

Immigration: Getting Ready for Entrepreneurial Parole

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For entrepreneurs, obtaining visa status in the United States is challenging. With no existing entrepreneurial visa, foreign-born innovators often have a difficult time starting and working for new businesses in the U.S. Beginning July 17, 2017, entrepreneurs will have an exciting new path to work authorization through the ***Entrepreneurial Parole program***.

Modeled after similar programs in the United Kingdom and Australia, this program authorizes individuals with a 10% ownership stake in an entity founded in the last five years to apply for up to five years of work authorization, in two 30-month increments. To qualify for this program, the entrepreneur must pay a fee of \$1,200 and file a Form I-941, a new form designed for the Entrepreneurial Parole program. Through this application, entrepreneurs must show that they:

1. Have obtained \$250,000 in investment in the last 18 months from an established U.S. investor, or group of investors;
2. Have obtained \$100,000 in grants in the last 18 months from a government entity, or group of government entities; or
3. Partially completed either items 1 or 2, and have compelling evidence that the new entity has substantial potential for rapid growth and job creation.

In addition to the items above, the entrepreneur will need to pay an additional \$85 to complete biometrics. This will involve going to a USCIS office to have the entrepreneur's fingerprints and photo taken after the application is filed.

Once the application is approved, entrepreneurs will need to take their approval documentation to the border to be paroled into the United States. This does not provide the entrepreneur with lawful visa status in the U.S., but does permit the holder to stay in the country and work. These entrepreneurs will be able to bring dependent family members, including spouses and children, by filing Form I-131 with the entrepreneur's I-941. Upon arrival in the U.S., the entrepreneur's spouse will be able to apply for work authorization by filing a Form I-765.

Thus, for entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Parole is a great opportunity to bring their innovations to the U.S.

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