

# Applying for a Colombian Visa

## An Introduction

We are an innovative international law firm that offers comprehensive legal services to clients in Colombia and around the world



# Colombian Visas

Whether engaging in tourism, planning an extended stay or focused on long-term residency, it is essential that you understand how the visa application process works in Colombia.

## Understanding the Visa Application Process is Key

Anyone who has applied for a Colombian visa will tell you that the process can be confusing, inconsistent and often unpredictable. A seemingly straightforward application can be denied without a clear explanation. The government might demand that an applicant submit additional documentation that is irrelevant to their specific visa application. More disturbingly, an application can be "Unadmitted" and/or denied for failure to provide key documentation that was previously submitted.

As the premiere visa service provider in the market, Langon is committed to simplifying the visa application process for all our clients worldwide. Operating since 2009 and with an approval rate of over 98%, our Firm has the knowledge and experience necessary to help our clients develop personalized visa strategies that allow them to stay in Colombia as long as they need.

## Our Visa Application Services

Langon provides comprehensive assistance to foreigners interested in applying for a Colombian visa anywhere in the world.

Langon clients can take advantage of the following:

### Unparalleled Service:

If you have ever dealt with service providers in Colombia you already know that client service is often lacking. Documentation is not always provided by set deadlines. Phone calls are not always returned promptly. Emails go unanswered. Unlike local alternatives, Langon is committed to providing our clients with world-class client service.

### Experience:

Langon has helped thousands of clients secure Colombian visas since 2009.

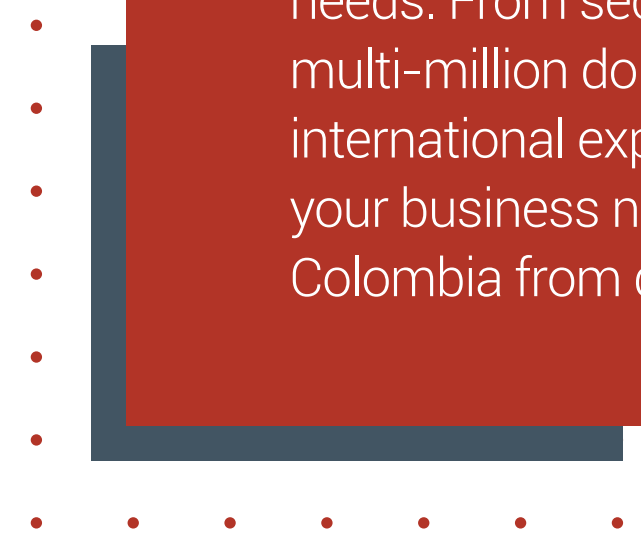
### English-Language Service:

Our legal services are managed by English-speaking attorneys for the convenience of our international clients.

## Our Firm

We are an innovative law firm that offers comprehensive legal services to businesses, private equity entities and high net worth individuals in Colombia and around the world. At Langon, we distinguish ourselves by offering an internationally focused, multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary approach to client service.

The depth and breadth of our practice allows us to provide our clients with creative legal solutions tailored to their specific needs. From securing Colombian visas and negotiating multi-million dollar M&A transactions to developing tax-efficient international expansion strategies, Langon Colombia can help your business navigate the legal and regulatory landscape in Colombia from day one.



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*With a 98% approval rate, Langon has helped thousands of clients secure a Colombian visa since 2009.*



# Preliminary Considerations

Below are key considerations when applying for a Colombian Visa.

## Process Can be Inconsistent and Unpredictable

If there is one consistent rule that governs the visa application process in Colombia is that you should be prepared for inconsistency. Applicants are often bewildered by any number of issues that may come up even before a visa application is actually submitted. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the issues grouped into relevant categories:

### 1. Inconsistent Interpretation of Applicable Regulations:

- different agents at the same government agency may provide different interpretations of the applicable rules and regulations
- different government agencies may provide different interpretations of the applicable rules and regulations
- different foreign consulates may provide different interpretations of the applicable rules and regulations

### 2. Inconsistent/Unpredictable Documentation Requests:

- government requires that an applicant submit



additional documentation while another applicant applying for the same exact visa is immediately approved

- government requires that an applicant submit additional documentation not actually required under applicable rules
- government requires that an applicant submit additional documentation that has NO connection to their specific visa type
- government requires that an applicant submit documentation that had been submitted previously
- government requires that an applicant submit additional documentation by an impossible deadline

### 3. Inconsistent/Visa Application Process:

- the government publishes new regulations that can suddenly and immediately change the way your current visa application strategy is managed, particularly if you are renewing an existing visa.

#### 4. Inconsistent Visa Results:

- an applicant's visa application is "Unadmitted" (defined in the Colombian Visas section of this publication) while a different applicant with the same exact profile and documentation is approved
- an applicant's visa application is denied while a different applicant with the same exact profile and documentation is approved

Because the process can be so unpredictable and arbitrary, visa applicants should coordinate with their local visa provider in order to anticipate specific requirements in advance of the visa application. In particular, applicants should be prepared to secure additional documentation beyond standard requirements that may be requested in order to avoid any unnecessary delays and unexpected expenses.

Finally, given the bureaucratic and often arbitrary nature of the visa application process, we recommend that all applicants exercise patience throughout. In the end, it is important to dot all the "i"s and cross all the "t"s and do all that the government requests, even if doing so appears to not make any sense.

### Visa Application Timelines Vary

In general, Colombian visa authorities have up to 30 days to review and approve a visa, though they reserve the right to extend this period as needed. This timeline may be extended further if visa authorities request additional information/documentation during the visa application process itself.

It should be noted that many visas are approved under the

30 day mark, particularly if you apply from a foreign consulate. Timelines are also affected by how much volume the government authorities are managing. For example, your visa application process may be significantly delayed during the May-August period because by this time many foreigners have run out of tourist days and are looking to secure a visa in order to stay in the country through the end of the calendar year.

In addition, all applicants should consider the applicable visa prep time involved before proceeding with any specific visa strategy. The applicable prep time will vary depending on the basis for your visa application. For example, anyone applying for a Migrant visa based on investment in local real estate will need to complete the property purchase process while someone looking to get a Civil Marriage Visa will need to finalize a civil marriage under local law.

