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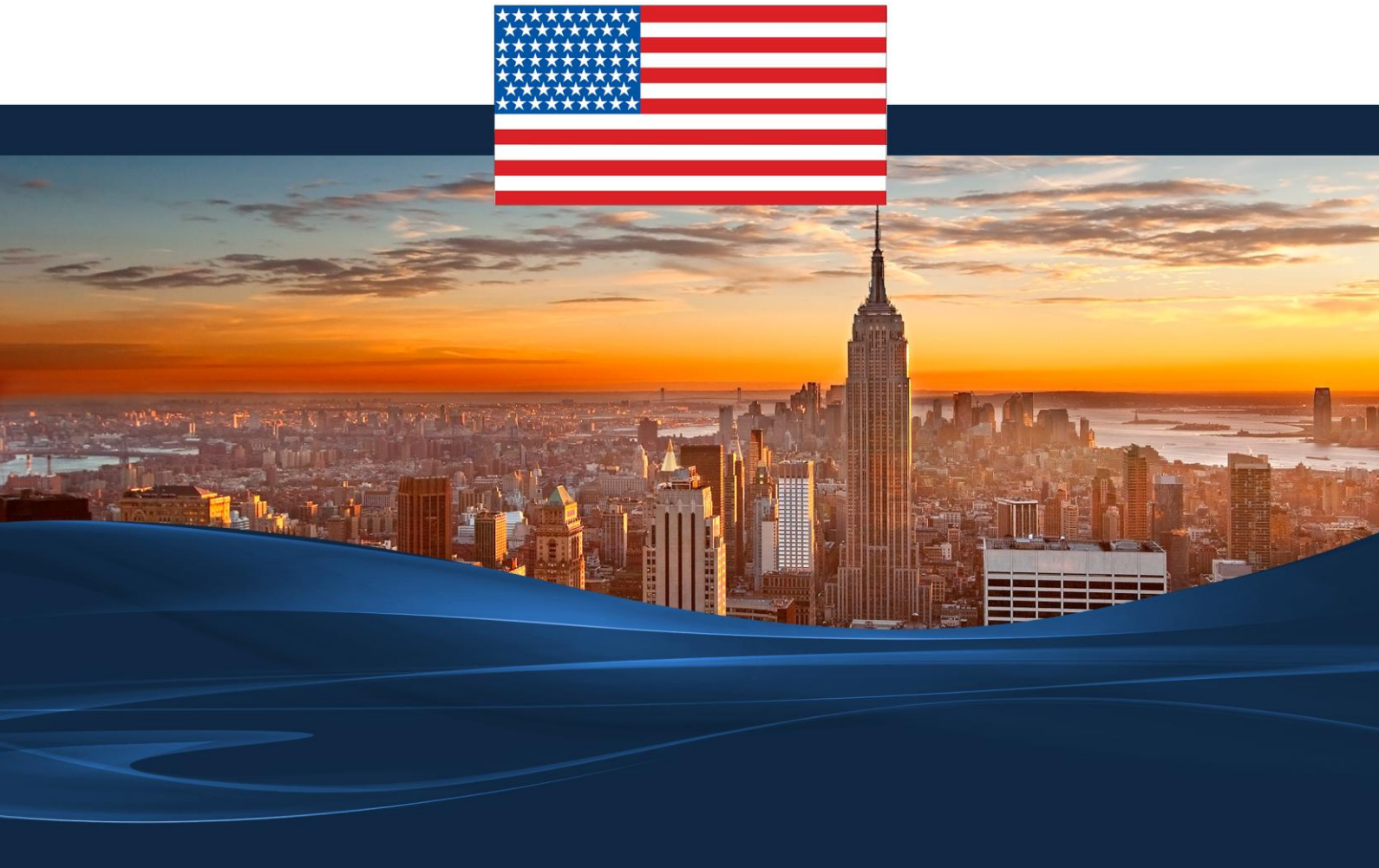

U.S.A. E-2 Investor Visa
Establishment or Purchase of Business

E-2 Treaty Investors

The E-2 nonimmigrant classification allows a national of a treaty country (a country with which the United States maintains a treaty of commerce and navigation) to be admitted to the United States when investing a substantial amount of capital in a U.S. business. Certain employees of such a person or of a qualifying organization may also be eligible for this classification. (For dependent family members, see "Family of E-2 Treaty Investors and Employees" below.)

Immediate Benefits!

