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2026 Programme Guide

EB-3 OTHER WORKERS

EB-3 Other Workers Guide: Unskilled Green Card Steps

A step-by-step guide to the employer-sponsored green card for roles needing under two years of training or experience.

INVESTMENT	EDUCATION	EMPLOYER
None: no capital required	No degree required	US employer sponsors you

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KEY POINTS

Short answer: EB-3 Other Workers is an employment-based green card category for permanent, full-time jobs that need less than two years of training or experience. You cannot apply on your own: a US employer must offer the job and complete the labor certification (PERM) process first. The employer pays all PERM costs by law, and the wait that follows depends mostly on the monthly Visa Bulletin, so the whole process commonly takes several years.

01 What is EB-3 Other Workers?

EB-3 is the third preference category of US employment-based immigration. It has three groups: professionals (who generally need a bachelor's degree), skilled workers (jobs that need at least two years of training or experience), and Other Workers. This guide is about Other Workers, sometimes called "unskilled" workers.

Other Workers is for permanent, full-time jobs that need less than two years of training or experience. Common examples are found in hotels, restaurants, food processing, manufacturing, warehousing, cleaning and some care roles. The job must be a real position that the employer expects to continue, not a short-term or seasonal placement.

Key features of this category:

- No degree is required for the job. The requirement is the job's own minimum, which is under two years of training or experience.
- A US employer must sponsor you. There is no self-petition option.
- No investment is required. You do not buy a business or put money into a project.
- The employer must first obtain a labor certification from the US Department of Labor (PERM), then file Form I-140 with USCIS.
- Your spouse and unmarried children under 21 can usually receive green cards with you.

This category has a limited number of visas each year, and demand is higher than supply. That is why the waiting period for a visa number can be long. See Stage 4 below.

02 Who can qualify?

Eligibility depends on the job and on you. In general you need:

- A permanent, full-time job offer from a US employer that is willing to sponsor you.
- An employer that completes the PERM labor certification process and later files Form I-140 through its immigration attorney.
- The ability to do the job as it is described in the labor certification. The employer cannot add requirements that are not in the certified job, and you cannot claim experience you do not have.
- Admissibility to the United States. This includes passing the immigration medical exam and not having a serious criminal record or other grounds that make a person inadmissible. Individual cases differ, so ask the employer's attorney if you have any concern.

What Other Workers is not: it is not a route for jobs that need a degree or two or more years of experience. Those fall under the EB-3 professional or skilled worker lines, or under EB-2, which have their own priority dates. It is also not a temporary work visa, and it does not let you apply without a sponsor. For a plain-language explanation of which jobs fit, read Who qualifies for EB-3 Other Workers.

03 The process at a glance

The steps below are typical for a case handled outside the United States. Times are rough and change often. Treat them as general guidance, not a promise.

Stage	Who does it	What happens	Typical time
1. Match with employer and job	You, the employer, recruiter	The job, pay, location and duties are agreed and checked	Varies widely
2. Prevailing wage, recruitment, PERM filing	Employer and its attorney	Wage determination, job advertising, then ETA-9089 filed	Often a year or more in total
3. PERM approval and I-140	Employer and its attorney	Labor certification is approved; I-140 is filed, with optional premium processing	PERM decision: months; I-140: weeks to months
4. Wait for your priority date	You	Your date must become current in the Visa Bulletin	Often the longest phase; can be years
5. NVC, DS-260, documents	You, with NVC	Fees, online form DS-260, civil documents	Weeks to a few months
6. Medical exam and interview (consular) or I-485 (adjustment in the US)	You	Panel physician exam and consulate interview, or I-485 with USCIS	Months

Stage	Who does it	What happens	Typical time
7. Visa, entry, green card	You	Visa issued, you enter the US, green card is mailed	Weeks to a few months

04 Stage 1: Employer and job match

Everything starts with a genuine employer and a genuine job. A real EB-3 job usually looks like this:

- The employer is a real, operating US business that you can look up, with a business address, a website or public record, and a named contact person.
- The job is permanent and full-time (generally at least 35 hours a week), with clear duties, a work location and a stated wage.
- The wage is at or above the prevailing wage set by the Department of Labor for that job and area.
- The employer talks about using an immigration attorney and the PERM process, and explains that it pays the costs.

