

Colombia's economic growth makes it an attractive location for companies looking to expand to South America. If your company is taking advantage of this opportunity, you'll need to obtain Colombia work visas for all foreign employees. However, not all businesses have the time or expertise to know how to get a work visa in Colombia.

As a global PEO, Globalization Partners can work with your company to help you achieve a fast and easy expansion. We'll act as the Employer of Record to hire all employees and assign them to work for your company, making sure every employee has a Colombia working visa and the ability to work legally in the country.

### **Types of Colombia Work Visas Available**

Colombia changed its visa rules in December 2017 to create several different visa categories. The three main visa options include:

- Visitor "V" type visa: Meant for visitors entering the country without permanent establishment.
- Migrant "M" type visa: Perfect for those who want to enter Colombia and live there temporarily.
- Resident "R" type visa: A visa for individuals establishing themselves in Colombia permanently.

M visas are the most common among expats for reasons such as marriage, investment, retirement, work, and studies. Individuals must meet certain requirements to obtain an M visa, such as having a spouse or partner who's a Colombian resident, maintaining permanent employment, or coming to Colombia as a missionary. These visas are typically valid for three years. However, certain exceptions exist, such as category five work visas and category nine student visas, which can be less than three years, depending on the length of employment and studies.

### **Requirements to Obtain an M Visa in Colombia**

The requirements for a working visa in Colombia vary by visa type. That said, most require a

job offer from a local employer to start. Once the employee and employer sign a contract, they can start the application process. In addition to the employment contract, applicants will need a letter of motivation from the employer, six months of bank statements, a photocopy of their passport, and a passport-style photo. Although the visa application process is online, visas are issued in person at the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores' offices in Bogota.

After holding an M visa for at least five years, foreign nationals can receive an R visa. Once an individual holds an R visa for five more years, they can apply to become a Colombian citizen. Since the country permits dual-citizenship, individuals won't need to deal with visas or give up citizenship in another country. This option also provides MERCOSUR trade block benefits, as members don't need a passport or visa to travel around the region.

### **The Application Process for a Colombia Working Visa**

When your employees need a working visa, they must fill out the application form for the type of visa they require. They can register online on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website by uploading all relevant documents. Once the application gets filed, reviewed, and approved, applicants must follow the authorities' directions for payment.

As an employer, you must provide:

- Bank statements corresponding with the six months before the visa application
- Proof of average monthly income of 100 times the legal monthly minimum wages
- Last year's income statement
- A certificate of suitability for the applicant
- Relevance of the employment contract
- Academic support of the visa applicant

### **Other Areas to Consider**

Every foreigner with a visa good for more than three months needs to apply and obtain a foreigners identity card at a regional office. They must obtain the card within 15 days of entering Colombia or 15 days after their visa was issued. They'll need a copy of their

passport and M visa.

Keep in mind that the foreigners identity card requires an appointment either online or in person. All applicants must file the right documents, pay the fee, then go to the office to pick up the physical ID card.

### **Trust Globalization Partners for Help Expanding**

Globalization Partners has experience helping companies like yours expand around the globe. Trust us to get all the Colombia work permits you need to work legally. [Contact our team today](#) to learn more about our solution.