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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT**  
**INTRA COMPANY TRANSFEREE (L-1) VISAS**

**What is a L-1 visa?**

An L-1 intracompany transferee visa is available to qualified international executives, managers, and specialized knowledge employees transferred from an overseas organization to work for the same organization in the United States or for its American subsidiary or affiliate.

Significantly, persons who qualify as managers or executives often can obtain immigrant (permanent resident) status promptly and easily once their U.S. employer has been doing business for at least one year.

**Am I eligible for a L-1 visa?**

To qualify for intracompany transferee status, it must be demonstrated that within the three years preceding the time of application the employee has been employed continuously abroad for one year by a firm, corporation or other legal entity, or a branch, affiliate or subsidiary thereof, and that the employee seeks to enter the United States temporarily to continue rendering services for the same employer, or a branch, subsidiary or affiliate thereof in a capacity that is managerial, executive, or involves specialized knowledge.

**What can I do on an L-1 visa?**

As an L-1 visa holder you can:

- Work legally for a U.S. company that is your sponsor.
- Be permitted to travel in and out of the U.S. or remain here continuously until your L-1 status expires
- Apply for dependent visas for your spouse as well as unmarried dependant children under 21

**What are the limitations of an L-1 visa?**

The limitations of the L-1 visa are:

- You are permitted to work only for the U.S. employer who acted as your L-1 visa sponsor
- Get visa approval for up to three years. Extensions of two years at a time may be allowed until you have been in the U.S. for a total of seven years if you are a manager or executive, five years if you come as a specialized knowledge employee

### **What types of L-1 visas are there?**

The L-1A visa is for managers and executives. On L-1A visa you may apply for a Green Card without going through the process of Labor Certification. If you were a manager or executive with the overseas branch for one year, you do not have to be in L-1A status for a year unless you are starting a new company in the U.S.

The L-1B visa is for key employees who have specialized knowledge of the company's products or procedures. The L-1B visa does not offer the shortened route to the green card.

### **How long can I stay in the U.S. on an L-1 visa?**

The L-1 visas are valid for a period of three years, but may be extended up to seven years.

### **Where do I file my L-1 petition?**

Your L-1 petition must be filed in the U.S.

### **What is the definition of an Executive for L-1 visa?**

"Executive" means an assignment in an organization in which the employee primarily directs the management of an organization or a major component or function; establishes goals and policies; exercises wide latitude in discretionary decision-making and receives only general supervision or direction from higher level executives, the Board of Directors, or stockholders of the business.

### **What is the definition of a Manager for L-1 visa?**

"Managerial" means an assignment within an organization in which the employee personally manages the organization, department, subdivision, function or component; supervises and controls the work of other supervisory, professional, or managerial employees, or manages an essential function within the organization or department or subdivision of the organization; has authority to hire and fire or

recommend personnel actions (if another directly supervises employees), or if no direct supervision, functions at a senior level and exercises discretionary authority over day-to-day operations of the activity or function.

### **What is the definition of “Specialized Knowledge” for L-1 visa?**

"Specialized knowledge" is defined to include persons who have "special knowledge of the company product and its application in international markets" or who have "an advanced level of knowledge of processes and procedures of the company." Characteristics of a specialized knowledge employee include the possession of knowledge that is valuable to the employer's competitiveness in the market place; unique qualifications that contribute to the U.S. employer's knowledge of foreign operating conditions; possession of knowledge which can be gained only through extensive prior experience with that employer; and, employees abroad who have been given significant assignments which have enhanced the employer's productivity, competitiveness, image, or financial position. Significantly, a specialized knowledge employee is not simply a highly skilled or professional worker.

### **Is there a minimum educational requirement for an Executive or Manager to get L-1 visa?**

No, there is no minimum educational requirement for L-1 visa

### **Can I extend my L-1 visa?**

Extensions of two years at a time may be allowed until you have been in the U.S. for a total of seven years if you are a manager or executive.

### **Can I bring my dependents with me on an L-1 visa?**

Yes, L-2 visas are issued to the dependents of L-1 visa holders. Dependents are spouse and children below 21 years of age.

### **Can my dependents work in the U.S. on an L-1 visa?**

L-2 spouse of an L-1 visa holder may apply for Employment Authorization. This employment authorization must be applied for separately. The L-2 dependent child is not permitted to work.

### **Can I change status while on an L-1 visa?**

Yes, you may apply for change of status while on an L-1 visa.

**Are there any travel restrictions on an L-1 visa?**

No, there are no travel restrictions on L-1 visa. You may travel out of the U.S. any number of times while on valid L-1 visa, as long as you have a valid visa stamp in your passport.

**Can I study on an L-1 visa?**

Yes. However, you may not join a full length program of study. You may take up a few credits at a University if it does not interfere with your work on the L-1 visa.

**Can my dependents study on an L-1 visa?**

Yes, your dependents may study on L-2 visa.

**Can I extend my stay on an L-1 visa?**

Yes, you may apply for L-1 visa extension, which may be granted as long as it is necessary to complete the program.

**How long can I stay in the US after the end of my L-1 program?**

You are permitted to stay for up to 30 days past the end date of your visa. You do not have work authorization during this time.

**Can I transfer or change jobs on an L-1 visa?**

Yes, but only for a job within the same multinational company that petitioned you. If the individual entered the US on a Regular L-1 visa the USCIS must be notified of any change in employment.

**What happens if my employer fires me while I am in the U.S. on an L-1 visa?**

You have a short grace period in which you may look for a new job, and have it approved by the USCIS. Barring that, you need to return to your home country.

**Can I work for any other company other than the company that sponsored my L-1 visa?**

No

**Can L-1 employees move to different locations across the U.S.?**

Yes, provided they remain under the same management and control.

**Can L-1 employees work part-time?**

Yes, L-1 employees may work part-time.