Red flags include an employer that cannot be verified, a job description that is vague or changes, a wage far below normal, anyone asking you for money to "reserve" or "buy" a job, and anyone who says no PERM is needed. Our guide How to tell a real employer from a scam lists more checks. You can also browse current openings on this site.

05 Stage 2: PERM labor certification step by step

PERM is the Department of Labor process that checks whether qualified US workers are available for the job. It is the employer's process. The employer's immigration attorney of record prepares and files it. For a fuller walkthrough, see PERM labor certification step by step.

- **Prevailing wage (Form ETA-9141).** The employer asks the Department of Labor to set the minimum wage for the job and location. This request can take months. See prevailing wage in 2026.
- **Recruitment.** The employer must test the US labor market. This generally includes a state workforce agency job order (typically 30 days), two Sunday newspaper advertisements, and a notice of filing posted at the workplace for 10 business days. Additional steps may apply depending on the job.
- **Waiting and the quiet period.** After the main recruitment steps, the employer generally waits at least 30 days and no more than 180 days before filing. Recruitment results must be reviewed, and US applicants who are qualified for the job must be considered fairly.

- **Filing Form ETA-9089.** If the employer finds no qualified, willing and available US worker, its attorney files the PERM application, usually online through the DOL FLAG system.
- **Possible audit.** The Department of Labor may audit a case, which adds time and requires the employer to submit its recruitment records. See common reasons for PERM audits.

The employer pays all PERM costs. Under US labor certification rules (20 CFR 656.12), the employer must pay the costs of the labor certification, including attorney fees and advertising for it, and the worker may not be charged for them.

Your priority date is the date the PERM (ETA-9089) is filed, not the date it is approved. That date is the one that later counts in the Visa Bulletin.

06 Stage 3: The I-140 petition

After the Department of Labor certifies the PERM, the employer files Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers, with USCIS. The employer's attorney of record files it.

The I-140 mainly shows that:

- The approved labor certification matches the job and the worker.
- The worker meets the minimum requirements for the job.
- The employer has the ability to pay the offered wage from the priority date onward. This is usually shown with tax returns, annual reports or audited financial statements.

Processing times change. USCIS currently offers premium processing for most EB-3 I-140 petitions, with a decision, request for evidence or notice of intent to deny targeted within 15 business days. The employer chooses whether to pay for it, so check the USCIS page for the current rule and fee. See also I-140 premium processing in 2026.

If USCIS issues a request for evidence (RFE), it sets a response deadline and does not extend it. The employer's attorney must reply on time with complete documents.

Once an I-140 is approved, you generally keep your priority date, even if you later change employers in some situations. If the employer withdraws the petition, whether the priority date and the case survive depends on how long the I-140 has been approved and whether you have a pending I-485. Confirm details with the employer's immigration attorney.

07 Stage 4: Waiting for your priority date

The law limits how many employment-based green cards are issued each year, and each country has a share cap. When more people apply than there are numbers, applicants wait in line by priority

date. The State Department publishes the Visa Bulletin every month to show who can move forward. We cover it live on our Visa Bulletin page. We do not print cut-off dates here because they change each month.

How to read the Visa Bulletin:

- **Final Action Date (FAD)** is the cut-off for when a visa can actually be issued or a green card approved. If your priority date is earlier than the date shown for your category and country, a number is available.
- **Dates for Filing (DFF)** is an earlier step. If USCIS allows it that month, people inside the US may file Form I-485 when their date is earlier than the Dates for Filing cut-off. USCIS announces each month whether applicants must use the Final Action chart or the Dates for Filing chart for employment-based cases. Check the USCIS "Visa Availability and Priority Dates" page.
- **Consular cases** (processing outside the US) follow the State Department's guidance, which generally uses the Final Action Date to schedule interviews. The NVC may ask for documents earlier.
- **Country of birth** matters. Your column is based on where you were born, not your citizenship or where you live. "Current" ("C") means no wait for that column, and a date means only priority dates before it can proceed.
- **Retrogression** happens when a cut-off date moves backward because demand is higher than expected. It can happen without warning. It is one reason timelines are never certain.