- Legal status in the USA
- Pathway to Green Card by expanding business and employing 10 people
- The possibility of American Citizenship 5 years after Green Card.
- Work permit issued to spouse and children up to the age 21
- Iran holds E-2 treaty with the United States since 1957
- Processing time 6-12 months
- Visa renewable as long as business is operational and making enough profit to support the applicant and his/her family

AKROS & Partners International Residence and Citizenship Planning Inc.
2300 Yonge St., Suite #1600 Toronto, ON, M4P 1E4, Canada
Telephone: 001-416-549-1612 | Email: info@akrosglobal.com

General Qualifications of a Treaty Investor

Who May File for Change of Status to E-2 Classification

If the treaty investor is currently in the United States in a lawful nonimmigrant status, he or she may file Form I-129 to request a change of status to E-2 classification. If the desired employee is currently in the United States in a lawful nonimmigrant status, the qualifying employer may file Form I-129 on the employee's behalf.

How to Obtain E-2 Classification if Outside the United States

A request for E-2 classification may not be made on Form I-129 if the person being filed for is physically outside the United States. Interested parties should refer to the U.S. Department of State website for further information about applying for an E-2 nonimmigrant visa abroad. Upon issuance of a visa, the person may then apply to a DHS immigration officer at a U.S. port of entry for admission as an E-2 nonimmigrant.

To qualify for E-2 classification, the treaty investor must:

- Be a national of a country with which the United States maintains a treaty of commerce and navigation
- Have invested, or be actively in the process of investing, a substantial amount of capital in a bona fide enterprise in the United States
- Be seeking to enter the United States solely to develop and direct the investment enterprise. This is established by showing at least 50% ownership of the enterprise or possession of operational control through a managerial position or other corporate device

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An investment is the treaty investor's placing of capital, including funds and/or other assets, at risk in the commercial sense with the objective of generating a profit. The capital must be subject to partial or total loss if the investment fails. The treaty investor must show that the funds have not been obtained, directly or indirectly, from criminal activity. See 8 CFR 214.2(e)(12) for more information.

*See U.S. Department of State's Treaty Countries for a current list of countries with which the United States maintains a treaty of commerce and navigation.

Qualifications Of The Employee Of A Treaty Investor

To qualify for E-2 classification, the employee of a treaty investor must:

- Be the same nationality of the principal alien employer (who must have the nationality of the treaty country)
- Meet the definition of "employee" under relevant law
- Either be engaging in duties of an executive or supervisory character, or if employed in a lesser capacity, have special qualifications

If the principal alien employer is not an individual, it must be an enterprise or organization at least 50% owned by persons in the United States who have the nationality of the treaty country. These owners must be maintaining nonimmigrant treaty investor status. If the owners are not in the United States, they must be, if they were to seek admission to this country, classifiable as nonimmigrant treaty investors. See 8 CFR 214.2(e)(3)(ii).

Duties which are of an executive or supervisory character are those which primarily provide the employee ultimate control and responsibility for the organization's overall operation, or a major component of it. See 8 CFR 214.2(e)(17) for a more complete definition.

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Special qualifications are skills which make the employee's services essential to the efficient operation of the business. There are several qualities or circumstances which could, depending on the facts, meet this requirement. These include, but are not limited to:

- The degree of proven expertise in the employee's area of operations
- Whether others possess the employee's specific skills
- The salary that the special qualifications can command
- Whether the skills and qualifications are readily available in the United States

Knowledge of a foreign language and culture does not, by itself, meet this requirement. Note that in some cases a skill that is essential at one point in time may become commonplace, and therefore no longer qualifying, at a later date. See 8 CFR 214.2(e)(18) for a more complete definition.

Requirements

A substantial amount of capital is:

- Substantial in relationship to the total cost of either purchasing an established enterprise or establishing a new one
- Sufficient to ensure the treaty investor's financial commitment to the successful operation of the enterprise
- Of a magnitude to support the likelihood that the treaty investor will successfully develop and direct the enterprise. The lower the cost of the enterprise, the higher, proportionately, the investment must be to be considered substantial

A bona fide enterprise refers to a real, active and operating commercial or entrepreneurial undertaking which produces services or goods for profit. It must meet applicable legal requirements for doing business within its jurisdiction.

Your investment must be in a bona fide enterprise and may not be marginal

A bona fide enterprise is one that is a real, active commercial or entrepreneurial undertaking which produces services or goods for profit. The enterprise cannot be an idle investment held for potential appreciation in value, such as undeveloped land or stocks held by an investor who has no intent to direct the enterprise. A marginal enterprise is one that will not generate more than enough income to provide a minimal living for you and your family or to make a significant economic contribution.

