



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

USCIS Reminds Japanese Nationals Impacted by Recent Disaster

Released: March 17, 2011

WASHINGTON—In light of the recent earthquakes and tsunami in Japan, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reminds Japanese nationals of certain U.S. immigration benefits available upon request.

USCIS understands that a natural disaster can affect an individual's ability to establish or maintain lawful immigration status. Temporary relief measures available to eligible nationals of Japan may include:

- The grant of an application for change or extension of nonimmigrant status for an individual currently in the United States, even when the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Re-parole of individuals granted parole by USCIS;
- Extension of certain grants of advance parole, and expedited processing of advance parole requests;
- Expedited adjudication and approval, where possible, of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited processing of immigrant petitions for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs);
- Expedited employment authorization where appropriate; and
- Assistance to LPRs stranded overseas without immigration documents such as Green Cards. USCIS and the Department of State will coordinate on these matters when the LPR is stranded in a place that has no local USCIS office.

Visitors traveling under the Visa Waiver Program may visit a [USCIS local office](#) for assistance. Japanese nationals who are at a U.S. airport may contact the U.S. Customs and Border Protection office there.

For more information on USCIS humanitarian programs, visit www.uscis.gov or call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

Last updated:03/17/2011



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

USCIS Reminds Japanese Nationals Impacted by Recent Disaster Questions and Answers

Released: March 17, 2011

Introduction

In light of the recent earthquakes and tsunami, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reminds Japanese nationals of certain U.S. immigration benefits available upon request.

USCIS understands that a natural disaster can affect an individual's ability to establish or maintain lawful immigration status. The following questions and answers address temporary relief measures available to nationals of Japan.

Questions and Answers

Q1. What are my options if I am a Japanese national who entered the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)?

A1. There is no provision under U.S. law to extend the stay of an individual admitted under the VWP. However, if you were admitted under the VWP and are unable to return because of the recent disasters in Japan, you may request satisfactory departure. If granted, you will have up to 30 days to leave the United States without penalty for exceeding your authorized stay. If you are at an airport, please contact the U.S. Customs and Border Protection office at the airport. All others please visit the [USCIS local office](#).

Q2. I am a Japanese national and cannot return to Japan at this time due to the disaster. I have a non-immigrant visa in my passport (and was not admitted under the VWP). My allowed time to stay in the United States has either expired or is about to expire. What are my options? Can I work during my stay in the United States?

A2. You may file a request to change or extend your nonimmigrant status if you still meet the existing criteria for your specific nonimmigrant category. For example:

- If you are a B-1 or B-2 visitor, you may apply for a six-month extension on the basis that you are unable to return to Japan at this time due to the events following the disaster. However, you would not be authorized to work or attend school in the United States.
- If you are no longer able to extend your non-immigrant status, USCIS will consider requests to change your status to B-1 or B-2.

Typically, an extension application must be filed before the authorized stay expires. However, USCIS may accept applications for change of status or extension of stay if your authorized admission has expired.

To change or extend your nonimmigrant status you must submit:

- A [Form I-539, Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status](#),
- The \$290 filing fee (no waiver of this filing fee is available), and
- Evidence establishing that the events that began March 11, 2011, are the basis for your inability to return to Japan prior to the expiration of your authorized period of admission.

If you were in a lawful, nonimmigrant status on March 11, 2011, you will be excused for filing late until May 11, 2011. After May 11, 2011, eligibility for delayed filing will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Q3. I am a Japanese national granted parole to enter the United States temporarily. However, I am unable to return to Japan due to the disaster and my parole has expired or is about to expire. What are my options? Can I work during my stay in the United States?

A3. If you are a Japanese national who has already been paroled into the United States by USCIS, you may apply for an extension of your parole (“re-parole”) by making an [InfoPass](#) appointment at your local USCIS field office. The length of the extension is at the USCIS district director’s discretion, but normally will not exceed six months. To qualify for re-parole, you will need to demonstrate that you were or are currently prevented from returning to Japan before the expiration of your current or last authorized parole. You will also need to present a genuine, expired or unexpired Form I-94 that shows an expiration date between March 11, 2011, and May 11, 2011. If your period of authorized parole was current on March 11, 2011, you will be excused for filing late up to May 11, 2011. After May 11, 2011, eligibility for delayed filing will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Once your parole has been extended, you may apply for employment authorization by filing Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. For instructions on how to apply, please refer to the filing instructions on Form I-765.

Q4. I am a Japanese national granted advance parole to travel outside of the United States. I cannot return to the United States from Japan due to the disaster, and my allowed time is expiring or about to expire. What are my options?

A4. USCIS grants Japanese nationals currently living outside of the United States an automatic extension of advance parole until May 11, 2011. Ports of entry have been instructed to accept the auto-extended Form I-512, Authorization for Parole of Aliens into the United States. Affected individuals need not bring any additional documentation with them to the airport.

Q5. I am a Japanese national F-1 student currently enrolled in school in the United States. Due to the disaster, I can no longer cover the cost of my education. What are my options? Can I work during my stay in the United States?

A5. If your family in Japan is funding your studies, you may be eligible for work authorization based on severe economic hardship. According to the regulations at 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(II)(C) and (D), F-1 academic students may request off-campus employment authorization based on severe economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control, such as changes in the financial condition of their source of support. If your family is encountering

difficulties with funding your studies in the United States due to the recent natural disaster in Japan, you may apply for employment authorization based on severe economic hardship. To qualify, you must establish that you:

- Have been an F-1 academic student for at least one full academic year;
- Are in good academic standing and carrying a full course load; and
- Need employment authorization to avoid severe economic hardship.

You will need to obtain a recommendation from your Designated School Official (DSO). If your DSO agrees that you should receive employment authorization based upon severe economic hardship, he or she will update your SEVIS record with a recommendation that will be reflected on your Form I-20. Your DSO will need to sign and date your new I-20. Once you obtain this recommendation you must file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, with your properly endorsed Form I-20, according to the filing instructions on the form. Although the filing fee for Form I-765 is \$380, you may apply to have that fee waived due to your inability to pay. For guidance on how to file a fee waiver request, please visit www.uscis.gov/feewaiver.

Q6. I am a Japanese national whose case is pending with USCIS. I need my case expedited due to the recent disaster in Japan. What are my options?

A6. Given the need for immediate relief, USCIS will expedite certain applications and petitions. Standard requirements for security checks remain in place under expedited procedures.

If a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident requests expedited processing of a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, the case will be expedited where a visa number is readily available.

Japanese nationals with benefit applications pending in the United States who must travel quickly for emergent reasons will need to apply for advance authorization for parole to return to the United States. USCIS will expedite the processing of Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, in such cases, where we have been advised of the emergent need to travel.

Q7. Where can I find more information about immigration relief benefits?

A7. For more information on USCIS humanitarian programs, visit www.uscis.gov or call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

Last updated:03/17/2011

[Plug-ins](#)