Column	Who it applies to
All Chargeability Areas (worldwide)	People born in most countries, including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, and Vietnam
China (mainland born)	People born in mainland China
India	People born in India
Mexico	People born in Mexico
Philippines	People born in the Philippines

Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau use the "all other countries" (worldwide) column. Always check the column for your own place of birth. If your case is subject to a different chargeability rule, such as through a spouse, ask the attorney.

08 Stage 5: Consular processing vs adjustment of status

When your priority date is current, there are two ways to finish. Which one applies depends on where you are and whether you are eligible to adjust.

	Consular processing	Adjustment of status
Where	Outside the US, through a US embassy or consulate	Inside the US, through USCIS
Main form	DS-260 immigrant visa application	Form I-485
Interview	At the consulate	Sometimes, at a USCIS office
Medical exam	Panel physician approved by the State Department	Civil surgeon, Form I-693
Eligible if	Your priority date is current and the NVC process is complete	You are in the US, were inspected and admitted or paroled, maintain eligibility, and your priority date is current
Result	Immigrant visa, then green card after entering the US	Green card approved by USCIS

Most Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China and Vietnam applicants who are living abroad use consular processing. People who are in the US in a qualifying status may consider adjustment, but not every status qualifies, so ask the employer's attorney before assuming this is open to you. For a full comparison, read consular processing vs adjustment of status.

National Visa Center (NVC) and DS-260. After the I-140 is approved, the case is generally sent to the NVC. You will be asked to create an online account, pay the required fees, complete Form DS-260, and upload civil documents such as your passport, birth certificate, police certificates and, if applicable, marriage and divorce records. Documents not in English usually need a certified translation. See the NVC process in 2026.

Affidavit of support (I-864). In most employment-based cases it is generally not required. It may be required if a relative filed the petition or owns 5% or more of the sponsoring business. Confirm this with the attorney or the NVC.

Medical exam and interview. For consular cases, you see a panel physician approved for the consulate. The exam usually includes a medical history, a physical exam, tests required by the State Department and required vaccinations. Then you attend an interview with a consular officer. You should bring your original documents, the exam results and your appointment letter. Be prepared to explain the job, the employer and your work history truthfully. See medical exam and interview.

Visa, entry and green card. If the visa is approved, you receive an immigrant visa in your passport and a sealed packet. Pay the USCIS immigrant fee, if required, and enter the US before the visa expires. The physical green card is generally mailed to you at your US address after arrival.

09 Realistic timeline

No one can give an exact timeline. Government processing and the Visa Bulletin change, and each employer and case is different. The ranges below are rough and hedged.

Phase	Typical range
Finding an employer and job	A few weeks to many months
Prevailing wage	Often several months
Recruitment and quiet period	Roughly 2 to 6 months
PERM processing at DOL	Often many months; audits can add more
I-140	Weeks with premium processing; months without it
Waiting for your priority date	Can be the longest phase, from a short time to many years, depending on the Visa Bulletin
NVC, medical exam, interview	Roughly 3 to 9 months
Visa and entry	Weeks to a couple of months

In total, the process commonly takes several years. The biggest factor is the Visa Bulletin wait, which is outside anyone's control. Employment-based categories can also retrogress. Because of this, never rely on anyone who promises a date.

10 Your family

Your spouse and your unmarried children under 21 can usually apply with you as derivative applicants. Derivatives generally follow the principal applicant's priority date and country column, so they are not a separate wait.

- A derivative's visa typically depends on the principal's case. If the principal is not eligible, derivatives are generally affected too.

