

UNITED STATES VISA SCREENING TO INCLUDE SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES



The U.S. Department of State will use a supplemental questionnaire for visa applicants who require further vetting for entry into the United States.

BACKGROUND

When President Trump signed Executive Order *Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States*, he called for “extreme vetting” measures to be put in place for foreign visitors to ensure the safety of United States citizens. In response, the Department of State has released a two-page questionnaire that consular officers will use to screen certain visa applicants deemed to require a more rigorous vetting process.

If required to complete the additional questionnaire, a visa applicant will need to provide the following information:

- ✓ Travel history during the last 15 years, including the sources of funding for travel.
- ✓ Address history during the last 15 years.
- ✓ Employment history during the last 15 years.
- ✓ All passport numbers and countries of issuance held by the applicant.
- ✓ Names and dates of birth for all siblings.
- ✓ Names and dates of birth for all children.
- ✓ Names and dates of birth for all current and former spouses, or civil or domestic partners.
- ✓ Social media platforms and user names (handles) used during the last five years. Passwords will not be requested.
- ✓ Phone numbers and email addresses used during the last five years.

Who is subject to this questionnaire?

ANSWER: The implementation of this questionnaire does not target nationals of any particular country. This questionnaire will apply to visa applicants whom a consular officer determines should undergo additional screening “in connection with terrorism or other national security related visa ineligibilities.”

It is not yet known how many visa applicants will be subject to the additional visa questionnaire, but there is evidence that the government anticipates that approximately 65,000 travelers will be required to complete the questionnaire each year.

Will my visa application be delayed if I am required to complete the questionnaire?

ANSWER: The questionnaire is new, so there is no track record of how the government will utilize the information during the visa issuance process and whether that use will delay your visa application.

Do I have to provide my social media password(s)?

ANSWER: The questionnaire only asks for your social media platform(s) and your identifiers or handles. The questionnaire does not at this time ask for your social media password(s).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

How does the questionnaire differ from information collected on routine visa applications?

ANSWER: Unlike the information collected in visa applications, this questionnaire requests information over the past 15 years, a significantly longer period of time than the normal five years. The request for your social media information is also new.

Can I refuse to fill out the questionnaire?

ANSWER: A visa applicant has the burden of proof to establish eligibility to enter the U.S. If you fail to complete the questionnaire, there is an increased likelihood that your visa application will be delayed or denied. If you willfully submit incorrect information or willfully fail to provide the requested information, you may face penalties under immigration laws or under criminal or civil laws of the U.S.

When will we know more?

ANSWER: BAL is monitoring this situation. As information is released by the government, we will continue to update our resources and send alerts as quickly as possible.