In addition, applicants should look out for any specific regulatory considerations that may be tied to their specific visa strategy. For example, anyone applying for a Migrant visa based on investment in local real estate or being the owner of a local business will need to consider applicable investment thresholds (and, in the case of a Company Owner Visa, the requirement of increasing the paid in capital of their company above requisite threshold) prior to applying.

It should also be noted that, for the most part, the single most important factor in determining how quickly an applicant can apply for a visa is how quickly they can process, procure and/or secure documentation from foreign jurisdictions.

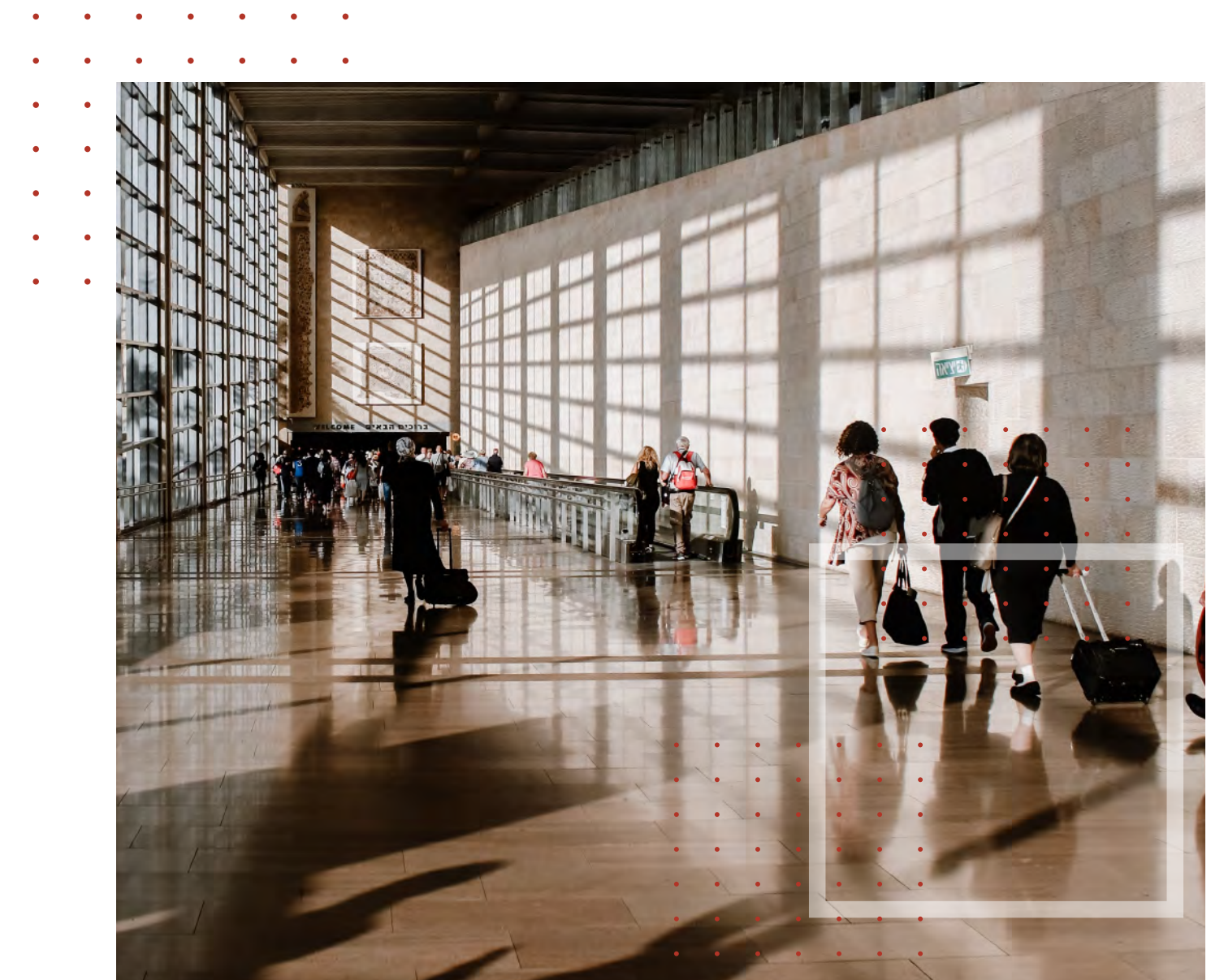
Here is a summary of how long it typically takes to receive approval for many of the most popular visa types. Time ranges include required prep time:

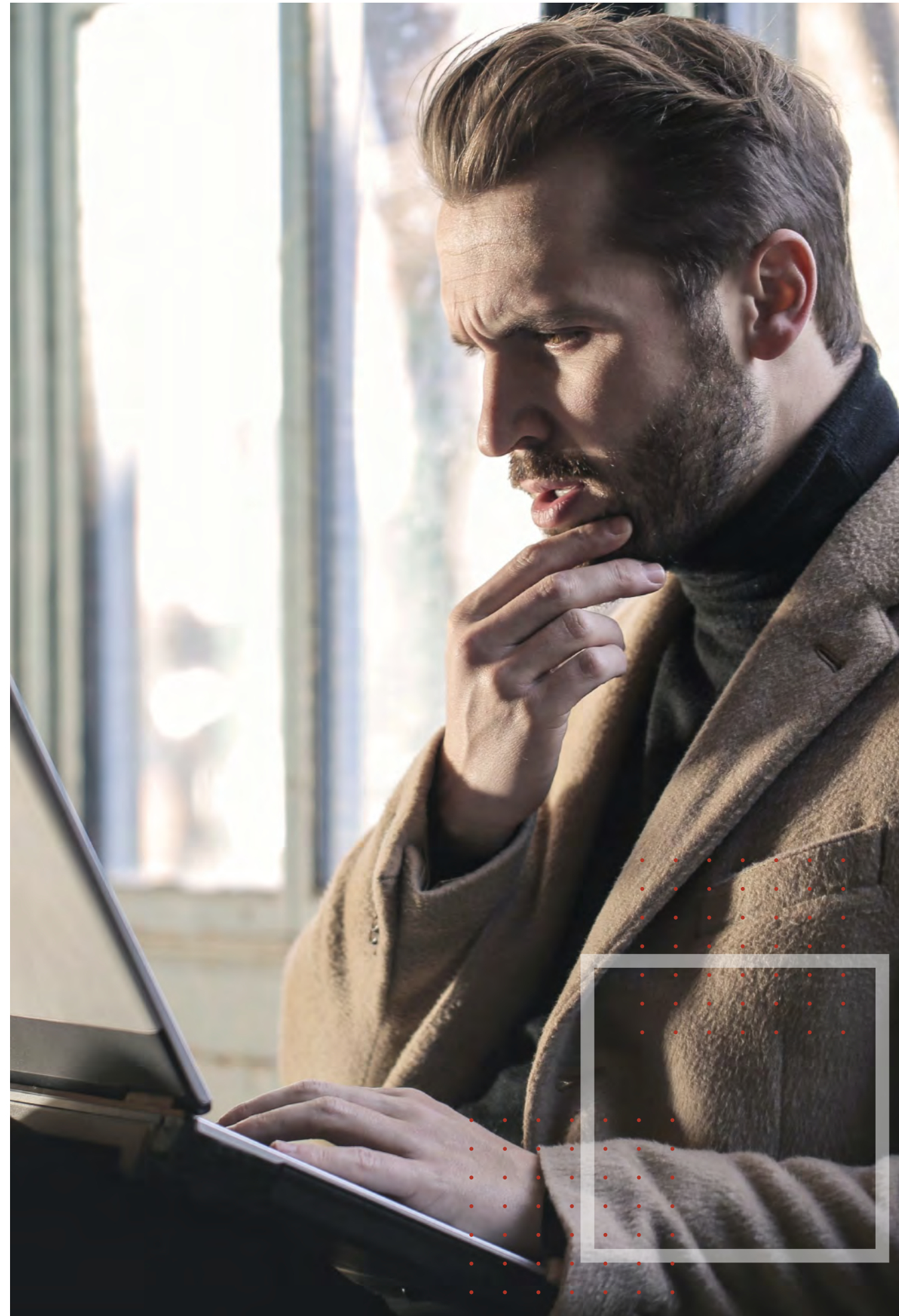
#### 1. Resident Visa:

- **Based on Accumulated Time:** 6 weeks to 2 months.

#### 2. Migrant Visa:

- **Marriage:** 2-3 months from the time marriage process commences.
- **Retirement:** 3-4 months.
- **Company Owner:** 6 weeks to 2 months after starting the company registration process if applying immediately but, ideally, 6-8 months after starting the company registration process.





- **Investment Visa:** 3-5 months after starting the property purchase process.
- **Independent Activities:** 7-9 months after starting the degree validation process.

### 3. Visitor Visa:

- **Annuity/Rentista:** 3-4 months.
- **Student:** 6 weeks to 2 months.
- **Business:** 6 weeks to 10 weeks.
- **Tourist:** 6 weeks to 2 months.

### 4. Beneficiary Visa:

- 1 to 2 months after primary visa holder is approved.

## Technical Considerations

It should be noted that all visa applications are submitted electronically. This means that there are technical aspects all applicants should consider prior to submitting a formal visa application:

1. **Page Length:** The visa application system enforces a strict page limit. This may force your visa service provider to get creative, particularly where an applicant is seeking a visa type that requires a lot of documentation.
2. **File Size:** The visa application system also enforces a file size limit. This means that your visa service

provider may need to resize documentation as needed.

3. **Technical Problems:** Your visa service provider may need to deal with ongoing technical problems when submitting documentation, scheduling meetings with government entities, and processing government fees because the online system is often plagued with technical errors. This can significantly delay your visa application, even as it may make it impossible for your visa service provider to communicate with the relevant government agencies regarding the status of your visa application.

## Managing Documentation

Much of the documentation that will be submitted as part of your visa application will require the following:

1. **Notarizations:** A notarization is a certification by an official notary (one licensed by a government entity in the jurisdiction where they operate) that the person who signs a document is, in fact, the person who is supposed to sign such a document. Most documents to be submitted as part of any visa application will need to be notarized either in Colombia or in the country where they are issued.
2. **Apostilles:** An apostille is a higher-level notarization of a document in order to allow that document to be used in a different jurisdiction. If as part of your visa application you are submitting documentation issued outside of Colombia (e.g., birth certificates, bank letters, etc...) you will be required to apostille that documentation pursuant to local regulations. Note that

apostilles apply in jurisdictions that are signatories to the Hague Convention and a different process applies if your visa application will require the use of documentation that is issued in a jurisdiction that is not a signatory.

**3. Translations:** If you are submitting documentation in a language other than Spanish, you will be required to have the documentation translated by an official translator that is certified by the Colombian government.

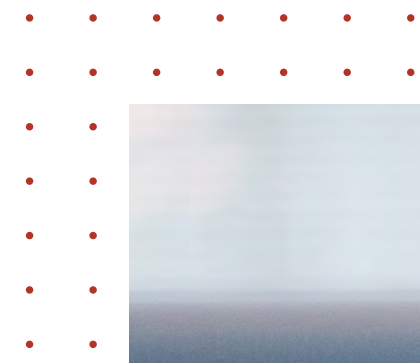
Given the time, effort and expense involved in finalizing documentation for use in your visa application, it is always a good idea to review all draft documentation with your local visa service provider BEFORE you get started with the processes described above.

## Government Priorities

The visa application process is also impacted by ongoing efforts by the Colombian government to constantly change applicable visa rules in order to (1) prevent applicants from gaming the system/committing visa fraud and/or (2) steer applicants to activities that will generate increasing fees/tax revenues. More and more, unless an applicant is going to actually engage in the activity that is covered by their visa or they are willing to make a financial investment in the country (for example, by buying property, starting a company, etc...) it will become increasingly difficult to secure a viable visa for long-term stay Colombia.

## Playing Whac-A-Mole

Some foreigners who are interested in staying in Colombia



over the medium to long-term can often feel like they are being forced into a constant game of Whac-A-Mole. The reality is that some foreigners just do not fit neatly into any specific visa category. Consequently, they decide to apply for a visa that makes the most sense for them at the time, even if it's not a perfect fit. Unfortunately, even if their visa application is initially approved, it is possible that by the time they apply for another visa the Colombian government has tightened the rules in order to exclude these types of applicants. This will force the applicant to apply for increasingly more risky visa categories as each visa option is limited by the Colombian government. Bottom line, you need to know that unless (1) you are truly focused on pursuing very specific activities (studying, working, doing business, etc...); AND (2) clearly qualify for the visa you are applying for, the risk increases that your visa application will be denied.

