

R-1 and R-2 Information

Description

The R-1 visa is for religious workers coming to the United States on a temporary basis.

Basic Requirements Summary

The R-1 visa applicant must be a member of a bona fide nonprofit religious denomination having a non-profit religious organization in the United States. The candidate must have worked for the denomination as a religious worker for at least 2 years immediately preceding the application for the R-1 visa.

R-1 visa holders are:

- **Ministers of Religion** - Persons who enter the U.S. only to work as a minister of the religious denomination he/she has belonged to for at least the past two years. The minister must be authorized by a recognized religious denomination to conduct religious worship and to perform other duties usually performed by authorized members of the clergy of that religion.
- **Religious Professionals** - Persons working for a bona fide non-profit organization in a professional religious vocation or professional occupation at the request of the organization. A U.S. baccalaureate degree or foreign equivalent is required.
- **Other Religious Workers** - Persons who enter the U.S. to work for a bona fide non-profit organization in a religious vocation or occupation at the request of the organization. This religious vocation or occupation does not require a baccalaureate degree or foreign equivalent.

The U.S. non-profit, religious organization must:

1. Have a religious community with a form of worship, a code of doctrine and discipline, religious ceremonies, established places of worship, and religious congregations, or other evidence of a religious denomination.
2. Be described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as a not for profit organization or satisfy USCIS that it is eligible for the tax-exempt status.

Validity Term

An R-1 visa is valid for an initial period of up to three years, and can be extended for two years, for a total of five consecutive years. An applicant who has spent five consecutive years in the U.S. as an R-1 visa may not reenter as an R-1 visa holder until he or she has been physically present outside the U.S. for at least one year.

R-2

Description

The R-2 visa is for dependents of R-1 religious workers coming to the United States on a temporary basis.

Basic Requirements Summary

The R-2 visa applicant must be either a spouse or unmarried child under 21 of an R-1 visa holder and must accompany the R-1 visa holder to the U.S., or join the R-1 visa holder that is already employed and residing in the United States. There is no employment allowed under this classification.

Validity Term

An R-2 visa holder may stay in the U.S. as long as the R-1 visa holder is in status. A R-2 visa is valid for an initial period of up to three years, and can be extended for two years, for a total of five consecutive years.