



# **VISA APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

## **U.S. CITIZENS**

**2025-2026**

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## INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are aimed to help you through the application process for your visa to travel to Spain. We strongly encourage all applicants to confirm the information with their local Consulate General of Spain on their websites. The links to the consulates can be found in these guidelines and on our website.

Note that all the information provided by the consular offices overrules any type of information provided here.

**\*You will be applying for a Student/Study Visa with some requirements waived for NALCAP recipients. The student visa falls into the category of national visas.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Congratulations! Now that you have accepted your NALCAP assignment for the 2025-2026 school year, you are one step closer to being in Spain. As a recipient of the grant you have just been awarded, your stay in Spain will fall under a Study/Student Visa.

Please note that:

- You must have a visa to participate in the program. It will provide you with an obligatory legal status of residency in Spain while you are in the program.
- You cannot leave for Spain before obtaining a visa because you cannot apply for the visa in Spain.
- You must check with the consulate in your jurisdiction as to when and how you can submit the documentation for your visa application. Consulates may have different procedures.
- Your US passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the last day of your participation in the NALCAP program (add on at least 6 months to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, in all of Spain except for Madrid which is June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026).
- Note that the procedures may vary from consulate to consulate and that the entire process may take up to various weeks depending on both the American offices and the consulate.

**WE URGE YOU NOT TO PURCHASE YOUR PLANE TICKETS (UNLESS THEY ARE REFUNDABLE PLANE TICKETS OR THEY PERMIT DATE CHANGES)** until you have undergone the complete visa application process – this entails having submitted the visa application and having received the actual visa in hand. This will prevent you from experiencing possible or unexpected scenarios in the future, such as having to pay

unexpected out-of-pocket change fees because on the date of your departure you still did not receive your visa. Please do not assume you will have your visa by a certain date. Visa processing may take up to various weeks depending on the consulate.

## BEFORE STARTING THE PROCESS

### What do you need to know regarding the general timeline?

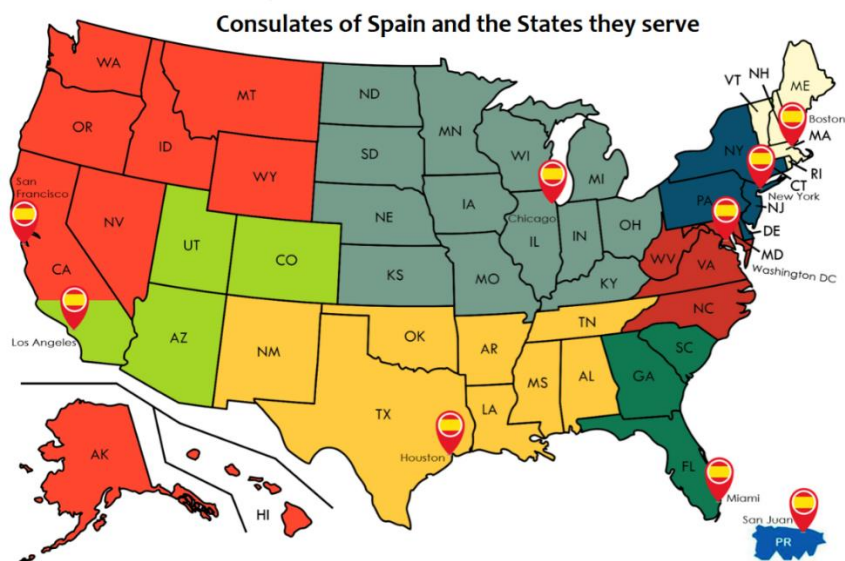
Once you have a **PLAZA ACEPTADA** status on the PROFEX 2 portal or on May 1st, it is time to start all the procedures related to obtaining the visa. Further on in this document you can see the steps you will have to follow.

### What is your local Consulate?

First, you need to locate your local Consulate General of Spain in the United States that provides the consular services for one of the following:

- a. State of residence OR
- b. State where your driver’s license or State ID was issued OR
- c. State where you go to school (you will need to have a student ID)

Each consulate provides services for several states, so please make sure you correctly identify your local consulate office. To help you with this, we are providing the following map. You will also find direct access to all the consular district office websites below (just click on the name of the consulate). This link will take you directly to the NALCAP student visa section of the Consulate website.