## Choosing the Best Visa Strategy Does Not Mean You Get a Visa

Given the above, it should be emphasized that there are no guarantees when you apply for a visa in Colombia. Ideally, your local visa service provider has the knowledge and experience necessary to (1) conduct a comprehensive analysis of your own specific situation AND (2) recommend a variety of viable visa options. It would be up to you to evaluate these options and choose the best visa strategy under the circumstances, even if that strategy generates added risk that your visa application is "Required," "Unadmitted" (defined in the Colombian Visa section of this publication) or even denied outright. Bottom line, the decision as to whether you are approved for a visa rests solely on the visa official that reviews your application.

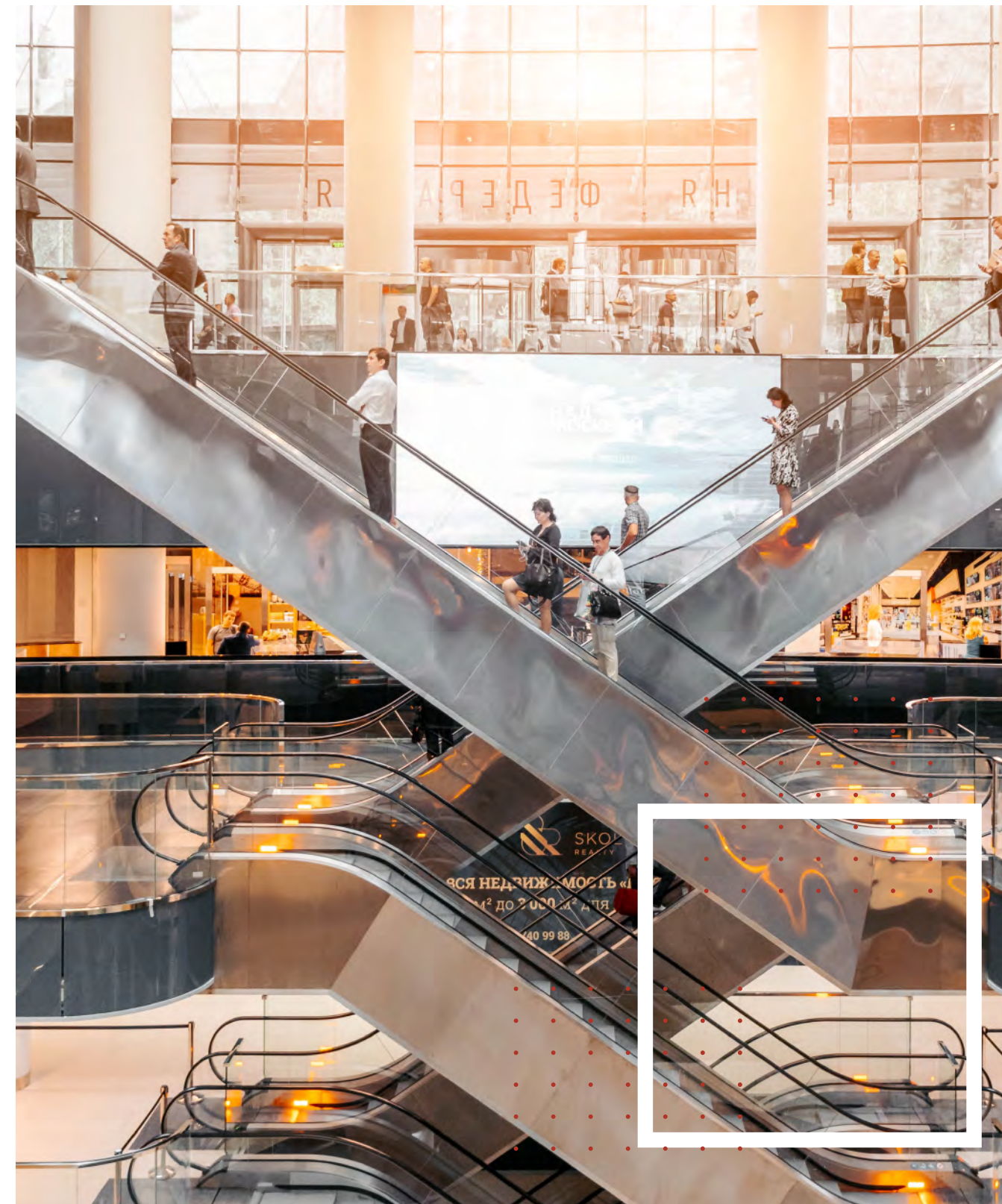
# Colombian Permits

Applicants should consider applying for a permit instead of an actual visa in certain circumstances.

## Non-Immigrant Permits: General Considerations

The vast majority of foreigners enter Colombia on non-immigrant permits. These permits allow foreigners to stay in Colombia on a short-term basis in order to engage in specific activities that could include tourism, studying, and working under specific circumstances. Below are general considerations relevant to Colombian non-immigrant permits:

**1. Tourist Permits vs. Tourist Visas:** People often confuse a tourist permit that is issued to nationals of specific countries and regions (United States, Canada, Australia, EU, etc...) and tourist visas issued to nationals of other countries. The former allow tourists to enter the country without a visa for periods of up to 6 months while the latter is an actual visa issued to nationals of other countries primarily because those countries do not have bilateral immigration agreements with Colombia. Bottom line, if you are a national of the United States, Canada, Europe and other select countries/regions you can travel directly to Colombia without a visa and get a tourist permit stamped directly in your passport at your initial port of entry. If you are a



national of any other country/region you will need a visa before entering Colombia. You should check to make sure you know how much time you are allowed to be in Colombia under a tourist permit before you enter the country.

**2. Other Short-term Permits:** Apart from tourist permits, foreigners may request short-term permits in order to, among other things, (1) study; (2) engage in academic exchanges; (3) teach or engage in academic investigations; (4) receive medical treatment; (5) attend events, conferences and seminars; or (6) provide technical assistance to local business entities. All of these permits are (after applicable extensions) limited to 6 months per calendar year. If you are a national of the United States, Canada, Europe and other select countries/regions you may not need to apply for these permits as you can stay in Colombia for a maximum of 6 months per calendar year as a tourist regardless (though you are technically required to seek the right type of permit for the specific activity you will be engaging prior to your entry into Colombia). Keep in mind that you cannot receive any type of compensation when entering Colombia pursuant to any of these short-term permits.

