

Jamaica is a melting pot of different people and cultures, making it an excellent destination for employment or business. As many new industries develop, you may want to get in on the ground floor with an expansion to Jamaica. However, you will need talented employees to ensure your company is successful.

## **Types of Jamaica Work Visas to Choose From**

All of your foreign employees will need a work permit to enter and work for your company in Jamaica. However, not all will need a visa, as some countries are exempt from Jamaica's visa requirement. Currently, citizens of the US, Australia, Canada, and a number of other countries do not need a visa to enter Jamaica and stay for up to 90 days. Some visitors may be able to stay for up to six months depending on their country of origin.

Eventually, your employees may want to gain permanent visa status in Jamaica. Keep in mind that permanent residency does not guarantee the right to work, so your employees will also need to obtain a work permit. After you secure a work permit on behalf of an employee, they can extend their time in Jamaica and eventually apply for permanent residency.

## **Requirements to Obtain a Jamaica Work Visa**

Every person who applies for a visa must have:

- A passport valid for six months beyond their stay
- A completed and signed visa application form
- A recent passport-size photo
- Official invitation and letter of invitation

Obtaining a work permit in Jamaica requires a separate set of documents. Both you and your employees will need to complete the application form and provide supporting paperwork. As the employer, you must write a letter outlining the skills and qualifications the applicant will provide, why you need the applicant to provide those skills instead of a Jamaican citizen, and the applicant's police record from their current country of residence.

Jamaica does prioritize hiring locals, so you will need to show efforts that you tried to recruit Jamaican citizens to carry out the work. Also, include the duration of the employment term. When your prospective employees land in Jamaica, they must take the letter and travel documents to the Passport, Immigration, and Citizenship Agency. The agency will endorse the individual's passport for the duration of the work permit and issue a certificate to the Ministry of Labor.

### **What Steps Should You Take to Get a Working Visa in Jamaica?**

Employers should submit all work permit applications to the Work Permit Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS). You will also need to pay a non-refundable processing fee of JMD 14,400 along with the application. If the MLSS approves the permit, the applicant must pay a fee depending on the permit's length. For example, permits valid for up to three months are around JMD 3,692,220, while permits valid from nine to 12 months are approximately JMD 14,768,879.

After obtaining a work permit, your employees may want to pursue permanent residency in Jamaica. This process requires certain documents, including:

- A valid passport
- Proof of financial status and support
- Certified birth certificate copy
- Proof of marital status
- Medical certificate proving good health
- Police certificate from country of residence
- Two passport-size photos
- Reasons for seeking permanent residence
- Names and addresses of two references

An application for permanent residency can take up to six to eight months, so your employees should apply early.

## Other Unique and Important Considerations

Work permits in Jamaica are both expensive and time-consuming. Processing a work permit application typically takes six to 10 weeks from when all the required information gets submitted. You must prepare and apply well in advance of when your employee will start working in Jamaica.

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