

VISA ASSISTANT FSN-7/FP-7 (CONS)
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT 17/11/51

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

35% of time: IV Case Management

Employee is responsible for processing a broad range of immigrant visa (IV) cases by performing complex review of documentation and completeness to prepare them for final interview by Consular Adjudicators. This requires solid knowledge of Immigration law and updates that affect eligibility. The employee uses this as the standard to identify areas of concern and makes case annotations to be explored by the interviewer. Prints visas and prepares passports and accompanying documents for return to the applicant.

Reviews IV petitions received from the National Visa Center (NVC), most of which have supporting documentation compiled at NVC. Employee is responsible for receiving, recording, retrieving and preparing files from NVC for IV interviews, including visas for fiancé(e) of American citizens as well as victims of human trafficking or other serious crimes. Reviews the petition for completeness, appropriate visa class and fraud indicators; identifies potentially derogatory information, including evidence of criminal activity shared by DHS and other agencies; pulls the electronic DS-260 application from “the cloud” into the consular software; initiates a biodata check for criminal history and/or immigration violations. Uploads photographs and initiates facial recognition biometric clearance. Collects digital fingerprints and initiates biometric clearance of criminal and immigration violation databases. Must be familiar with all immigrant visa petitions and required documentation for each, including the I-130, I-140, I-360, I-129F, I-526, I-600, I-914, and I-918. Verifies that applicant is eligible for interview based on annual U.S. immigration quotas. Each category of immigrant visa (62 categories total) have varying quotas and strict compliance with the quotas is required by statute and regulation. The incumbent properly records all cases within a family group, linking them electronically and through paper files. Reviews for missing family members in some cases, updates file information as needed. If required qualifications for the visa are missing, employee notifies applicant and annotates file. Makes initial determination whether applicants qualify for the Child Status Protection Act and/or Patriot Act protections and makes recommendation to the consular officer.

Although Peruvian citizens are not eligible to participate in the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV), incumbent must have good knowledge of the program in order to prepare cases of applicants from other countries who live in Peru who won this lottery. Incumbent carefully reviews and analyzes this complex visa category to ensure the applicant meets the work experience or education requirements. Incumbent summarizes qualifications for final decision by Consular Adjudicators. Confirms the proper State of Chargeability against annual U.S. immigration quotas. Diversity Immigrant Visas are limited by statute and must be carefully tracked to ensure that the application fits within the annual quota.

Incumbent receives petitions filed at the USCIS office in the Embassy. Creates an electronic file in the consular software. Sends applicants detailed instructions on preparing for the IV interview, including a length list of required documents. On the day of the interview, compiles all the documents brought by the applicant and notes missing documents.

Prepares petitions and case files for return for USCIS for revocation or other processing. Based on consular officer's interview notes, drafts memo of revocation for consular officer's approval and signature. Returns other petitions to USCIS at that agency's request. Scans all relevant documents into the electronic case file to make them available to USCIS to view through the Consolidated Consular Database.

After the interview, receives and processes missing documents sent by the applicant via courier. Matches the documents to the correct case file. Prepares the file for another adjudication review by the consular officer. Notes continued missing documents and annotates case file.

Receives from USCIS notification of approved waivers of criminal or immigration ineligibilities. Matches approvals to case files of denied applications. Reviews file to ensure all documentation remains current and valid. Annotates case file to note expired documents. Prepares file for final adjudication by the consular officer.

The incumbent uses his/her judgment in reviewing the adjudication, noting any potential errors in application of the law. Refers errors to the adjudicating officer or consular manager. Highlights for the Consular Officers possible fraud indicators or visa ineligibilities, including lack of qualifying family relationship, incorrectly annotated civil status, lack of prior work experience, etc. He/she also assists in monitoring cases sent to the Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) for further investigation. It is essential that incumbent be acquainted with local civil documents to pre-screen their validity and veracity.

Assists in the processing of adoption cases, preparing the case in the consular software, liaising with the adoption agency, initiating concurrence of the Government of Peru, specifically the Ministry of Women Issues and Vulnerable Population (MIMP), for the international adoption pursuant to the Hague Convention. Responds to inquiries from the adoptive parents and/or adoption agency and schedules appointments for the visa interview. Completes all other case management as detailed above.

Incumbent also processes Special Immigrant Visas (SIV), available to certain foreign employees that have worked for the U.S. Government. Creates case file based on approval from the Chief of Mission. Prepares case for the Consular Adjudicator to submit an advisory opinion to the Department. Is primary point of contact for the applicant for questions about the application process and required documents. Schedules visa application appointment. Completes all other case management as detailed above.

Incumbent must have advanced knowledge of visa ineligibilities detailed in section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Must understand application of these ineligibilities to visa applications and review completed applications to identify possible misapplication of the law.

Department regulations require that some case files be maintained and appropriately secured. Visa assistants need to be knowledgeable about which cases are to be treated in what manner to ensure adherence to privacy laws. They are also required to actively purge files according to department standards.

35% of time: NIV Case Management

Employee is responsible for processing a broad range of non-immigrant visa (NIV) cases for final interview by a Consular Adjudicator, including referrals from other sections of the Embassy, and participants of the Business Facilitation Program. Employee reviews the DS-160 electronic applications for completeness, appropriate visa class and fraud indicators, initiating biodata check of criminal and immigration records, uploading passport photos and initiating biometric facial recognition clearance, collecting digital fingerprints and initiating biometric clearance of criminal and immigration violations databases, and ensuring they have paid the full and correct visa fee. Verifies the quality of visa photos and authenticity of applicant's documents, including passports and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) petitions. Scans visa petitions, employment contracts and other relevant documents into consular software. Ensures compliance with applicable State Department and other regulations pertaining to NIVs. Employee also reviews the petition for completeness, appropriate visa class and fraud indicators, and identifies potentially derogatory information, including evidence of criminal activity.

