

June 2021



# Consular Newsletter

Hello, everyone. I'm Keith Devereaux, the Incoming Immigrant Visa Unit Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince. June is [National Immigrant Heritage Month](#), which recognizes the history and achievements of immigrant communities across the United States. This month's "Ask the Consul" section focuses on the immigrant visa process, so you can have all the resources you need if you are considering, or in the process of, petitioning for a family member to immigrate to the United States.



*Pictured: Keith Devereaux,  
(incoming) Chief, Immigrant Visa Unit*

We are continually working hard to serve you and we know the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic persistently presents challenges. Due to the current spike in COVID-19 cases in Haiti, all of our consular operations are running at a very limited capacity. In addition to long visa interview wait times, the current wait time to schedule an appointment to renew a U.S. passport at the Embassy is longer than usual, as it is worldwide. To help mitigate this, if you are a U.S. citizen, **you now may be able to return directly to the U.S. on an expired U.S. passport** until December 31, 2021. Please [see this page](#) for more information and to check if this new rule applies to you. We hope this change will help you return home promptly and safely.

Additionally, on June 7, the CDC [increased its travel health notice](#) for Haiti to "Level 4: COVID-19 Very

High." The CDC recommends that travelers avoid travel to Haiti, and if you must travel, to make sure you are fully vaccinated. Note that the Department of State does not provide direct medical care, such as vaccines, to private U.S. citizens abroad.

In addition to the risk posed by COVID-19 in Haiti, civil unrest, violent crime, and kidnapping, coupled with weak security and health infrastructure, pose

increased threats to the safety and well-being of U.S. Citizens throughout Haiti. The Embassy is extremely limited in its capacity to respond to U.S. Citizens in distress throughout the country. Consequently, U.S. Citizens must rely primarily – and potentially solely – on local authorities and resources for assistance. The U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens that Haiti has the highest (Level 4) [Travel Advisory](#), and urges extreme caution to anyone deciding to travel to and/or remain in Haiti.

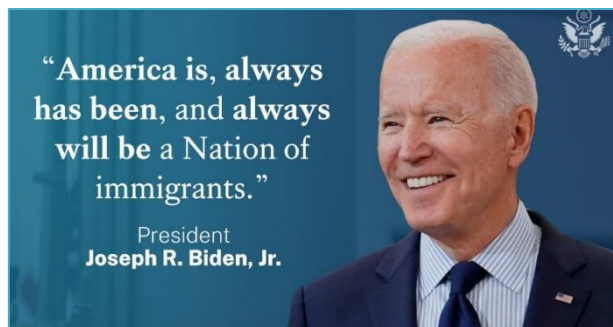
On a bright note, I'd like to wish you all a Happy Pride Month, which we also celebrate in June. This newsletter explores the history of Pride Month, starting with the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan, NY, through today's continued fight towards equal rights for all. And for the first time ever, the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince is flying the Pride flag, along with U.S. Embassies and Consulates in numerous countries around the world.

# Ask the Consul: Immigrant Visa Processes

Each month we'll be answering some of your frequently asked questions. For June, we're focusing on the immigrant visa process.

**Q: As a U.S. citizen, for which members of my family can I file an immigrant visa petition? And if I am a Lawful Permanent Resident?**

**A:** U.S. citizens can file an immigrant visa petition for their spouse, son, daughter, parent, brother, and/or sister. They can also file a visa petition for their fiancé. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) may file petitions for their spouse and unmarried sons or daughters. Learn more about family-based immigration at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov).



**Q: What are the different steps in the process for applying for a family member and how do I get started?**

**A:** [Click here](#) to see each step of the immigrant visa process. First, U.S. citizens or LPR petitioners residing in the U.S. must file Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If USCIS approves the petition, the file proceeds to the [National Visa Center](#) (NVC). You will then be asked to pay fees and submit an [affidavit of support](#) with other supporting documents. After the petition is complete (“documentarily qualified”), NVC will notify you that your case is pending scheduling at the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince. Make sure NVC has the most up-to-date contact information to schedule an interview. Before your interview, please [follow these steps](#), which include scheduling a medical examination. At the interview make sure to bring original versions of your documents, especially the original birth certificates of all applicants and children. Many of the immigrant visa applicants that we see at the Embassy do not come to the interview with all the required documents which causes delays in the processing of their cases. However, there is an easy fix! Each applicant should [read our checklist](#) and confirm they have all the documents needed before the interview.

**Q: How long does the Immigrant Visa process take, from beginning to end?**

**A:** The length of time for the immigrant visa process varies depending on the category of visa. Due to the recent increase in incidence of COVID-19 in Haiti and for the health and safety of our clients and staff, the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince is prioritizing the cases of adopted children of U.S. citizens, cases in which an applicant would otherwise “age out” of a visa category, and certain emergency cases. You can log in to our [Consular Electronic Application Center](#) (CEAC) to check your status, receive messages, and manage your case.

