomatic status.

- Temporary Visitor as correspondents of written, radial or television press, paid abroad.
- Temporary Visitor as farmer.
- Temporary Visitor as forest investor.
- Temporary Visitor as executive at the Colon Free Zone.
- Temporary Visitor as personnel hired by companies of the Agency of the Panama - Pacific Area.
- Temporary Visitor as personnel hired by companies engaged in the call center of commercial use for exportation "Call Center"
- Temporary Visitor as personnel hired by multinationals.
- Temporary Visitor as personnel hired by the Panama Canal Authority.
- Temporary Visitor as personnel hired by the Ciudad del Saber [City of Knowledge] in the capacity of: Researcher, scientist, professor, technician.
- Temporary Visitor as students at Ciudad del Saber.
- Temporary Visitor as foreigner personnel hired by companies of the cinematographic and audiovisual industries.

Short Stay Visa

This visa is granted to those foreigners whose term of stay at the country is not longer than nine (9) months, and who enter the national territory due to different interests or matters, whether:

- Business
- Family
- Researchers or scientists
- Medical treatment
- Businessmen and investors due to special laws
- International Humanitarian Assistance
- Banking Sector
- Passengers or members of the crew of vessels with recreation or tourism purposes.

Authorized Visas

1. Visa Authorized as Businessman.
2. Visa Authorized as Immigrant.
3. Visa Authorized as Tourist.

Authorized Visas to Enter the Country

The Consuls of the Republic abroad are authorized to grant Tourist Visas. The foreigners of some countries, due to security policies, in order to travel to Panama require counting on the prior approval on the part of the National Migration Service, which authorizes said diplomatic officers to issue the visas. This proceeding is known as Authorized Visa to Enter the Country.

Likewise, it may be directly processed in our country by the interested party. This visa is granted for thirty (30) days, and it may be granted or not in order to carry out the residence proceedings.

The processes to obtain the immigrant visa or temporary visitor visa may be commenced abroad or in Panama once the foreigner is there. The visa request must be submitted by means of a suitable Lawyer to practice the profession in Panama, and the requirements stated by the Law shall be complied with.

Requirements

The requirements may be different, in accordance with the type of visa in question, but the common documents for each one of the visas are listed below:

1. Certificate of Criminal records of the country of origin or residence.
2. Passport of the interested party.
3. Marriage certificate and birth certificates of their children, issued by the authority of the country where they got married, and the date thereof shall have to be recent.
4. Photographs.
5. Health Certificate.
6. Economic Solvency Certificate of the foreigner who is requesting the visa.
7. Certified checks or cashier's checks for the amount of US\$250.00 and US\$800.00 in favor of the National Treasury.
8. To furnish evidences of the source and the quantity of the incomes with which he/she will cover his/her general expenses and of his/her dependents.

The documents shall have to be authenticated by the Panamanian Consul at the country where they are issued or apostilled.

Multiple Return Visa

The migratory provisions grant the non - resident foreigner the possibility of obtaining a multiple entry and departure visa which may be valid up to five (5) years as the particular case may be, which allows the foreigner entering and exiting the country in an unlimited number of times and without the need of obtaining another visa on the part of a Panamanian consular officer abroad in order to be able to come back to the country. Likewise, it may be granted to the non - resident foreigners who, due to their commercial or business activity, need to travel constantly to our country.

Right to the Personal Identity Card

The identity card is the personal identity document of the bearer, whether a citizen or a foreigner. The foreigners older than eighteen (18) years old and with definitive stay in Panama shall have the grant to obtain it.

Naturalization

The immigrant foreigners with permanent residence in the country shall be able to become citizens, if they are under any of the following circumstances:

3) Residents in Panama for more than five (5) consecutive years, after having obtained their status of permanent residents.

4) Foreign residents in Panama for three (3) consecutive years, married with Panamanian citizens.

5) National Foreign citizens (on birth) of Spain or other Latin American country, based on the reciprocity principle. It is worth clarifying that the Panamanian State reserves the right to approve or not a request of Naturalization Papers due to morality, security, healthiness, physical or mental disability.

Work Permits

The foreigners who request for a Temporary Visa as Executives hired by companies of Free Zone of Colon, in the capacity of Technician hired by the Panamanian State, in the capacity of Press Correspondent or for a Special Temporary Visitant Visa, as well as those with Immigrant Visas who whic-h to work in the territory of the Republic of Panama shall have to obtain, in addition to it, a Working Permit.

The common requirements in order to obtain a Working Permit are the following:

- 1) Power and request by means of a lawyer.
- 2) Original working contract.
- 3) Certification of Migratory Status issued by the National Migration Service of the Republic of Panama.
- 4) Photocopy of the Migration card.
- 5) Photocopy of the passport.
- 6) Four (4) passport sized photos.
- 7) Certificate of Public Registry of the company owning the business.

Naturalization Papers

Every foreigner who meets the requirements set forth in our legislation may opt for Naturalization Papers and thus adopt the Panamanian citizenship, with which he/she acquires the rights, privileges and duties that the National Constitution confers to the Panamanians.