NOTE: Always check the website for the most recent version of this form and current filing fees!

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Form DS-260, Online Immigrant Visa Application and Registration, is a web-based electronic form that will eventually replace the current Form DS-230, Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration. The Form DS-260 will eventually be required for all visa applicants at U.S. consulates. At the present time, the only applicants who apply at selected U.S. embassies and consulates are notified by the National Visa Center (NVC) to use this form. The roll-out of the new DS-260 will be gradual. Therefore, not all immigrant visa applicants will be required to use the new form at the same time.

These online forms are completed and submitted online to the Department of State via the Internet through the Consular Electronic Applications Center (CEAC). The forms may be partially completed, saved online to finish, and submitted later; or the forms can be completed and submitted in a single session.

Because the information entered online is transmitted directly to embassies and NVC, extra care should be taken in completing the Form DS-260 to ensure accurate information is recorded. Most fields on the DS-260 are mandatory. Fields marked “Optional” may be left blank. Some fields may also give the option to select “Does Not Apply.” If a field does not apply, mark the box next to “Does Not Apply.” All other fields must be completed; the application will not allow an applicant to submit a form with any mandatory fields left blank. In this instance, an error message will be displayed and the applicant will be required to complete the field before continuing with the application. If all questions requiring an answer are not answered, the form may be rejected.

Note that the DS-260 has a “time out” feature. If the DS-260 application is left idle for approximately 20 minutes, CEAC will log off the user. All data entered up to the last time it was saved will be stored. However, any data entered after clicking “Save” will be lost.

The form can be accessed by returning to the CEAC website and selecting “View/Edit” from the “IV and Alien Registration” section of the “Immigrant Visa – Summary Information” screen. At that time, the screen will provide a list of all applicants in the case, along with the status of each application (NOT STARTED, INCOMPLETE, or SUBMITTED). To continue updating an incomplete application, simply click on the “Edit” button to the right of the application’s status.

Once the application is submitted, by clicking the “Sign and Submit Application” button on the “Sign and Submit” page, the application will no longer be accessible without the assistance of NVC, or the relevant U.S. embassy or consulate.

**COMPLETING THE FORM**

**Before Starting**

Have the following information available:

---

*Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.*

*Carlina Tapia-Ruano* is a past president of AILA and its first Hispanic president. She founded Tapia-Ruano & Gunn PC in Chicago, and has practiced law for over 30 years. Her area of practice includes family, employment, and removal defense. She has written and lectured extensively. She has testified before Congress, and been a faculty member of the American Immigration Council’s Litigation Institute, De Paul College of Law, and the Illinois Institute of Technology-Chicago Kent School of Law.
• Internet access
• The NVC case number (provided by NVC)
• Invoice I.D. number (issued by NVC after payment of visa fees)
  Access the DS-260 from the Consular Electronic Application Center and click “Submit Visa Application and Civil Documents,” or on the website of the U.S. consulate where the applicant will apply for the visa.

**Personal Address and Phone Information**
• List full, legal name as it appears on the applicant’s birth record, or any subsequent legal document, such as a marriage certificate.
• Present address should be where applicant resides at time of completion of the form.
• Address in United States where applicant intends to live should be permanent mailing address.
• Any information requested where the answer is none should be marked as “DOES NOT APPLY.”

**Family Information**
• List as much information as possible, but be sure information is accurate.

**Previous U.S. Travel Information**
• If applicant is present in the United States at the time of filing the form, respond “yes” applicant has previously been in the United States.

**Work/Education/Training Information**
• List all employment in the United States, whether applicant had work authorization or not.
• Where information is requested and applicant does not know the answer, mark “UNKNOWN” or “DO NOT KNOW”, depending on available choices listed.

**Petitioner Information**
• List name and address of visa petitioner.

**Security and Background Information**
• Answers to these questions will form basis of most grounds of inadmissibility.
• Any answer marked “yes” should be followed up with a brief explanation.
• All arrests, even if they never resulted in convictions, should be listed with information on the disposition of each arrest.
  Even if the applicant is in the United States at the time the application is filed, questions regarding applicant’s departure from the United States should be answered in light of applicant’s imminent departure from the United States. For example: if the applicant remained in the United States without authorization, beyond 180 days, the applicant should answer “yes” to the question of whether the applicant had been “unlawfully present” in the United States. Although the applicant will not trigger the second prong of the “unlawful present” definition until the applicant departs the United States, it is presumed that the applicant will need to depart the United States to appear at the U.S. consulate for the immigrant visa interview.