- Children must be unmarried and under 21 when the visa is available. The Child Status Protection Act (CSPA) can protect some children who "age out," but whether it applies depends on the child's age, the dates in the case and the Visa Bulletin chart in use. Ask the attorney early if a child is close to 21.
- Each family member needs their own medical exam, documents and interview.

Read more in EB-3 spouse and children.

11 After you arrive: rights and changing jobs

A green card makes you a lawful permanent resident. You may live and work in the US, with a few conditions.

- **Work for the employer.** The visa was approved based on a specific permanent job, so you are expected to arrive intending to work for the sponsoring employer.
- **Worker rights.** Permanent residents have the same wage and hour protections as other workers, including minimum wage and overtime pay where the law applies. Keep copies of your pay records and employment documents.
- **Changing jobs.** Under AC21, if you filed Form I-485 and it has been pending for at least 180 days, you may be able to move to a new employer in the same or a similar occupation without starting again. This applies to adjustment cases, so ask an attorney before changing jobs. See AC21 job portability. After you already hold a green card, see changing jobs after you have a green card.
- **Travel and keeping residence.** You must keep the US as your permanent home. Long trips can raise questions. As a general rule, a single absence of more than 6 months may be questioned, and an absence of a year or more can be treated as abandoning residence unless you obtained a reentry permit first.
- **Card validity.** An EB-3 green card is generally valid for 10 years and can be renewed.
- **Citizenship.** After five years as a permanent resident, you may apply to become a US citizen if you meet the other requirements, including continuous residence, physical presence, good moral character, and passing the English and civics tests. Whether you can keep your original nationality depends on that country's law.

12 Who pays for what?

Costs should be clear in writing before you commit. General rules are below, and details vary by case.

Cost	Who typically pays
PERM and labor-certification costs, including attorney fees, advertising, prevailing wage	Employer, by law. The worker may not be charged
I-140 filing fees and attorney fees	Usually the employer or its attorney, depending on their arrangement. Confirm in writing
NVC, DS-260 and visa-related fees	Typically the applicant. Confirm which fees apply
Medical exam, vaccinations	Typically the applicant
Translations, police certificates, document fees	Typically the applicant
Travel and relocation	Typically the applicant

Global Immigrate's service terms are shown only after you sign in and are set out in a written agreement. Read it before you sign. Never pay anyone to "buy" or "reserve" a job slot. See who pays EB-3 costs.

13 Why choose us

Global Immigrate has helped families with U.S. immigration since 2018. We have over 1,000 success cases in total, including over 300 EB-3 success cases. USA EB-3 Jobs is our recruitment programme for EB-3 Other Workers.

- **Real, current openings.** We list roles from U.S. employers who have agreed to sponsor, and tell you plainly which roles fit your background. See open positions.
- **An honest assessment.** We start with your background, family and timeline. If your case is not ready, we tell you directly.
- **Costs explained before you pay.** The employer pays for PERM labor certification. Your own costs are set out in a written agreement before you pay anything.
- **A licensed attorney for the employer's petition.** A licensed U.S. immigration attorney prepares and files the employer's petition, and we keep you informed from PERM to green card.
- **Offices in Hong Kong and Taipei.** Our Taiwan entity is a registered immigration agency (registration C0309). This guide, our site and our enquiry form are available in four languages.
- **Checked against official sources.** Guides on this site are reviewed by Oscar Yip of Global Immigrate and checked against official U.S. sources.

No one can promise approval or a date, and we do not. If anyone asks you to pay for a job slot or promises a guaranteed green card, stop and verify first: see real employer or scam. You can also contact us with any question.

14 How EB-3 Other Workers compares

This is a brief overview. Requirements are complex, and the right route depends on your own background, so speak with a qualified attorney.

Route	Needs an employer?	Typical requirement	Notes
EB-3 Other Workers	Yes	Job needing under 2 years of training or experience	No degree needed; PERM required; waits often long
EB-3 Skilled / Professional	Yes	Skilled: 2+ years of training or experience. Professional: bachelor's degree	PERM required; its own priority dates
EB-2	Usually yes	Advanced degree, or exceptional ability	Often needs PERM unless a national interest waiver applies; see EB-3 vs EB-2
EB-1A	No (self-petition possible)	Extraordinary ability, shown by sustained acclaim	High standard of proof; no PERM
EB-5	No	Qualifying investment that creates US jobs	Large investment and source-of-funds review; no employer sponsor

Waiting times differ by category and country, so check the Visa Bulletin rather than assuming.