### **Consulate General of Spain, Boston**

Serving the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Maine.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Houston**

Serving the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Chicago**

Serving the States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Los Angeles**

Serving the States of California (Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Barbara y Ventura Counties), Arizona, Colorado, and Utah.

### **Consulate General of Spain, San Francisco**

Serving the States of Alaska, California (except counties pertaining to Los Angeles – see above), Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, and U.S. Territories in the Pacific.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Miami**

Serving the States of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.

### **Consulate General of Spain, New York**

Serving the States of New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Washington D.C.**

Serving the States of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington D.C.

### **Consulate General of Spain, Puerto Rico**

Serving the Islands of Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## **What is BLS?**

BLS is the outsourced partner to most of the Consulates General of Spain in the U.S. The Spain Visa Application Centre of BLS functions as a collection and managing center to guarantee a better service.

This means that, although your local consulate is the institution responsible for issuing the visa, it is likely that most of the paperwork will have to be done through BLS International.

Please refer to the links above for details on each of the consulates.

### **What do I need to know about the FBI background check?**

A screening is necessary for the NALCAP program as language assistants will be in school classrooms in Spain. The FBI background check will include a comprehensive criminal record check against the FBI's national database, which will include arrest and conviction history. A fingerprint check is also run against the FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) and against the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, as well as against sex offender and terrorist watchlist databases.

This is [the link](#) to request your FBI background check.

If you have recently lived in another country for 6 months or more, then you need a background check from that country with its corresponding apostille. You should check the consulate website for detailed information.

Please note that the background check is **only valid for 5 months**. So, if it expires by the time you submit it as part of your visa application, it will not be valid and therefore will not be accepted. If it is June and you still haven't gotten a PLAZA ACEPTADA status, then also request the background check, as you will probably not apply for a visa in November. Please be aware of the time frames.

### **What documentation do consulates usually request?**

Although the following are the generally required documents, please check with your consulate and/or BLS for specific document requirements as they may vary depending on each consulate.

- 1) Your **U.S. passport together with a photocopy**. Please note that it must be signed **and valid for at least 6 months after the last day of your participation in the program** (Add 6 months to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, in all of Spain except for Madrid which is June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026).
- 2) Your **driver's license or State issued ID** or **student ID** in addition to a photocopy (in some consulates you may be asked for a notarized copy) as proof of eligibility for the consulate jurisdiction.
- 3) **1 or 2 (depending on the consulate) recent passport photos** on a white background.

4) The **original copy of your Letter of Acceptance (Carta de Nombramiento)** from the regional education office offering you a placement in Spain, as well as a photocopy of this document.

\*This letter is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** as it contains all the pertinent information about your grant, the duration of your stay in Spain, the school where you have been placed (with name, address, and phone number), as well as the information concerning your health insurance policy. All this information is needed to process your visa application.

5) **A money order** for the visa processing fee, currently at: **US \$160** (for US citizens). The fee must be paid by money order, made payable to Consulado General de España.

6) **An original medical certificate** (copies will not be accepted) and in some cases, a translation of this document into Spanish (please check with your consulate about the specific content and translation requirements for this certificate) as it may vary according to each consulate. Some consulates offer a medical certificate form on their website. Keep in mind that this document is only valid for 3 months.

7) **An FBI background check** (original document), with the apostille certification and officially translated into Spanish by a certified translator. FBI background checks do not need to be notarized as they are expedited by the U.S. Department of State. Do not unstaple the apostille under any reason. It will not be valid if it is not stapled to the background check. The background check is only valid for 5 months. Please consider all possible time frames for the submission of your application.

8) **A National Visa application form** properly filled out and a photocopy of this document. Please fill it out BEFORE YOUR VISIT. See page 11.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please make sure all the original documents are returned to you, as they may be requested by your school in Spain for further legal formalities.

## What is an apostille?

An apostille is an international notarization of a document issued by the United States Secretary of State. The apostille is a certificate attached to your original document to verify that it is legitimate and authentic so it will be accepted by other countries. It is only used for international purposes.

Your background check will need to be apostilled. No other document for your visa application will require it. For an FBI background check, you will need an apostille issued by the US Department of State.

This is the [link](#) to request your apostille certificate for the FBI background check.

On that link you will find a form which you must download and fill out. Then send it along to the address listed on the website with the processing fee and the background check.