## Non-Immigrant Permits: Specific Considerations

Below are specific considerations relevant to Colombian non-immigrant permits:

- 1. Time Limits.** If you are a national of the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe and other select countries/regions you can travel directly to Colombia and request a tourist permit of up to 90 days at your initial point of entry. You will be able to enter Colombia multiple times per calendar year so long as you do not exceed a maximum of 180 days per calendar year in Colombia. From a practical perspective, you may enter Colombia multiple times during the calendar year using a tourist permit though, at some point, the migration officer will give you only up to the maximum number of days you may have left during that calendar year. You can also technically stay up to the full 180 day limit without leaving Colombia if you extend your stay. Keep in mind that this extension is not automatic and you will need to affirmatively extend your stay. Please let us know if you need this process done so our team can organize in advance. Finally, note that a foreign national who has a tourist permit may apply for a visa at any time prior to the expiration of their permit. That being said, we recommend that you apply for a visa with sufficient lead time in order not to overstay your permit during the visa application process.
- 2. Staying in Colombia Legally:** Sample Scenarios. The following are sample scenarios that highlight how tourist permits work under different scenarios. It is assumed that the foreign national is able to extend their tourist permit up to a maximum of 180 days per calendar year.

- Scenario 1: Multiple Entries:

Activity:

- foreigner enters Colombia and is given a tourist permit that expires in 90 days;
- foreigner leaves Colombia within 60 days;
- foreigner enters Colombia again and is given another tourist permit that expires in 90 days;
- foreigner leaves Colombia within 30 days;
- foreigner enters Colombia again and is given another tourist permit that expires in 90 days; and
- foreigner leaves Colombia within 60 days and does not return during the same calendar year.

Analysis:

- No legal issues as foreigner stayed only 150 days during calendar year and did not need to extend their tourist permit.

- Scenario 2: Permit Extension:

Activity:

- foreigner enters Colombia and is given a tourist permit that expires in 90 days;
- foreigner wants to stay in Colombian without leaving the country so extends their tourist

permit on their 86th day in Colombia;

- ❑ as part of extension process, foreigner is given an extension of 90 days; and
- ❑ foreigner leaves Colombia within 60 days and does not return during the same calendar year.

Analysis:

- ❑ No legal issues as foreigner did not overstay their initial tourist permit, applied for and received a permit extension in time, and left the country prior to reaching 180-day max.

• **Scenario 3: Visa Application:**

Activity:

- ❑ foreigner enters Colombia and is given a tourist permit that expires in 90 days;
- ❑ foreigner wants to stay in Colombian without leaving the country so extends their tourist permit on their 86th day in Colombia;
- ❑ as part of extension process foreigner is given an extension of 90 days; and
- ❑ foreigner applies for a visa and is approved on his 80th day following extension (170th day in Colombia).

Analysis:

- ❑ No legal issues as foreigner did not overstay their initial tourist permit, applied for and

received a permit extension in time and was approved for a visa prior to reaching 180-day max.

**3. Overstaying Your Permit.** If you overstay your permit (in other words, if you stay in Colombia past the date that is stamped on your passport) you will be considered to be in Colombia illegally. This could lead to a formal administrative process lasting several months or an immediate determination that you have violated local law, the assessment of fines, an order of deportation and/or the imposition of future migratory restrictions. Fines are determined by representatives of Migración Colombia and can be significant in some circumstances. If you overstay your permit your options include:

- **Respond to Administrative Process.** You would want to retain local legal representation and counter any allegations against you in connection with the administrative process.
- **Leave the Country.** You would need to go to a Migración office to pay your fine and request a Safe Passage Permit (as defined below) allowing you to leave the country. Government officials can also assess fines at select ports of entry (example: international airports) prior to your departure.
- **Do Nothing.** Some of our clients choose to overstay their permits for a specific period of time because it is more efficient and, occasionally, less expensive than other alternatives. For example, depending on your nationality, you could overstay your permit until the end of the calendar year, pay a fine, leave the country and return under a new tourist permit the

following calendar year. Note that this is NOT recommended if you plan to apply for a visa as your application may be denied automatically owing to your prior overstay. It should also be noted that the longer you remain in Colombia illegally, the higher the fines and the more severe the penalties imposed.

## Safe Passage Permits (“Salvoconductos”)

Foreigners can apply for specific permits that allows for short-term stays in Colombia in connection with certain activities. In general, you can use these Safe Passage Permits in order to (1) prep a visa application after you overstay your visa (this option only applies if your current visa is about to expire; it doesn't apply to tourist permits); or (2) leave the country for strategic reasons after you overstay your visa or permit.

- 1. Applying for a Visa.** So long as you have prepared all relevant documentation for your visa application you can get up to 30 days to apply.
- 2. Leave the Country.** You can use this permit to leave the country for strategic reasons.

# Colombian Visas

The most popular way to ensure that you can stay in Colombia over the medium to long-term is to apply for a visa.

## Colombian Visa Categories

There are three main visa categories in Colombia:

- 1. Visitor Visas:** These are non-immigrant visas ideal for anyone who is not planning to stay in Colombia over the long-term. They include, but are not limited to, Tourist Visas, Student Visas, Nomad Visas, Business Visas, Medical Visas, and certain work visas. In general, Visitor Visas are valid for up to 2 years depending on the visa. Visitor Visa holders cannot apply for residency no matter how long they maintain their visas.
- 2. Migrant Visas:** These are immigrant visas ideal for anyone planning to stay in Colombia over the medium to long-term. They include, but are not limited to, Retirement Visas, Company Owner Visas, Civil Marriage Visas, Investment Visas and Parent of a Colombian National Visas. Migrant Visas are valid for up to 3 years depending on the actual visa and can lead to eventual residency within 5 years (though Civil Marriage Visa holders can apply for residency after only 3 years).

