

Extension of validity for National Interest Exceptions (NIEs) for Travelers from China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, the Schengen Area, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and India

Last Updated: July 6, 2021

On June 29, 2021, the Department of State extended the validity of National Interest Exceptions (NIE) for travelers subject to restrictions under Presidential Proclamations (PPs) 9984, 9992, 10143, 10199, and similar subsequent PPs related to the spread of COVID-19. Unless otherwise indicated, existing NIEs will be valid for 12 months from the date of approval and for multiple entries, as long as they are used for the purpose under which they were granted.

This extension applies to travelers subject to these proclamations due to their presence in China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, the Schengen area, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and India who currently have approved NIEs or who were granted NIEs in conjunction with a visa application.

Among the qualifications for NIEs are those traveling to provide vital support or executive direction to critical infrastructure; those traveling to provide vital support or executive direction for significant economic activity in the United States; journalists; travel due to extraordinary humanitarian circumstances; or travel in support of national security or public health. Students holding F or M visas and travelers with immigrant or fiancé visas have been granted NIEs and do not need to obtain NIEs in advance from a consular section.

Travelers should contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate before traveling if they have not previously been approved for a NIE and have a valid visa in the appropriate class or have a valid ESTA authorization for travel under the Visa Waiver Program and seek to travel for purposes consistent with ESTA authorization. If an NIE is approved, they may travel on either a valid visa or ESTA authorization, as appropriate. Each approved NIE is valid for 12 months from the date of approval and may be used to travel to the

AILA Doc. No. 21070638. (Posted 7/6/21)

United States multiple times for the purpose indicated in the approved NIE.

The 12 month and multiple entry extension applies retroactively to all existing National Interest Exceptions approved in the last 12 months. Travelers who have been approved for a National Interest Exception may travel to the United States using their existing NIE if it was approved in the last 12 months and if the purpose of travel is the same as the purpose for which it was granted.

Travelers who need visas and who believe their travel to be in the United States' national interest should review the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for instructions on how to apply, bearing in mind that many consular sections have a backlog due to the pandemic. Approved visas applicants will be considered for an NIE as part of the application process.