

Costa Rica's tropical climate makes it a popular destination for expatriates from all over the world. However, there are strict guidelines in place to ensure that foreign nationals are not taking job opportunities that could otherwise be filled by Costa Rican citizens and permanent residents. If your company is preparing to expand or outsource operations to Costa Rica, you'll need to make sure all of your employees have the necessary visas and permits to live and work in this coastal nation.

It can be difficult to navigate the global expansion process while you're already running a successful business. If you don't have time to learn how to get a work visa in Costa Rica, Globalization Partners can help.

Types of Work Permits in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, a work permit is a specific type of immigration permit that falls under what is called the "Special Category." This category includes Costa Rica work permits for:

- Temporary workers
- Workers in a specific occupation
- Transferee staff
- Self-employed workers in a well-established company
- Individuals who are self-employed in the agriculture, service, or construction industry
- Athletes, artists, and entertainers
- Transfrontier workers
- Professional and technical guests

If your company's employees fall under any of these categories, they may be able to obtain work permits. Only citizens and permanent residents of Costa Rica can work without a permit.

What Are the Requirements to Obtain a Costa Rican Work Visa?

To apply for a permit to work in Costa Rica, foreign nationals will need to submit several

documents, including the following:

- A signed, duly completed application form
- A birth certificate
- Two passport photos
- Copies of each page of the applicant's passport, including blank pages
- The potential employer's Legal Constitution and Registration Documents
- A letter explaining the reason for applying for a work permit, which should also include the applicant's full name, age, nationality, current address, and occupation
- A statement from the potential employer, which should indicate the duration of the employment contract, the salary, and the functions of the job
- Proof of insurance in the form of a statement from the applicant's insurance company
- A receipt of consular inscription
- A receipt of fingerprint registration issued to the applicant by the Ministry of Public Security
- A certificate of police clearance from the applicant's country of origin or residence, along with a copy of a document proving their legal residence in that country
- Proof that the applicant has sufficient financial means and income
- Certification of the Costa Rican Social Security Institution for the employing company
- A receipt for the payment of each page submitted with the application

What Steps Should Employees Take to Get a Work Visa in Costa Rica?

Before a prospective employee can begin the lengthy application process for a work permit, the employer will need to prove that the position could not be filled by any job-seeking Costa Rican nationals.

Once this has been established, the employee should apply for a provisional visa. This visa is required to enter Costa Rica. Nationals from certain countries do not need a visa to enter, but they still need to register with the Costa Rica Consulate in their country.

Upon arrival in Costa Rica, the employee must apply for a work permit. Before applying, they must also register their fingerprints with the Ministry of Public Security, Ministerio Seguridad Pública.

Costa Rican work permits are issued by the Immigration Department, the Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería — this is where the employee will submit their application. The department will review the application according to the regulations set forth by the Costa Rican Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

It can take three to eight months for a Costa Rica work permit to be processed, and in some cases, it may take even longer. Employees should begin the application process well in advance of their intended start date.

Are There Any Unique Considerations for Costa Rican Working Visas?

Employees should be sure to gather all of the necessary documents for their application before arriving in Costa Rica. The documents will need to be translated into Spanish and notarized.

Join the Globalization Partners Team

When you choose to work with Globalization Partners, we'll make sure your company's transition to operations in Costa Rica is as quick and easy as possible. As an experienced Global PEO, we can handle the process of obtaining visas and permits for all of your employees, along with any other challenges along the way. [Contact us today](#) to learn more or join the Globalization Partners team!