

# Visa Classifications

The following visa classifications can be used to bring professional hospitality workers and hospitality management trainees to the U.S.:

❖ Professional Hospitality Workers

**H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers:** Hospitality professionals who possess a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in a specialized field and who are coming to the U.S. to perform services in that field may qualify for H-1B status.

**O-1 Workers of Extraordinary Ability:** Hospitality professionals who can boast a significant record of achievement in the field may qualify for classification as O-1 "extraordinary ability" workers.

**TN NAFTA Professionals:** Canadian (and to a lesser degree Mexican) hospitality workers may qualify for immigration status under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

**H-2B Temporary Workers:** Skilled and unskilled workers who come to the U.S. to meet temporary or seasonal needs in positions for which qualified U.S. workers are not available may qualify for H-2B status.

**E-2 Treaty Investors and Essential Employees:** Nationals of countries that have a qualifying invest-

ment treaty with the U.S., and who invest a substantial amount of capital in a bona fide U.S. enterprise can use the E-2 category to sponsor themselves and their essential employees for U.S. work authorization. A list of qualifying treaty countries can be found at [travel.state.gov/reciprocity/list\\_of\\_treaty\\_countries.htm](http://travel.state.gov/reciprocity/list_of_treaty_countries.htm).

**L-1 Multinational Managers & Specialized Knowledge Workers:** Individuals who are coming to the U.S. to work in a managerial or specialized knowledge capacity for a U.S. company, and who have worked for at least one year out of the preceding three years for a foreign affiliate of that U.S. company in a managerial or specialized knowledge capacity, may be eligible for L-1A or L-1B status.

❖ Hospitality Management Trainees

**J-1 Exchange Visitors:** The purpose of the J-1 exchange visitor program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges. J-1 exchange visitors must have sufficient scholastic preparation or professional training to participate in the designated training program, including knowledge of the English language.

**H-3 Trainees:** An H-3 training program must offer a training opportunity

that is not available in the trainee's own country, and that will benefit the trainee in pursuing a career outside the United States. H-3 trainees may not be placed in a position which is in the normal operation of the business and in which citizens and resident workers are regularly employed, and they may not engage in productive employment unless such employment is incidental and necessary to the training.

**Q-1 International Cultural Exchange Visitors:** The Q-1 international cultural exchange program provides practical training and employment, the essential purpose of which is the sharing of the history, culture, and traditions of the participant's home country with the American public. Q-1 exchange visitors must be at least 18 years old and must be able to communicate effectively about the cultural attributes of their home country.

**F-1 Optional Practical Training:** F-1 Optional Practical Training provides academic students who are completing an Associate's or Bachelor's degree program at a U.S. college or university with practical exposure to their field of study. F-1 students can request authorization for "optional practical training" on a part-time basis while still in school, and on a full-time basis thereafter.