



U.S. VISAS FOR STARTUPS

Module 5

Visa Type	Who It's For	Key Benefits	Limitations	Ideal For	Duration
B-1 (Business Visitor)	Short-term visitors for business	Easy to obtain, can explore U.S. market	No work authorization, no salary	Market research, pitch meetings	Up to 6 months
E-2 (Treaty Investor)	Nationals of treaty countries investing in a U.S. business	Renewable indefinitely, spouse can work	Only for treaty countries, must show substantial investment	Founders actively managing a U.S. startup	2 years, renewable
O-1 (Extraordinary Ability)	Individuals with demonstrated excellence in their field	Can lead to Green Card (EB-1)	High evidence burden	Top-tier founders, especially in tech or science	Up to 3 years, extendable
L-1A (Intracompany Transferee)	Managers or executives of a foreign company opening a U.S. office	Path to Green Card, can bring family	Requires foreign entity affiliation	Scaling operations from abroad	1-3 years, extendable to 7 years
H-1B (Specialty Occupation)	Workers with a job offer requiring a degree	Dual intent (can apply for Green Card), spouse can work (H-4 EAD)	Lottery system, limited renewals	Startup hiring skilled technical founders	3 years, renewable to 6
F-1 OPT / STEM OPT	Students working post-graduation	Low barrier to entry, extendable for STEM	Limited to certain timeframes, not all founders qualify	Student founders post-graduation	12 months + 24 month STEM extension
International Entrepreneur Parole (IEP)	Startup founders who raised U.S. capital or got government grants	No visa cap, startup-focused	Not a visa, no path to Green Card, discretionary	Early-stage high-growth startup founders	Initially 30 months, extendable to 60
EB-5 (Immigrant Investor)	Investors putting \$800k+ into U.S. business	Path to Green Card, includes family	High investment threshold, long processing	Wealthy founders ready to invest	Permanent (Green Card)
EB-2 NIW (National Interest Waiver)	Talented individuals working on ventures in the U.S. interest	No employer sponsorship needed	Requires strong case and U.S. benefit	Impactful founders or researchers	Permanent (Green Card)

+2349099449754

info@visaimmigrationpro.com

www.visaimmigrationpro.com

+1 (678) 989-6370

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