**Q: After being issued an immigrant visa and becoming an LPR, can I still come to Haiti as often as I would like?**

**A:** LPRs are free to travel outside the U.S., and temporary or brief travel usually does not affect your LPR status. However, if it is determined that you have not maintained residence in the U.S., you will be found to have “abandoned” your LPR status. A general guide is whether you have been absent from the U.S. for more than a year. [Click here](#) to learn more about international travel as an LPR.

For more information about immigrant visas, go to:

- [U.S. Visa Information for Haiti](#)
- [Immigrant Visa Process](#)
- [Family Immigration](#)
- [U.S. Embassy Port au Prince Website](#)

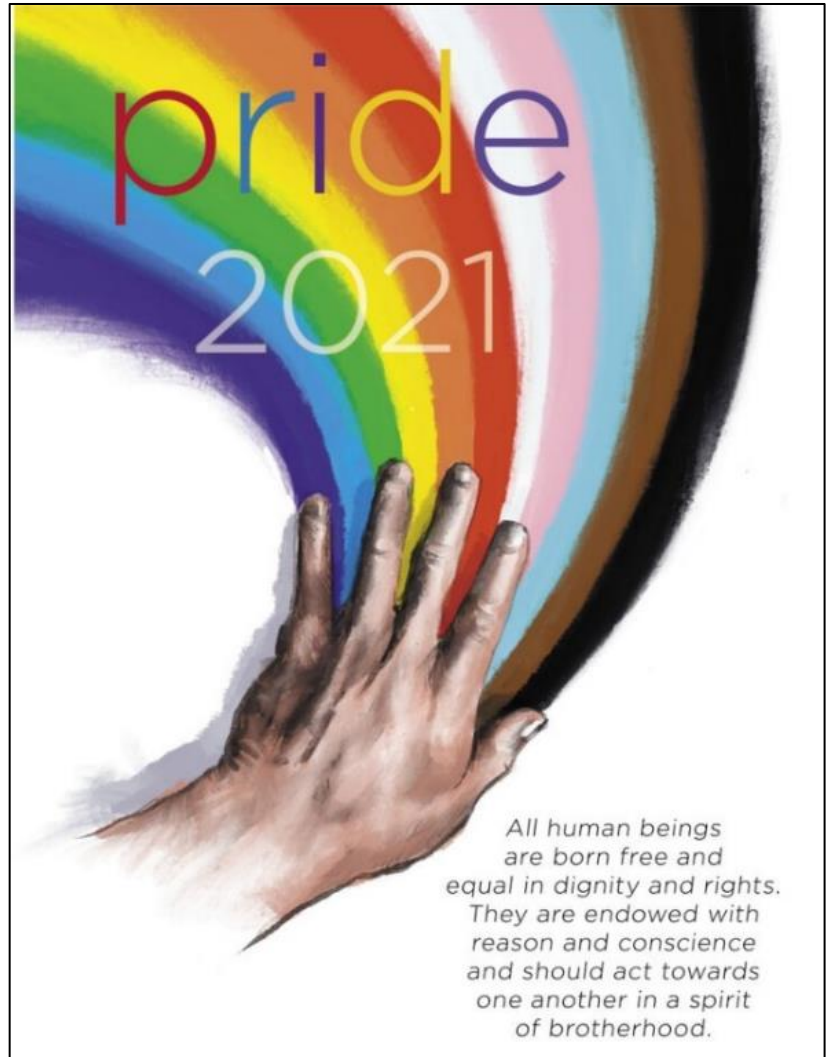
**Q: Is it possible to expedite an immigrant visa case?**

**A:** Yes, immigrant visa applicants who meet specific criteria may request an expedited appointment if the case is already “documentarily qualified” with NVC, depending on the Embassy’s appointment availability. [Click here](#) to learn more about requesting an expedited appointment.

## Celebrating LGBTQI+ Pride Month

June is LGBTQI+ Pride Month:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan, New York. The Stonewall Uprising, led by transgender women of color including Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, was a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States. In the United States in the 1970s, the last Sunday in June was initially celebrated as "Gay Pride Day," but the actual day was flexible. In major cities across the nation the "day" soon grew to encompass a month-long series of events. The purpose of the commemorative month is to recognize the impact of, and continued fight toward equal rights for individuals who identify as LGBTQI+.



LGBTQI+ people all over the world continue to face severe stigma, discrimination, exclusion, and repression. A record number of transgender Americans were killed in 2020, many of them people of color. Even in countries with legal protections, LGBTQI+ people face alarmingly high rates of violence and discrimination, often limiting their access to basic social services. This marginalization in turn can trap people in cycles of extreme poverty and poor health.