**Processing times are currently listed at 8-11 weeks.**

This waiting time is the reason why we ask you to start requesting the background check and the apostille when you have a PLAZA ACEPTADA status on PROFEX 2 or in the month of June. In this way, by the time you receive your Letter of Acceptance from your regional education office in Spain, you will have or be close to having all the necessary paperwork to then submit to your local Consulate of Spain.

**\*Your apostille will come stapled to your background check. PLEASE DO NOT EVER UNSTAPLE IT. If you remove the apostille, the document will lose its validity. And you will have to start the process all over again (that may include the possible 11-week waiting period).**

Make sure you make various photocopies of your background check and the apostille (never removing the staple) to take to the consulate and to Spain.

## What do you need to know about the translations?

At most consulates, the background check must be translated into Spanish by a sworn/certified translator. Some consulates only ask for the translation of the background check while others also ask for the translation of the apostille. Please consult your consulate website. In addition, consulates provide a list of official translators on their website.

## What is the *Carta de Nombramiento* (Letter of Acceptance)?

The *Carta de Nombramiento* is a document provided by the education office of the region in which you have been selected, detailing the conditions of the assigned position.

After moving to the status of PLAZA ACEPTADA in Profex 2, the Ministry of Education will communicate your name to the regional education office, which will process this document and send it to you at the email address that you provided on your application. The time it takes to receive this letter may vary.

The *Carta de Nombramiento* is of vital importance because it is one of the documents you will need for the visa application. Note that you cannot apply for a visa until you have



this document. It contains important information that is needed to process your visa application.

You will need to take the letter plus a copy of it to your local consulate. **Keep the digital document as you may need it in Spain for further legal formalities.**

We kindly request to keep in mind that neither the Embassy of Spain nor the Spanish Consulates have anything to do with the issuing of the Letter of Acceptance, so they cannot request it or rush it or any other matter of that nature. You must have the *Carta de Nombramiento* before handing in your visa application paperwork.

## What is the meaning of each term in the application?

In the following table you can find some tips and translations of terms that may be useful when filling in your visa application.

**\*Very important: Please keep in mind that the date format in Europe is: Day/Month/Year DD/MM/YYYY**

Item	Description	You write or check box
1	Apellido(s)	Last name
2	Apellido(s) de nacimiento (apellido(s) anterior(es))	Previous last names if any
3	Nombre(s)	First name
4	Fecha de nacimiento	Date of birth
5	Lugar de nacimiento	Place of birth (City, State)
6	País de Nacimiento	Country of birth
7	Nacionalidad actual	USA / Current nationality
8	Sexo	Sex
9	Estado civil	Marital Status
10	Menores de edad	n/a
11	Número de documento nacional de identidad, si procede	Only if Spanish citizen. If not, leave blank
12	Tipo de documento de viaje	Check “Pasaporte ordinario / Ordinary Passport”
13	Número del documento de viaje	Passport number
14	Fecha de expedición	Issued Date
15	Válido hasta	Valid until date
16	Expedido por	Issued by US Dept. of State
17	Domicilio postal y dirección de correo electrónico del solicitante	Postal address, email address and phone number
18	Residente en un país distinto del país de nacionalidad actual	Leave Blank

19	Profesión actual	Current profession
20	Motivo principal del viaje	Check “Estudios / Studies”
21	Fecha de entrada prevista en España	The date you plan on arriving in Spain
22	Número de entradas solicitadas	Check “multiples / multiple entries”
23	Domicilio postal del solicitante en España	Address of school or regional education office
24-27	NIE	Leave Blank
28	Nombre, dirección postal, número de teléfono y correo electrónico del centro de estudios o investigación.	Contact information for your school or regional education office
28	Fecha prevista de inicio de los estudios o investigación	Intended starting date of studies or research October 1, 2024
28	Fecha prevista de finalización de los estudios o investigación	30/06/25 or otherwise indicated on letter of acceptance
29	En caso de desplazamiento temporal de menores....	Leave Blank
30-31	Lugar, fecha y firma.	Place, date, and Signature

All the Consulates General of Spain are familiar with the NALCAP Program, and the staff there are willing to help you to process your visa diligently and as quickly as possible. Please bear in mind that the visa process **is the sole responsibility of the Consulates General of Spain and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, and not the Ministry of Education of Spain. **Make sure you carefully read the info on the consulate website.** At times, they might not have the staffing to answer emails.