- 3. Residency Visas:** These are immigrant visas ideal for anyone planning to stay in Colombia over the long-term. Residency Visa holders are required to renew their visa stamps every 5 years.
- 4. Beneficiary Visas:** These are visas that are tied to a main Visitor, Migrant or Residency Visa. Note that only some Visitor Visa holders can sponsor a Beneficiary Visa. These are ideal for:
  - Married couples; and
  - Children under 25 that are economically-dependent on parents who hold a qualifying visa.



# Colombian Visa Types

The following summarizes the ideal candidate for the most important visa types:

## VISITOR VISAS

<b>Nomad Visa</b>	Foreign entrepreneur/employee or independent contractor of foreign entity.
<b>Student Visa</b>	Foreigner who wishes to travel to Colombia for short term study/specialized instruction (i.e., short-term Spanish classes, art courses, etc...) as well as primary, secondary, university, graduate, or post-graduate studies.
<b>Work Visa</b>	Foreigner who is hired by a qualifying local employer for a short-term work assignment.
<b>Business Visa</b>	Foreigner wishing to carry out market research, engage in foreign direct investment, start a local business venture, open a local corporate bank account and/or serve as a local legal representative of their own company.
<b>Annuity/ "Rentista" Visa</b>	Foreigner who receives regular, monthly income from some non-employment source that exceeds 10 times the local minimum wage.
<b>Tourist Visa</b>	Foreigner who is a national of a country that is not entitled to receive a tourist permit who is focused on engaging in tourism in Colombia.
<b>Promotion of Internationalization Visa</b>	Foreigner who is focused on promoting innovation/scientific investigation based on standards established by the Directorate of Consular Migration Affairs.
<b>Agricultural Worker Visa</b>	Foreigner who is focused on working in the agricultural sector pursuant to standards established by the Ministry of Agriculture or provincial ("departamental") governments.
<b>Religious Volunteer/Student Visas</b>	Foreigner who is affiliated with a religious entity and who is focused on volunteering or engaging in academic programs.
<b>Permanent Journalist Visa</b>	Foreign journalist who works as a press correspondent for a foreign media outlet.
<b>Technical Assistant Visa</b>	Foreigner who will provide technical assistance to a legal entity in Colombia.
<b>Free Trade Agreement Business Visa</b>	Foreign entrepreneur who needs to travel to Colombia in connection with any FTA.

## MIGRANT VISAS

<b>Retirement/Pension Visa</b>	Foreigner who receives a private or government pension in excess of 3 times the local minimum wage.
<b>Company Owner Visa</b>	Foreigner who invest at least 100 times the local minimum wage in a business entity that issues shares.
<b>Investment Visa Type 1</b>	Foreigner who invests in excess of 350 times the local minimum wage in local real estate.
<b>Investment Visa Type 2</b>	Foreigner who invests in excess of 650 times the local minimum wage in (1) local real estate; (2) shares of a local business entity; and (3) in other investments that qualify as Foreign Direct Investment.
<b>Work Visa</b>	Foreigner who works for a local business entity that qualifies under applicable rules.
<b>Common Law Marriage Visa</b>	Foreigner who has entered into a Common Law Marriage under Colombian law and waits at least 1 year to apply.
<b>Civil Marriage Visa</b>	Foreigner who has entered into a Civil Marriage under Colombian law.
<b>Parent of Colombian National Visa</b>	Foreign parents of a Colombian national.
<b>Promotion of Internationalization Visa</b>	Foreigner with a master's degree, doctorate or postdoctoral training in basic sciences who contributes to the adoption of new technologies.
<b>Mercosur Visa</b>	Foreigner who is a citizen of any of the Mercosur Region countries including Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay.
<b>Andean Visa</b>	Foreigner who is a citizen of any of the Andean Region countries including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru.

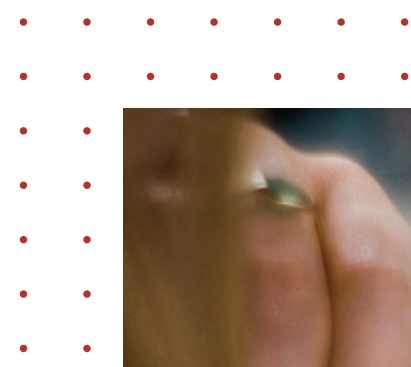
## RESIDENCY

<b>Based on Continuity</b>	Migrant Visa holders who maintain their visa status for a minimum of 5 continuous years.
	Civil Marriage Visa holders who maintain visa status for a minimum of 3 continuous years.
	Parent of Colombian National Visa holders who maintain visa status for a minimum of 2 continuous years.
	Mercosur Visa holders who maintain visa status for a minimum of 2 continuous years.
	Andean Visa holders who maintain visa status for a minimum of 2 continuous years.
<b>Venezuelan Nationals</b>	Having maintained a PEP or PPT permit for a minimum of 5 years

## Possible Outcomes

Once you apply for a visa you will receive one of 4 possible initial responses:

- 1. Approved ("Aprobada"):** This means that your visa application has been provisionally approved, subject to paying applicable visa fees and registering your visa.
- 2. "Required" ("Requerida"):** This means that you are required to either (1) provide additional information and/or documentation; (2) and/or submit to an in-person interview. You are typically given 3-10 business days to comply. Please review the "Preliminary Considerations" section of this publication for more information regarding the arbitrary and inconsistent nature of this process.
- 3. "Unadmitted" ("Inadmitida"):** This means that your visa application has not been approved because, in the opinion of the Colombian government, you have failed to prove that you meet the requirements of the visa type you applied for. Note that you can still apply for a different visa if your initial application is Unadmitted. Please review the "Preliminary Considerations" section of this publication for more information regarding the arbitrary and inconsistent nature of this process.
- 4. Denied ("Rechazada"):** This means that your visa application was rejected. You may not apply for a new visa for a period of six months as of the date your visa application was rejected. In addition, your next visa application can only be processed from the Colombian foreign consulate in the jurisdiction where you are a resident. Please review the "Preliminary Considerations" section of this publication for more information



regarding the arbitrary and inconsistent nature of this process.

