

YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

Extension of stay or change of status: identify the requested action

How is extending a stay different from changing nonimmigrant status?

An extension concerns continuing the activities of the existing nonimmigrant classification; a change concerns another classification. USCIS generally uses I-129 or I-539 depending on the category and requested action. A petition classification can also be approved while the extension of stay is denied, so read the exact decision rather than a single approval label.

Check the boxes on screen or by hand. Use the notes area for records to find and questions to ask.

Your preparation checklist

- ☐ Identify the current classification from actual records.
- ☐ State the activity proposed and whether it changes classification.
- ☐ Check the category-specific I-129 or I-539 owner.
- ☐ Identify separate requests for family members.
- ☐ Read each granted or denied action in the complete notice.
- ☐ Do not begin a disallowed new activity based only on filing.

Notes and questions to follow up

Source links and current instructions

Sources checked October 25, 2026. Follow current instructions at the linked institution.

USCIS: Policy Manual: extension of stay and change of status
<https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-2-part-a-chapter-4>

USCIS: Changing nonimmigrant status: approval and activity distinction
<https://www.uscis.gov/visit-the-united-states/change-my-nonimmigrant-status>

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Source links (continued)

USCIS: I-539: Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>

Immigrant Insider: Editorial policy and verification status

<https://immigrantinsider.com/editorial-policy/>

Return to the complete guide

<https://immigrantinsider.com/status/extension-change/>

General information

This free organizer is not a government form and does not submit an application, establish eligibility, preserve a deadline or replace individual legal advice. Government filing fees and professional services are separate.