The following is an excerpt from the White House's Proclamation on LGBTQI+ Pride Month 2021:

*"The uprising at the Stonewall Inn in June 1969, sparked a liberation movement — a call to action that continues to inspire us to live up to our Nation's promise of equality, liberty, and justice for all. Pride is a time to recall the trials the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQI+) community has endured and to rejoice in the triumphs of trailblazing individuals who have bravely fought — and continue to fight — for full equality. Pride is both a jubilant communal celebration of visibility and a personal celebration of self-worth and dignity... I call upon the people of the United States to recognize the achievements of the LGBTQI+ community, to celebrate the great diversity of the American people, and to wave their flags of pride high." ~President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.*



# Health Resources & COVID-19

- 👉 **COVID-19:** For updated information about COVID-19 in Haiti, including where to get tested, entry/exit requirements, and quarantine information, [please visit the Embassy website](#).
- 👉 Make sure you are current on your vaccines, including tetanus and rabies. Treatment for prevention of rabies after you have been potentially exposed is non-existent in Haiti.
- 👉 Know where doctors and the closest emergency room are in your area. Please visit the [Embassy website](#) for a list of hospitals and medical professionals in Haiti.
- 👉 Always keep basic medications and supplies on hand. Invest in a quality first aid kit and keep one in your car and at home.
- 👉 Always have medical insurance, including medevac insurance. If you need to be medically evacuated out of Haiti, you should contact a medevac company or an air ambulance service. Visit the U.S. Embassy website for a list of [Air Ambulance Services](#).

## 4 Haiti – Level 4: Very High Level of COVID-19

The CDC has issued a [Level 4 health advisory](#) for Haiti. Travelers should avoid all travel to Haiti. Travel may increase chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

## Five Things to Consider *Before* Traveling Abroad During Atlantic Hurricane Season

1. Be informed.
2. Consider purchasing additional travel insurance.
3. Prepare an emergency plan.
4. Monitor local news sources and the National Hurricane Center.
5. Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

(Photo: © Shutterstock)



# Travel & Security

## 4

### Haiti – Level 4: Do Not Travel

The U.S. Department of State has renewed the highest level “[Level 4: Do Not Travel](#)” travel advisory for Haiti due to kidnapping, crime, and civil unrest, and COVID-19.

#### If you are in Haiti...

- Remember that demonstrations, tire burning, and roadblocks are frequent, unpredictable, and can turn violent at any time. Emergency response, including ambulance service, is limited or non-existent.
- Always carry your cell phone and ensure it is charged before you travel. Ensure you have important numbers programmed into your phone. Consider using code names for family or friends.
- Avoid demonstrations and crowds. If you encounter a roadblock, turn around and get to a safe area.
- Arrange airport transfers and hotels in advance, or have your host meet you upon arrival.
- Travel by vehicle to minimize walking in public, and travel in groups of at least two people, whenever possible.
- Always keep vehicle doors and windows locked, with valuables out of sight.
- Exercise caution and alertness, especially when driving through markets and other traffic-congested areas.
- Do not physically resist any robbery attempt/kidnapping.
- Do not travel in areas unfamiliar to you and be aware that navigation apps are highly unreliable in Haiti.
- Always make sure your vehicle is in good driving condition.
- Travel at times when traffic is expected to be lighter and avoid travel after dark in Port au Prince.
- Ensure adequate spacing between vehicles to provide options for evading a potentially dangerous situation.
- Patronize shops or restaurants that provide secure, enclosed, and well-lit parking.
- Always inform someone, such as a family member or friend, of where you are going and what time you expect to return. Minimize broadly publishing your travel plans on social media.
- **Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** to receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in Haiti, and help the Embassy contact you in the case of emergency. To enroll, visit: [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov), or click the image below.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Embassy Address:

U.S. Embassy Port au Prince  
Boulevard du 15 Octobre  
Tabarre 41, Route de Tabarre, Port au Prince, Haiti

### Online Resources:

- ✓ U.S. Embassy Port au Prince's website: [ht.usembassy.gov](http://ht.usembassy.gov)
- ✓ American Citizen Services (ACS) website: [ht.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services](http://ht.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services)
- ✓ U.S. Embassy Port au Prince on Facebook: [facebook.com/USEmbassyHaiti](https://facebook.com/USEmbassyHaiti)
- ✓ ACS on Facebook: [facebook.com/ACSPortauPrince](https://facebook.com/ACSPortauPrince)
- ✓ Haiti Travel Advisory: [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/haiti-travel-advisory.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/haiti-travel-advisory.html)

To respond to your inquiry most effectively, we strongly encourage you to write to our topic-specific e-mail addresses as follows:

- ✓ American Citizen Services: [acspap@state.gov](mailto:acspap@state.gov)
- ✓ Visas: [support-haiti@ustraveldocs.com](mailto:support-haiti@ustraveldocs.com)

**In case of a life or death emergency regarding U.S. citizens in Haiti, please call: +509-2229-8000**



***Disclaimer:** This newsletter is published by the Consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince as a service for U.S. citizens living or traveling in Haiti. It provides security and other general information to people who have subscribed by enrolling with the Embassy. Please feel free to pass it along to other interested people. If you would like to receive your own copy directly, enroll with the Embassy through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)). Comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter are welcomed at [acspap@state.gov](mailto:acspap@state.gov).*