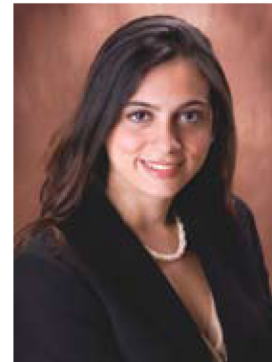




THE American MAZE

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I am currently in the United States, but my visa is about to expire, which will require me to return to my home in Argentina. I would like to extend my stay in the U.S. and potentially seek permanent residency. What are my options, and which ones provide me the fastest route in obtaining a green card?

Most foreign nationals who come to the United States—whether as tourists, business travelers, visitors looking for investment opportunities or individuals with a one-way ticket to new lives in the land of opportunity—ask themselves where and how to begin the journey through the unfamiliar path of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) to reach the ultimate treasure: a green card.

There are numerous options available, with visas literally ranging from “A” to “V,” which provides a wide variety of opportunities for individuals and families. The American maze can be deceptive, and you will find no straight line across the maze once you enter seeking a green card. Consider the following methods of application:

Family: If you have a relative who is a U.S. citizen (spouse, parent, child or sibling) or a legal permanent resident (spouse or parent), they may petition for your permanent residency. With some family petitions, a green card may be issued in as early as six months.

Education: If you have a bachelor’s degree or higher in a specialty occupation (including accounting, computer analysts, programmers, database administrators, web designers, engineers, financial analysts, doctors, nurses, scientists, architects, lawyers and others), and you have a job offer from a U.S. employer, an H-1B visa may be an option.

Business: If you currently work for a company abroad as a manager or executive, or if you own a business abroad, you may be transferred to its U.S. branch, subsidiary, affiliate or joint venture partner (even if such U.S. entity is less than one year old) with the L-1A visa alternative. For example, Ikjoon Kim came to the United States from South Korea with a visitor’s visa to attend to business related matters. Because Mr. Kim is the owner of an insurance agency located in Seoul, he was able to open a new subsidiary office in Orlando. He then transferred himself as an executive of his business with an L-1A visa. In a period of three years, Mr. Kim and his family became permanent residents after the approval of their employment based petition.

Extraordinary Ability: If you are internationally recognized for extraordinary abilities, for example, professional athletes, artists and celebrities, and there is a contract or employment opportunity for you in the United States, an O visa may be appropriate for you.

To prevent yourself from reaching dead ends or getting lost on the way from long processing times, filing wrong applications, complex instructions and intimidating officers, consult with an immigration attorney to guide you through the American maze.

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