## VISA APPLICATION STEPS

### STEP 1: GET FAMILIAR WITH THE PROCESS, LOCATE YOUR CONSULATE AND VERIFY SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

**You need to start with this step before June 1st or when you move to the status of PLAZA ACEPTADA in Profex 2.**

It is important to carefully read these guidelines and your consulate's requirements to take some time to learn about the process. Find out which consulate you need to work with to process your visa and become familiar with its website, operational times, and contact information. Although the information on our website is up to date, we remind you that your local consulate website is your main source of information to ensure that you are informed of any last-minute updates.

Please read the instructions for your visa application carefully and **start to collect all the necessary paperwork** as soon as possible. Below you can find general information

about the required documentation. Check your consulate's website for specific information.

## STEP 2: REQUEST THE BACKGROUND CHECK

**You need to start with this step just after June 1st OR when you move to the status of PLAZA ACEPTADA in Profex 2.**

Above you can find the link for the background check application.

## STEP 3: REQUEST THE APOSTILLE

**You need to start with this step just after you have the background check.**

Above you can find the apostille information and the link to apply for an apostille.

## STEP 4: GET THE TRANSLATIONS

**You need to start with this step after you have the background check and the apostille.**

Above you can find more information about translations.

## STEP 5: APPLY FOR THE VISA

**You need to start with this step after you verify all your documentation is ready.**

After making sure you have all the documentation, including the letter of acceptance, you can apply for the visa.

Please remember that you will be applying for a Student/Study Visa (a specific type of national visa).

Check with your consulate and/or BLS on how and when to submit your application paperwork. Depending on each consulate, you may be able to do it by appointment (phone, online or walk-ins) or you may be able to mail in the paperwork.

Please make sure that you will have all the required documentation. If you don't have all your correct paperwork, you will experience delays in the already lengthy process.

Normally, the documentation sent from Spain, such as the letter of acceptance, goes in DIN A4 format. When printing these documents in the US in letter size format, it is common that some of the information is left out. **Make the necessary printing adjustments to reflect all the information on the printed paper.**

You should also have extra copies of each required document for your appointment, as well as to take with you to Spain.

This process usually takes between 3 to 8 weeks.

Please read carefully all the points in the "before starting the process" section of this guide before applying.

## STEP 6: ATTEND YOUR APPOINTMENT AT THE CONSULATE OR THE BLS OFFICE

If you are requested to go to the consulate or BLS office in person, make sure you are on time for your appointment and that you have all the necessary documents with you. Some consulates may penalize you if you do not keep your appointment. And please be aware that if you do not take all the required documents to your appointment, you will have to return home and make an appointment for another day.

If you are mailing in your application, please make sure you have all the documents. This will avoid delays in processing your visa application.

## STEP 7: REQUEST YOUR TEMPORARY RESIDENT ALIEN ID NUMBER (NIE - NÚMERO DE IDENTIFICACIÓN DE EXTRANJERO)

**You need to start with this step after you arrive in Spain as your visa is **ONLY VALID FOR 90 DAYS.****

**Within the first 30 days after your arrival in Spain** you must go to your local police station or immigration office (*Oficina de Extranjería*) and request your temporary resident alien ID number (*NIE - Número de Identificación de Extranjero*) if you did not receive it on your visa and your residency card (*TIE- Tarjeta de Identificación Extranjero*).

This residency card, the TIE will cover your full stay in Spain and thus make it legal for you to be in Spain. **APPLY FOR IT AS SOON AS YOU GET THERE.** It may take weeks to get an appointment depending on where in Spain you are located. In some cases, you may also need the TIE to receive your stipend. Some banks in Spain may require it to open a bank account. And if you do not have a Spanish bank account, your stipend will be delayed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not let your visa expire or you will have to return to the U.S. and apply for a new one. You cannot apply for a visa in Spain.**

For this final step in Spain, you will need to take the following documents (all the documents must be the original documents – photocopies will not be accepted):

1. your visa
2. your acceptance letter
3. your medical certificate



4. your background check

**\*It is a good idea to ask your school or regional education offices in Spain for help with this step.**

## **ADDITIONAL INFO**

For information on a wide array of issues that often affect Americans traveling or living abroad, please refer to [TRAVEL.STATE.GOV](https://travel.state.gov)

For travel issues, we ask you to keep abreast of the ever-changing travel requirements to and from Spain and the U.S. A good source is [the American Embassy in Madrid website](#).

## **FOR QUESTIONS CONCERNING VISA APPLICATIONS**

Any questions regarding visa applications should ONLY be directed to your local consulate and/or BLS.