

U.S. Embassy Announces New Visa Processing System In India

Applicants will encounter changes to appointment and fee payment procedures starting September 26, 2012.

The U.S. Embassy in India announced on September 5, 2012 that it is implementing a new visa processing system at all U.S. consular posts in India. The changes will impact fee payment and appointment scheduling.

Changes to Appointment Scheduling

Effective September 26, 2012, individuals who need to make consular visa appointments will be able to do so through a new website <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in>. Applicants will also be able to schedule appointments through a call center. Call center agents will answer questions in Hindi, English, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, and Telugu. Call centers will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. IST on Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. IST on Sunday. The telephone numbers are (91 120) 660 2222 or (91 22) 6720 9400 in India or 1.310.616.5424 in the United States. Applicants can email requests for appointments in English or Hindi to support-india@ustraveldocs.com, or they can chat with information agents directly on the new website during call center hours. There is currently no fee for using the call center. In addition, visa applicants will be able to pay visa application fees via electronic fund transfer (EFT), through their mobile telephones, or in cash at branches of Axis Bank and Citibank.

Separate Biometric Appointment

Under the new system, many first-time applicants and some renewal applicants will have to make two appointments. Prior to their visa interviews, many first-time applicants and a smaller number of renewal applicants will have to visit an Offsite Facilitation Center (OFC) to submit their fingerprints and a photo. OFCs are located apart from the embassy and consulates in Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

Passport Delivery

Under the new system, passports, visas, immigrant visa packets, and other documents will be delivered to 33 document pickup locations across India within a week at no charge. Applicants will be asked to choose a delivery location when they schedule their appointments and will be able to track the progress of their visa application on the website. When documents are ready for pickup, applicants will be notified via email and/or short message service (SMS) on their mobile telephones.

Implications

Individual applicants and their employers should factor into their planning the need for two separate appointments as well as the potential for delays or glitches as this new system is implemented. We will monitor developments in this area and publish additional Immigration Alerts as warranted.

Source: [JDSUPRA](#) Link to official release located <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr090512.html>.