Must have thorough knowledge of 48 classes of non-immigration visas. The incumbent regularly processes complex work visas, including those for agricultural workers or sheepherders, temporary workers and trainees, intracompany transferees, aliens with extraordinary ability, athletes, artists and/or entertainers, international cultural exchange visitors, treaty trader investors, and professionals under NAFTA ON). Incumbent must also have advanced knowledge of the qualifications for student and cultural exchange visas, including the Summer Work Travel program.

Also processes sensitive and complex protocol cases and official and diplomatic visas for government organizations and functionaries, staff at the Presidential Palace, members of Peruvian Congress and their staff, Foreign Diplomats, staff of International Organizations accredited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Commanders of the Armed Forces, Chiefs of Police. Furnishes information and answers inquiries regarding procedures and questions about the Protocol service and visa classifications. While the incumbent performs data entry verification, he/she conducts preliminary visa classification and advises on decisions regarding A (diplomatic) and G (International Organization) visa cases, validity and annotations, using good judgment, tact and diplomacy in order to facilitate visa processing, especially when services cannot be provided. Verifies that the applicant at the protocol window qualifies to use the special process designated for these cases. Informs Consular Officers on the essentials of protocol cases and takes action on cases if necessary, using knowledge of U.S. government policies and law. Notifies the NIV Chief, the Supervisory Visa Specialist, and NIV Visa Assistant Supervisor of urgent protocol cases. Provides high levels of customer service to hundreds of applicants daily.

Incumbent must have advanced knowledge of visa ineligibilities detailed in section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Must understand application of these ineligibilities to visa applications and review completed applications to identify possible misapplication of the law.

Department regulations require that some case files be maintained and appropriately secured. Visa assistants need to be knowledgeable about which cases are to be treated in what manner to ensure adherence to privacy laws. They are also required to actively purge files according to department standards.

15% of time: Printing

Employee is responsible for the printing of both non-immigrant and immigrant visas, and for transferring passports and applications to and from the DHL delivery service.

Responsible for the proper handling hundreds, possibly thousands, of controlled accountable items daily. Prints both non-immigrant and immigrant visas, ensuring accuracy of applicants' information and print quality thereon. Reports discrepancies for spoiling and reprinting. Prepares issued IV cases for DHL delivery. Must keep careful track of all printed visas and must account daily for all unprinted or spoiled visa foils.

Responsible for creating a daily manifest of issued passports/visas to be transferred to the contract delivery service. Certifies all manifested passports and visas have, in fact, been delivered by the contract delivery service.

If a visa is not approved, incumbent provides specific instructions as requested by the Consular Officer for cases that require DNA testing, fraud investigation or further administrative processing.

10% of time: Protection of Personally-Identifiable Information and Accountability and Communication

Visa assistants work with personal data that is sensitive and protected by privacy laws. S/he needs to respect the privacy of individuals and handle all paperwork appropriately. When dealing with visa foils,

s/he is personally accountable for receipt and safeguarding of numbered items. Handles controlled visa foils, applicant passports, and controlled State Department seals. Deals with sensitive personal data in visa issuance and refusal files. Verifies security related information such as fingerprint results and deportation information. Updates system and maintains files.

Visa assistants require advanced skills in both written and oral communication, in both English and Spanish. They deal with a wide audience and need to express legal requirements clearly. Visa assistants direct correspondence to sections within the Department of State, other Embassies or Consulates, and other US governmental agencies. They direct public inquiries to information sources or to the Consular Admin Unit. Incumbent communicates with applicants whose cases require administrative processing, schedules special interviews via telephone or email, for example for fraud investigations or secondary, in-depth interviews, and provides special instructions. Updates case status in consular visa systems, IVO and NIV.

Incumbent is required to clearly explain verbally or in writing, with tact and diplomacy, to applicants, petitioners, lawyers, and members of Congress and their staffs, both in Spanish and English, the status of a case, including the sometimes complicated legal reason for a visa refusal.

5% of time: Other duties

Schedules and provides intake services for DNA collection. Receives photocopy of demographics page from Accountable Officer, updates DNA database, schedules applicants for sample collection appointments, updates appointment log, and files demographics page in folder, annotating appointment date/time. On the day of collection, employee is responsible for collecting intake sheets, completing applicant biographic intake in the DNA booth, and explaining all DNA testing issues and processes to applicants. Employee must ensure utmost confidentiality and sensitivity in the handling of each DNA case.

Works with contractors who provide entry and information services to visa applicants. Liaises with contract personnel to ensure an appropriate number of applicants are moved from the visa pavilion to the waiting room throughout the day. Assists the team leaders in completing administrative and clerical tasks as necessary.

Incumbent regularly runs reports, track cases, and resolves problems associated with processing a visa case. Visa assistants may be a team leader or occasionally function as a back-up team leader. The employee may act as back-up cashier on an as-needed basis. S/he may be asked to back-up the Consul General's Secretary, correspondence/administrative team or work in the public windows in the CCAC. Provides training to the entire section on visa classifications, visa ineligibilities and Peruvian culture and history. May also be required to draft translations for printed or online information and scanning. Maintains adequate levels of expendable supplies and locally printed letters and forms in the visa unit. Employee performs other duties, as assigned.