## Once You Get Approved

There are several things to keep in mind after your visa is approved:

- 1. Validity:** Your visa will eventually expire so make sure you know how long your visa is valid for. More importantly, do reach out to your local visa service provider at least 4 months prior to the expiration of your visa so that you can start to develop a viable visa strategy well in advance. Options may include:
  - leaving the country;
  - leaving the country and coming back as a tourist (if applicable);
  - applying for a Safe Passage Permit;
  - applying for a non-immigrant permit;
  - applying for the same visa again; and
  - applying for a different visa.
- 2. Losing Your Visa:** You can lose your visa under certain circumstances:
  - being outside of the country for more than 6 consecutive months (Migrant Visas) or more than 2

consecutive years (Residency Visas);

- not using your visa for the purpose it was intended (e.g., not attending classes if you have a Student Visa or selling your property if you have an Investment Visa);
- turning 25 years old (Beneficiary Visas);
- divorce from main visa holder; and
- death of main visa holder.

**3. Cancelling Your Visa:** If you expect to lose your current visa or you plan to change your visa it is always better to cancel your visa in advance. Reach out to your local visa service provider in order to ensure that this process is done correctly. Note that you will have 30 days from the date your visa is cancelled to either apply for a different visa or to leave the country.

**4. Cancelled/Lost/Stolen Passport:** If something happens to your passport make sure you reach out to your local visa service provider because you will need to apply for a "traspaso de visa" in order to use your visa going forward. Note that your service provider can assist with this process after you have secured your new passport.

**5. Continuity and Migrant Visa Holders:** Keep in mind that if you are approved for a Migrant Visa you may apply for a Residency Visa within 5 years (though Parent of Colombian National Visa holders can apply for residency after only 2 years while Civil Marriage Visas holders can apply after only 3 years). However, this option will NOT be available if there are gaps between

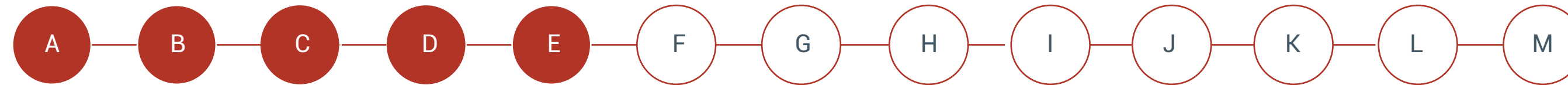
your visas within that time period. In other words, you won't be able to secure a Residency Visa if within that period time you did not have a valid Migrant Visa. Similarly, if you receive a Safe Passage Permit within that time period your continuity will break and you will be disqualified for a Residency Visa.





# The Visa Application Process: A Timeline

Below is a summary of the visa application process. Keep in mind that the actual timing depends on your specific visa strategy and the availability of required documents.



## **A. Consultation**

We highly recommend that you have an initial consultation with a reputable local visa service provider well in advance of any visa application. This consultation will allow the local provider to review your own specific situation in order to identify viable visa strategies. Remember that the more information and context you can provide the more your local provider can help in identifying the best visa application strategy tailored to your own specific situation.

## **B. Preliminary Document Collection**

Following your consultation, your local visa service provider may ask that you provide specific documentation in order to review the viability of specific visa strategies. For example, they may request that you provide copies of your local marriage certificate, benefits letters, bank statements, health insurance policies and other documents.

## **C. Visa Application Preliminary Analysis**

After your formal consultation, and following the collection and review of specific documentation, your local service provider should organize a formal visa analysis that provides a comprehensive summary of your current

immigration status in Colombia and outlines the most viable visa application strategies based to your own specific situation. This analysis should include a recommended strategy as well as potential next steps in advance of your application.

## **D. Client Selects Specific Visa Strategy**

You should review the visa analysis carefully. Make sure that you reach out to your visa service provider if you have any follow-up questions or if there is any lack of clarity. Once you fully understand the visa analysis you should inform your visa service provider what specific visa application strategy you have selected so that they can proceed as soon as possible.

## **E. Documentation/Info Collection**

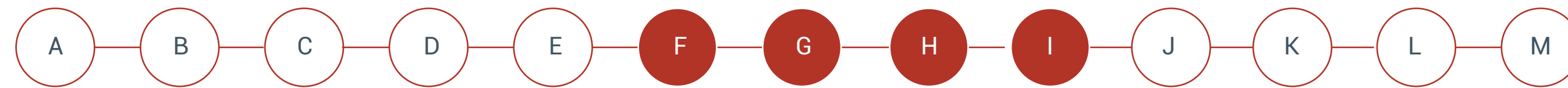
You may be required to collect, draft, secure, and/or procure certain documentation specific to the type of visa you are applying for. Your local visa service provider may also ask you to provide additional documentation that may or may not be required in order to better understand your visa options or even to anticipate additional documentation requests that may be made by the government during the application process. Expect this process to take between 1

week to 1 month depending on the type of visa requested. Note that if your visa requires documentation issued outside of Colombia the document collection process will typically take longer than 2 weeks. Finally, note that all documentation provided to the Colombian authorities in connection with your visa application must remain valid and be issued no later than 3 months from the date of the application.



# The Visa Application Process: A Timeline

Below is a summary of the visa application process. Keep in mind that the actual timing depends on your specific visa strategy and the availability of required documents.

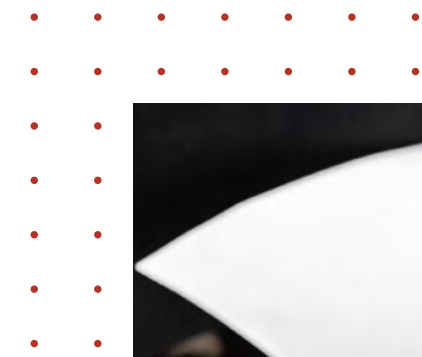


## F. Visa Service Provider Reviews Documentation

Make sure you are in constant contact with your local visa service provider while you secure applicable documentation. They should review all draft documentation in order to provide suggested edits. You should only proceed to notarize and apostille documents if your local service provider approves. As mentioned elsewhere in this publication, most documentation issued in a different jurisdiction in English will need to be translated by an official translator in advance of your application.

## G. Apply for Visa

Your local visa service provider will apply for your visa once they receive all required documentation in the requisite format. As part of this process, your service provider will also pay the applicable Visa Study fee. It should be noted that while visa applications are processed electronically, whether you are physically in Colombia or in your jurisdiction of residence will impact how the visa application is submitted. For this reason, make sure you don't travel internationally for at least 4 weeks once you start the visa application to avoid any number of logistical and administrative issues.



