



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

P-1A Internationally Recognized Athlete

The P-1 classification applies to you if you are coming to the U.S. temporarily to perform at a specific athletic competition as an athlete, individually or as part of a group or team, at an internationally recognized level of performance.

Individual Athletes Eligibility Criteria

You must be coming to the United States to participate in individual event, competition or performance in which you are internationally recognized with a high level of achievement; evidenced by a degree of skill and recognition substantially above that ordinarily encountered so that the achievement is renowned, leading or well known in more than one country.

Athletic Teams Eligibility Criteria

You must be coming to the United States to participate in team events and must have achieved significant international recognition in the sport. The event in which your team is participating must be distinguished and require the participation of athletic teams of international recognition.

Application Process

To come to the United States your U.S. employer must file a Form I-129, Petition for Non-Immigrant Worker, accompanied by the appropriate fee and supporting documentation.

Please note a petitioner who will be filing as an agent for multiple employers must establish that it is duly authorized to act as an agent. The required conditions can be found at the link to the right (see the memorandum "Requirements for Agents and Sponsors Filing as Petitioners for the O and P Visa Classifications").

The U.S. employer must submit a consultation from an appropriate labor organization. The consultation must describe the work or services to be performed in the United States and your qualifications for such work. If no appropriate labor organization exists, this requirement is excused.

For more information about filing a Form I-129, see the "Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker" page.

Supporting Documents

The Form I-129 must include the following documents:

- A written consultation from an appropriate labor organization
- A copy of the contract with a major U.S. sports league or team or a contract in an individual sport commensurate with international recognition in the sport, if such contracts are normally utilized in the sport
- An explanation of the event and itinerary
- Documentation of at least two of the following:
 - Evidence of having participated to a significant extent in a prior season with a major United States sports league
 - Evidence of having participated to a significant extent in international competition with a national team
 - Evidence of having participated to a significant extent in a prior season for a U.S. college or university in intercollegiate competition
 - A written statement from an official of a major U.S. sports league or an official of the governing body of the sport which details how you or your team is internationally recognized
 - A written statement from a member of the sports media or a recognized expert in the sport which details how you or your team is internationally recognized
 - Evidence that you or your team is ranked, if the sport has international rankings
 - Evidence that you or your team has received a significant honor or award in the sport

Applying for a Visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

Once the visa petition is approved, you can apply at a U.S. embassy or consulate. For more information on visa application processing and issuance fees, see the "Department of State, travel.state.gov" page.

Period of Stay/Extension of Stay

| Initial Period of Stay | Extension of Stay |
|--|---|
| Individual Athlete - Time needed to complete the event, competition or performance, not to exceed 5 years | Individual Athlete –Increments of up to 5 years in order to continue or complete the event, competition or performance. Total stay is limited to 10 years. |
| Athletic Group - Time needed to complete the event, competition or performance, not to exceed 1 year | Athletic Group – Increments of up to 1 year in order to continue or complete the event, competition or performance. |
| Essential Support Personnel - Time to complete the event, | Increments of up to 5 years in order to continue or complete the |

activity, or performance, may not exceed 1 year

event, competition or performance.
Total stay is limited to 10 years

For additional information on extension of status for P-1 nonimmigrant individual athletes and P-1 essential support personnel see the memos: "Procedures for Applying the Period of Authorized Stay for P-1 Nonimmigrant Individual Athletes" and "Procedures for Applying the Period of Authorized Stay for P-1S Nonimmigrant Individual Athletes' Essential Support Personnel." The Form I-129 is used to apply for a change of status, extension of stay, or change of employment. For more information see "Extend my Stay" and "Change my Nonimmigrant Status" pages.

Change of employer

You may change employers, but only after your new employer has filed a new Form I-129 with USCIS requesting permission to employ you and extend your stay. You may not commence employment with the new employer until the Form I-129 has been approved.

Family of P-1A Visa Holders

Your spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21 may obtain P-4 status. Your dependents may not engage in employment, but may attend school or college.

Essential Support Personnel

Essential Support Personnel who are an integral part of the performance of a P-1 athlete (team) and who perform support services which cannot be readily performed by a U.S. worker, are eligible for P-1 classification. Support personnel may include coaches, scouts, trainers and other team officials and referees.

The U.S. employer must file a separate Form I-129 for support personnel. The petition must include the following documents:

- A consultation from an appropriate labor organization with expertise in the area of the support person's skill
- A statement describing the support person's prior and current essentiality, critical skills and experience with the P-1 athlete (team)
- A copy of a written contract between the employer and the support person or a summary of the terms of the oral agreement under which the support person will be employed

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