

YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

Visa, admission and status: three different immigration questions

What is the difference between a visa, admission and immigration status?

A visa lets a traveler seek entry in the relevant category; CBP separately decides admission. A person's authorized stay and classification come from the actual admission and later records, not simply the visa expiration. USCIS benefit decisions answer another defined question.

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 issuing agency on each document.
- ☐ Keep visa and admission records in separate sections.
- ☐ List questions about inconsistent dates.

Notes and questions to follow up

Source links and current instructions

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

U.S. Department of State: Visa information: frequently asked questions

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/frequently-asked-questions.html>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection: Official I-94 portal: admission record and separate travel-history tools

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

USCIS: I-130: Petition for Alien Relative

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-130>

USCIS: Policy Manual: extension of stay and change of status

<https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-2-part-a-chapter-4>

USCIS: Unlawful presence and inadmissibility: statutory framework and current alerts

<https://www.uscis.gov/laws-and-policy/other-resources/unlawful-presence-and-inadmissibility>

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Return to the complete guide

<https://immigrantinsider.com/immigration-paths/visa-and-status/>

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.