

U.S. and China to Increase Visa Reciprocity Beginning November 12

November 11, 2014

The United States and the People's Republic of China will jointly increase the validity of short-term business and tourist visas, as well as student and exchange visas, issued to each other's citizens in an initiative that starts Wednesday, November 12.

Chinese citizens who qualify for B-1/B-2 nonimmigrant visas are now eligible to receive a multiple-entry business or tourist travel visa valid for up to ten years, the longest visa validity period possible under U.S. law. Chinese citizens who qualify for F, M, or J nonimmigrant visas based on an academic or exchange programs are now eligible to receive multiple-entry visas valid for up to five years or the length of the program.

American citizens who qualify for Chinese short-term business and tourist visas may also receive multiple-entry visas valid for up to ten years. Eligible American students may receive student residency permits valid for up to five years, depending on the length of their academic program.

Previously, U.S. and Chinese business travelers and tourists had to apply for a new visa each year they visited the U.S. or China. Chinese students traveling abroad were also often required to apply for a new visa before returning to the U.S. to resume their course of study.

The change in policy is designed to increase bilateral travel, exchange, trade, and investment between the U.S. and China. More U.S. nonimmigrant visa applications are processed in U.S. Consular Posts in China than in any other country. Applications processed in China account for over 14 percent of all U.S. nonimmigrant visa applications worldwide. The changes in visa validity will not impact visa eligibility requirements or current processing fees.