15 Next steps

- Check your eligibility using the form on the home page.
- Browse current EB-3 jobs and read how the process works.
- Read the live Visa Bulletin page to see how your birth-country column is moving.

Questions? admin@usa-eb3.com, WhatsApp +852 6888 4742, LINE oscar_gi, WeChat globalimmigrate.

More from Global Immigrate: For more on the program from our main site, see US EB-3 unskilled immigration. You can also read real stories or visit the FAQ and contact page.

This guide is general information, not legal advice. Rules, fees and processing times change, so confirm details with the employer's immigration attorney and official sources.

16 Frequently asked questions

Do I need to speak English?

The job itself does not have a degree requirement, and many Other Workers jobs need only basic English for daily tasks. The employer may require some English for safety or communication, and the job description will say so. English is also tested later if you apply for citizenship.

Can I bring my family?

Yes. Your spouse and unmarried children under 21 can usually receive green cards with you as derivative applicants. They generally follow your priority date, and each person needs their own medical exam and documents. Children close to 21 should ask the attorney about CSPA protection early.

How long does EB-3 Other Workers take?

It commonly takes several years in total. PERM, I-140 and consular steps take months to a year or more, and the Visa Bulletin wait is often the longest part. No one can promise a date, and processing times change.

Does my employer need to be a big company?

No, but the employer must be a real business with the ability to pay the offered wage from the priority date onward. It must also have a permanent, full-time job and be willing to work with an immigration attorney. Small businesses can qualify if they can show financial ability.

Can I change employers?

It depends on the stage. After an I-485 has been pending 180 days, AC21 may let you move to a new employer in the same or a similar occupation. Before that, changing jobs can end the case, so talk to an attorney first.

What if the employer withdraws?

The effect depends on how far the case has gone. If the I-140 was approved for at least 180 days, the petition and priority date may be kept in some situations, and an I-485 pending for 180 days has extra protection. Confirm details with the employer's immigration attorney.

Is a degree required?

No. EB-3 Other Workers is for jobs that need less than two years of training or experience, so a degree is not required. If a job requires a degree or two or more years of experience, it falls into a different category.

How do I know a job is real?

Look up the employer in the state business registry and on its website, and ask for a written job description that states the wage. A real employer pays PERM costs and never asks you to pay for a job slot. If you are unsure about an offer, contact us before you pay anyone. Read our guide on real employers and scams for a full checklist.

17 Sources

- USCIS: Employment-Based Immigration, Third Preference EB-3 https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/permanent-workers/employment-based-immigration-third-preference-eb-3
- US Department of Labor: FLAG (PERM) https://flag.dol.gov/
- US Department of State: Visa Bulletin https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html
- USCIS: Visa Availability and Priority Dates https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/green-card-processes-and-procedures/visa-availability-priority-dates
- USCIS: Form I-140 https://www.uscis.gov/i-140
- USCIS: Form I-485 https://www.uscis.gov/i-485
- USCIS: How Do I Request Premium Processing https://www.uscis.gov/forms/all-forms/how-do-i-request-premium-processing
- US Department of State: The Immigrant Visa Process https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/the-immigrant-visa-process.html
- eCFR: 20 CFR 656.12 (employer obligations) https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-656/subpart-A/section-656.12

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Tell us your situation and we will say plainly whether EB-3 fits you.

About us

Global Immigrate has helped families with US immigration since 2018. We have over 1,000 success cases in total, over 300 of them EB-3. Our offices in Hong Kong and Taipei work with clients from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China, and USA EB-3 Jobs is our portal for EB-3 employer-sponsored roles. We explain the process plainly, and we never promise a result or a date.

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