How do I demonstrate that my business is bona fide?

Some of the evidence you may submit to demonstrate that your business is bona fide includes:

- Notice of assignment of an Employer Identification No from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Tax returns
- Financial statements
- Quarterly wage reports or payroll summaries (i.e., W-2s and W-3)
- Business organizational chart
- Business licenses
- Bank statements, utility bills, and advertisements/telephone directory listings
- Contracts or customer/vendor agreements
- Escrow documents
- Lease agreement

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Marginal Enterprises

The investment enterprise may not be marginal. A marginal enterprise is one that does not have the present or future capacity to generate more than enough income to provide a minimal living for the treaty investor and his or her family. Depending on the facts, a new enterprise might not be considered marginal even if it lacks the current capacity to generate such income. In such cases, however, the enterprise should have the capacity to generate such income within five years from the date that the treaty investor's E-2 classification begins. See 8 CFR 214.2(e)(15).

Period of Stay

Qualified treaty investors and employees will be allowed a maximum initial stay of two years. Requests for extension of stay may be granted in increments of up to two years each. There is no maximum limit to the number of extensions an E-2 nonimmigrant may be granted. All E-2 nonimmigrants, however, must maintain an intention to depart the United States when their status expires or is terminated.

An E-2 nonimmigrant that travels abroad may generally be granted an automatic two-year period of readmission when returning to the United States. It is generally not necessary to file a new Form I-129 with USCIS in this situation.

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Terms and Conditions of E-2 Status

A treaty investor or employee may only work in the activity for which he or she was approved at the time the classification was granted. An E-2 employee, however, may also work for the treaty organization's parent company or one of its subsidiaries as long as the:

- Relationship between the organizations is established
- Subsidiary employment requires executive, supervisory, or essential skills
- Terms and conditions of employment have not otherwise changed

USCIS must approve any substantive change in the terms or conditions of E-2 status. A "substantive change" is defined as a fundamental change in the employer's basic characteristics, such as, but not limited to, a merger, acquisition, or major event which affects the treaty investor or employee's previously approved relationship with the organization. The treaty investor or enterprise must notify USCIS by filing a new Form I-129 with fee, and may simultaneously request an extension of stay for the treaty investor or affected employee. The Form I-129 must include evidence to show that the treaty investor or affected employee continues to qualify for E-2 classification.

It is not required to file a new Form I-129 to notify USCIS about non-substantive changes. A treaty investor or organization may seek advice from USCIS, however, to determine whether a change is considered substantive. To request advice, the treaty investor or organization must file Form I-129 with fee and a complete description of the change.

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Family of E-2 Treaty Investors and Employees

Treaty investors and employees may be accompanied or followed by spouses and unmarried children who are under 21 years of age. Their nationalities need not be the same as the treaty investor or employee. These family members may seek E-2 nonimmigrant classification as dependents and, if approved, generally will be granted the same period of stay as the employee. If the family members are already in the United States and are seeking change of status to or extension of stay in an E-2 dependent classification, they may apply by filing a single Form I-539 with fee. Spouses of E-2 workers may apply for work authorization by filing Form I-765 with fee. If approved, there is no specific restriction as to where the E-2 spouse may work.

The E-2 treaty investor or employee may travel abroad and will generally be granted an automatic two-year period of readmission when returning to the United States. Unless the family members are accompanying the E-2 treaty investor or employee at the time the latter seeks readmission to the United States, the new readmission period will not apply to the family members. To remain lawfully in the United States, family members must carefully note the period of stay they have been granted in E-2 status, and apply for an extension of stay before their own validity expires.

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Immigration procedure

STEP 1: USCIS Approval

- Prepare immigrant documents
- Deposit investment money to Escrow account
- Submit I-526
- USCIS Approval
- Transfer investment money from Escrow to the project

STEP 2: Conditional Permanent Resident

- Transfer to National Visa Center (NVC)
- Transfer to the US Embassy
- US interview and examination; Embassy physical
- Acquire Permanet Residency (Green Card)

STEP 3: Termination of Conditional Green Card

- Entry into the US in 180 days from issuance of permanent passport
- After 21st month of USA entry, submit I-829
- Termination of Conditional Permanent Resident (Acquire I-829 approval)
- Request to get investment money back after 5 years of entering the US

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