

Pre-Departure Orientation > #17-117 Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA)

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#17-117 Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA)

The Bureau of Consular Affairs is the primary bureau of the US Department of State (DOS) responsible for immigration related issues.

Introduction

Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA)

The Bureau of Consular Affairs is the primary bureau of the US Department of State (DOS) responsible for immigration related issues.

- US embassies and consulates are operated by this bureau
- For useful resources for travelers, visit [Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov)
- To locate US embassies, consulates, or diplomatic missions abroad, check out usembassy.gov

For assistance, contact us at +1 718 643 0311 ext. 11 (office) or +1 917 244 2600 (WhatsApp chat).

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What is a US embassy or consulate?

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Depending on the location, prospective exchange visitors can visit a nearby US embassy or consulate abroad to apply for a visa to enter the US

Embassies

- Generally located in the capital city
- Each host country has an embassy led by an ambassador
- Official headquarters for US diplomats and government representatives serving in a foreign country

Consulates

- The larger embassies have branches (or consulates)
- Provide similar services and functions as the embassy, but on a smaller scale
- Each consulate is led by a consul general

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What do they do?

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US embassies and consulates abroad have two principal functions: to assist and protect Americans abroad and to issue visas to foreign nationals who wish to come to the US on either a temporary or permanent basis.

Citizens

- Adjudicate passports to American citizens
- Facilitate adoptions
- Provide passport services
- Help evacuate Americans in case of a disaster

Foreigners

- Adjudicate immigrant and non-immigrant visas
- Facilitate legitimate travel to the US
- Combat fraud and fight human trafficking
- Make judgments about foreign nationals who want to travel to the United States

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Who works there?

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Individuals who work there are called Foreign Service Officers. They interview citizens of the host country who wish to travel to the US for business, education, or tourism purposes. Consular officers are one of the five types of Foreign Service Officers.

- US citizens employed by the State Department
- Trained to assess the general situation presented by visa applicants
- Handle each visa application as an individual case
- Issue visas to qualified applicants
- Work as the front-line personnel of US embassies and consulates around the world

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