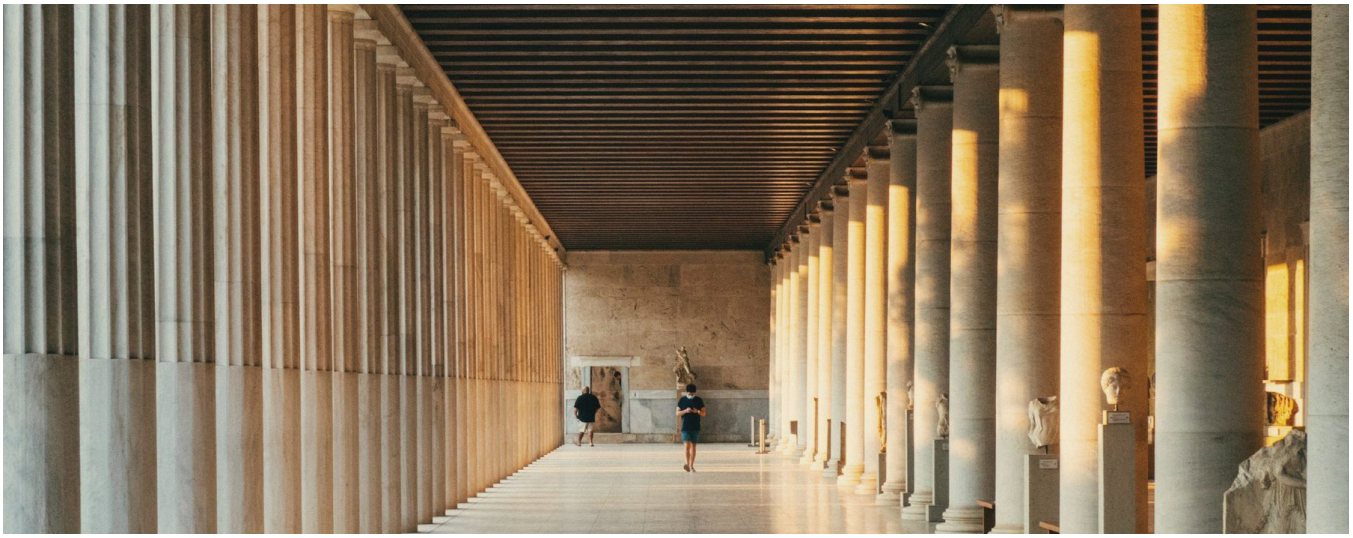


INSIGHTS / POLICY

POLICY FAST-MOVING

Consular processing update: the pause in immigrant visa interviews

In late August 2026 the US Department of State paused immigrant visa interviews at its posts worldwide. This note sets out what was announced, who is affected, and what it means for a family in the Emirates.

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Information current as of 10 September 2026 Fast-moving: verify before relying on it

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In late August 2026 the Department of State paused immigrant visa interviews worldwide for training on updated public-charge guidance. No firm resumption date for every post had been announced when this note was written.

- The pause applies to immigrant visas processed at consulates. Nonimmigrant visas and adjustment of status within the United States were reported to be unaffected.
- Families at earlier stages lose nothing from the pause itself. Families with a scheduled interview should follow the post's notice and their counsel's instructions.

> **A note on this topic.** The pause described here is temporary by the Department's own account, and the position may have changed since the date shown. Families with a scheduled interview should follow the instructions of the embassy or consulate handling their case, and of their counsel, rather than this note.

What was announced

On or about 25 August 2026, the Department of State confirmed that it was pausing immigrant visa interview appointments at US embassies and consulates worldwide so that consular officers could receive training on updated public-charge guidance. Two developments lay behind it. On 21 August 2026 a federal court vacated the Department's earlier suspension of immigrant visa issuance to nationals of 75 countries, a policy that had been in place since January. Days later, the Department announced that appointments would be adjusted to allow a global training initiative on the revised public-charge standard, which governs whether an applicant is likely to become dependent on public benefits.

Applicants with scheduled interviews began receiving notices that their appointments were cancelled and would be rescheduled. A Department official was quoted in the press as saying the pause was expected to be temporary and not expected to extend beyond early to mid-September. As of the date of this note, we are not aware of a formal announcement of a nationwide resumption date, and reports indicate that individual posts are rescheduling into September, October and November.

Who is affected

- **Immigrant visa applicants abroad.** The pause applies to immigrant visas, the category used by anyone completing a green card process at a consulate outside the United States. That includes family-based, employment-based and diversity applicants, and it includes EB-5 investors and their families processing through a consulate.

- **Not nonimmigrant visas.** Visitor, student and temporary work visas were reported to be unaffected. A child travelling to the US on a student visa in the meantime is in a different queue.
- **Not adjustment of status.** A family already lawfully in the United States who is applying for a green card through USCIS, rather than at a consulate, is not processed by the Department of State and is not directly affected by a consular pause.

What it means for a family in the UAE

Immigrant visas for residents of the United Arab Emirates are generally processed at the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi. A family whose EB-5 petition has been approved and who was waiting for an interview there should expect a delay measured, on current reports, in weeks to a few months, and should watch for a rescheduling notice rather than assume a new date.

The pause does not affect the earlier stages of the process. A family whose petition is pending with USCIS, or who has not yet filed, loses nothing by the consular pause itself, and the source-of-funds and project work described on our US Residency page continues as normal. For those families the practical lesson is about sequencing: the consular interview is the last step, and it is the step most exposed to changes in Department of State operations.

The public-charge context

The training that prompted the pause concerns the public-charge ground of inadmissibility. Under the updated guidance, consular officers are expected to apply the standard more consistently across posts, and applicants may be asked for fuller evidence of financial means and of how they will support themselves. For a family investing in the EB-5 programme, that evidence is unlikely to be the obstacle; but it is one more reason to have financial documentation organised and consistent across the whole case.

What has not been said

The Department has not published a firm date for resumption at every post, has not stated whether all posts and all applicants will be affected in the same way, and has not indicated how quickly the backlog created by the pause will be cleared. Anyone who states a resumption date with confidence is guessing. We will update this note when the position is clearer.

What to do

- If you have a scheduled interview, do not travel on the assumption it will proceed. Check the notice from the post and follow your counsel's instructions.
- If your case is at the National Visa Center stage, continue to complete the documentary requirements; that work is not paused.
- If you have not yet filed, treat this as a reminder that the last step of the process is the one you control least, and plan the earlier steps accordingly.

SOURCES

US Department of State statements on immigrant visa appointment adjustments and public-charge training, late August 2026, as reported by the Associated Press and immigration-law firms.

Federal district court decision of 21 August 2026 vacating the suspension of immigrant visa issuance to nationals of 75 countries, as reported.

Practitioner summaries published 25 August to 1 September 2026 by Fragomen, Ogletree Deakins, Greenberg Traurig and others.

US Embassy and Consulates in the United Arab Emirates, immigrant visa information, ae.usembassy.gov.

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