

IMMIGRATION ALERTS

July 2022

If you file your STEM OPT extension application on time and your OPT period expires while your extension application is pending, **we will automatically extend your employment authorization for 180 days**. This automatic 180-day extension ceases once USCIS adjudicates your STEM OPT extension application.

Fee Increase

- Under the new fee proposal, USCIS would increase and create separate fees for H-1B, L-1 and other nonimmigrant case types. The proposed H-1B fee increase is \$780, from \$460, a 70% increase. The proposed L-1 petition fee is \$1,385, from \$460 – a 201% increase.
- The fee for H-1B cap registration would increase to \$215, from \$10, per registration.
- A new Asylum Program Fee of \$600 would be imposed on top of the newly increased Form I-129 and Form I-140 filing fees.
- The rule also includes proposals to lengthen the premium processing timeframe from 15 calendar days to 15 business days, and unbundle adjustment of status and ancillary benefit fees, among other measures.
- The proposed rule does not have an immediate impact on filing fees; USCIS is accepting public comments on its proposals through March 6, 2023.

Visa Interview Waivers

- The U.S. State Department's visa interview waiver program for certain temporary workers, students, and exchange visitors has been extended to December 31, 2023.
- The separate interview waiver program for certain applicants renewing a visa in the same category within 48 months of expiration remains in effect on an indefinite basis.
- U.S. consulates are not required to implement these interview waiver policies but may do so as local conditions and resources allow.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ALERTS

China Travel

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued detailed guidance on implementation of the new COVID test requirement for travel from China, set to take effect on **January 5**.
- Under the guidance, airline passengers two years of age and older traveling from mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau, as well as travelers from certain designated foreign transit hubs who have been in mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau within 10 days prior to departure, must provide either a negative COVID test taken within two days before departure or documentation of COVID recovery in order to travel to the United States.
- The CDC guidance clarifies that documentation of recovery may be shown by either a positive COVID test more than 10 days but less than 91 days prior to departure, or a positive test within 10 days prior to departure and documentation that COVID symptoms began more than 10 days before departure.
- The CDC guidance also provides exemptions for travelers transiting China and for certain air crew, military, and law enforcement personnel, and a narrow exemption for CDC-approved humanitarian exceptions.