

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: August 12, 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. NIE eligibility for students who have been present in Brazil, China, India, Iran or South Africa applies to programs that begin on or after August 1, 2021. Additional information is available [here](#).

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 approval for travel under the Visa Waiver Program and seek to travel for purposes consistent with ESTA approval. If an NIE is approved, they may travel

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on either a valid visa or ESTA approval, as appropriate. Each approved NIE is valid for 12 months from the date of approval and may be used to travel to the United States multiple times for the purpose indicated in the approved NIE.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this announcement extend the validity of NIEs issued prior to the effective date of June 29, 2021?

Yes, this extension of NIE validity to 12 months applies to NIEs issued before June 29, 2021.

I received an NIE prior to June 29, 2021, and my visa has an annotation limiting my entry, for example to single entry within 30 days. Is my NIE now valid for 12 months and multiple entry despite the annotation?

Yes, NIEs are now valid for 12 months and multiple entry, regardless of the annotation on previously issued visas for NIEs.

Does this apply to all NIEs issued by the Department of State, including those in which a new visa was not issued at the time the NIE was approved?

Yes, this applies to all NIEs issued by the Department of State, including for those travelling without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program.

If I receive an NIE to travel from one region under a COVID-19-related presidential proclamation, can I use the same NIE to travel within 12 months from a separate region that is also under a COVID-19-related presidential proclamation restricting travel?

Yes, all valid NIEs approved by the Department of State apply to all COVID-19-based Presidential Proclamations.

Will Customs and Border Protection inspectors at the ports of entry recognize State Department-issued NIEs as valid for 12 months and multiple entries if traveling for the same

purpose?

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purpose:

Customs and Border Protection will recognize the extended validity of all NIEs approved by the Department of State.

Does DOS' NIE extension announcement apply to or affect NIE waivers issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) / Customs and Border Protection (CBP)?

No. There is no change to the validity period of DHS/CBP issued NIEs.