

Houston Immigration Law Explained

In general, it's relatively easy to sneak into the United States, so long as you maintain a low profile and are willing to accept certain cuts in your standard of living. That's an obvious and highly visible point, but the corollary often goes unnoticed: many of the world's best and brightest simply aren't willing to enter the United States under those conditions, preferring instead to wait and work for the dignity that comes with legal status. Two rarely-used avenues to a green card are available for these more cerebral applicants for US citizenship. Those who rely on their intellectual capabilities for their income and well-being may fulfill the requirements for employment-based preference under "Extraordinary Ability" or "National Interest Waiver" status.

Of the two, "Extraordinary Ability" is loftier (if more vague) in its set of qualifications, requiring the applicant to be more...well...extraordinary. Generally, these applicants are required to be winners of nationally or internationally recognized prizes; scholars routinely publishing in major academic or scientific journals; researchers and scientists whose work is of obvious value, being cited by others in major academic or scientific journals; or artisans and creators working at the highest levels of culture.

Although "National Interest Waivers" are less daunting in their criteria, they have a much more strictly observed set of qualifications. Aliens applying for this status must be engaged in work of "substantial intrinsic merit," which benefits US citizens on a national scale, rather than simply being locally beneficial. Further, this work must have an impact on national interests greater than the same work would have if performed by an available American worker.

A fairly common practice in applications of this kind is the solicitation of letters of reference. Esteemed colleagues with American citizenship are often a valuable asset to scholars and researchers seeking US citizenship. Additionally, applicants will want to have their CV updated, providing clear references to specific qualities and qualifications rendering them eligible for US citizenship.

About the Author

A. Banerjee is a Houston immigration lawyer in Texas. Before selecting an immigration lawyer in Houston Texas, contact the Law Offices of Annie Banerjee by visiting their information filled web site at <http://www.visatous.com>.

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