## H. Colombian Government Reviews Application

The Colombian government will review your application and determine whether it meets the statutory and regulatory requirements relevant to the type of visa you requested. It is at this stage that you may receive an initial response to the application ranging from approval to "Required," "Unadmitted," and even "Denied" as explained in the "Colombian Visas" section of this publication.

## I. Visa Application Decision: Denied

If your visa is rejected you will not be able to apply for a new visa for at least 6 months. You should review options available with your local visa service provider as soon as possible following this decision.



# The Visa Application Process: A Timeline

Below is a summary of the visa application process. Keep in mind that the actual timing depends on your specific visa strategy and the availability of required documents.

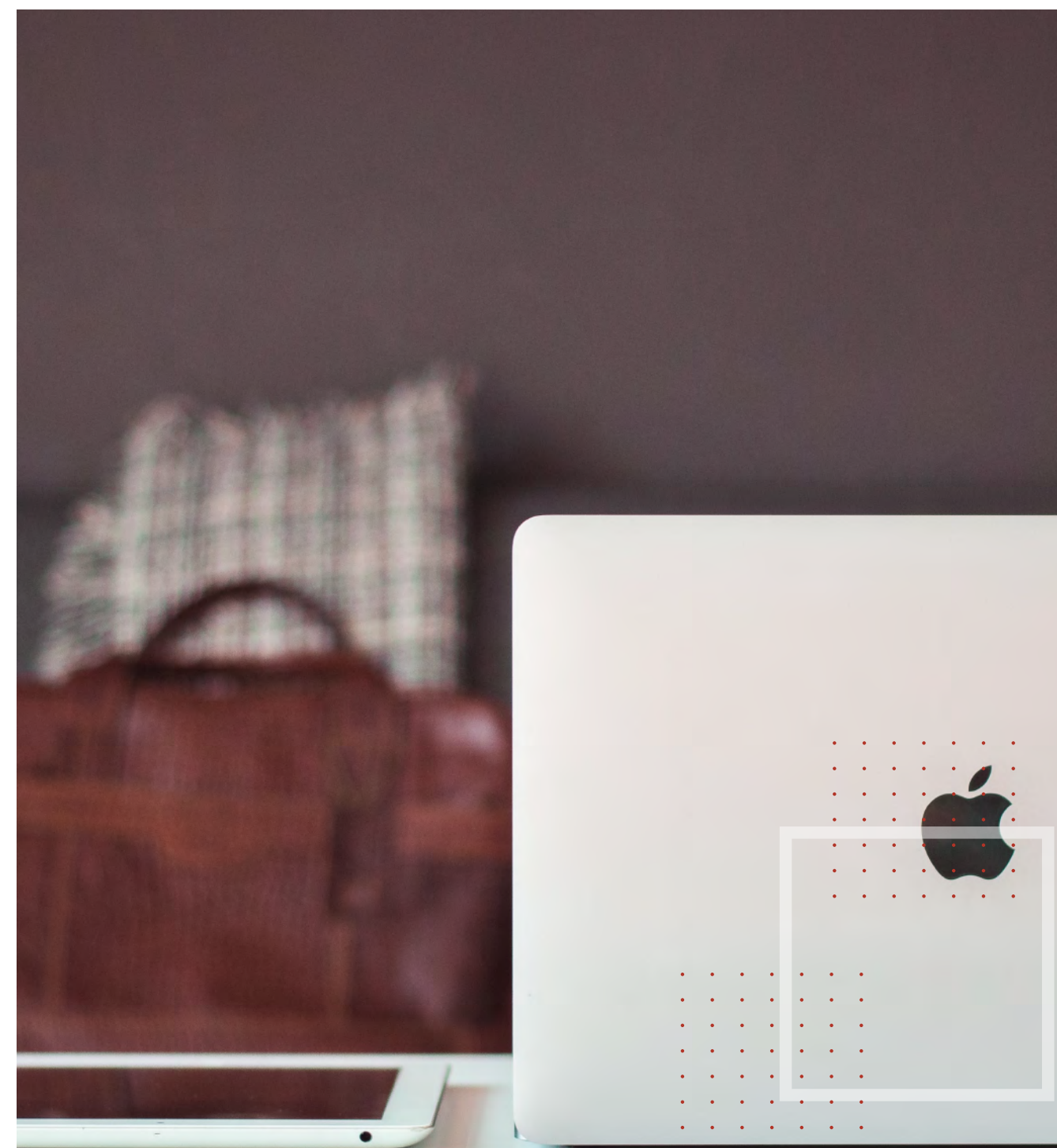


## J. Visa Application Decision: "Unadmitted"

If your visa is "Unadmitted"/"Inadmitida" (defined in the Colombian Visa section of this publication) you visa was neither approved nor rejected. In general, receiving a "Unadmitted" decision means that you did not directly qualify for the visa type you applied for, information/documentation requested by the government was unclear, or require additional documentation that you did not submit by a specific deadline. You should review options available with your local visa service provider as soon as possible, which may include applying again for the same visa type or even a different visa type.

## K. Visa Application Decision: "Required"

If your visa is "Required"/"Requerida" (defined in the Colombian Visa section of this publication) it means that the government is requesting additional documentation or information by a specific deadline. You should review options available with your local visa service provider as soon as possible, which may include attempting to secure the requested documentation and/or information by the applicable deadline or even submitting a new application after the applicable deadline.



## L. Visa Application Decision: "Approved"

If your visa is approved your local visa service provider will pay applicable visa fees which will eventually allow you to receive an electronic visa. It is recommended that you print a copy of your electronic visa in order to facilitate entry and exit into and out of Colombia once you receive one.

## M. Request a Local "Cédula"

Following your visa approval you must register the visa and request a "Cédula de Extranjería" (national ID card) within 15 calendar days from the date your visa was issued if the visa was issued while you are physically in Colombia. If the visa was issued while you were outside Colombia you have 15 calendar days from the day you enter the country to complete this process. Expect to receive a "cédula" 2-3 weeks after you register your visa. You will need to schedule a meeting at a local Migración office in order to register your visas and request a "cédula." Keep in mind that "cédulas" are issued to holders of Colombian visas that exceed 3 months of validity.



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