

**LEGAL RIGHTS**



**By Atty. Johnson Lazaro**

# Do Business and Stay with an Investor's Visa

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THIS November, we will be meeting with several business people in Manila and around the Philippines to provide information about the Investor's visa. Below is a preview of the topics concerning this visa.

*What is an investor's visa?*

This visa allows you, your family, and even key employees to operate your business in the United States.

*How do I find a business or an investment opportunity in America?*

The best approach is to try and obtain a business visa (B-1 visa) to visit the U.S. and personally explore business opportunities. There are thousands of businesses for sale.

*What is the procedure to immigrate to America?*

The U.S. government requires that you are ready, able, and willing to make the investment before your visa can be approved. This means that your funds may have to

be deposited in an account in the U.S., in a U.S. bank in the Philippines, with a reputable escrow company in the U.S. or in the attorney-client trust account.

*How much should one invest?*

This visa is for the serious investor. It is available for someone with \$150,000.00 to invest but consular officials would prefer a "true entrepreneur"—someone who would genuinely invest or buy a business in America and make it grow and prosper as compared to someone who just wants to immigrate.

The investor, his family and even key employees are qualified to immigrate as long as he can show sufficient resources to sustain their livelihood while he operates the

business. The spouse will be allowed to work anywhere and the children (under 21) will be able to enroll in school. If the investor needs advice on running the business, there are government agencies such as the Small Business Administration to assist the investor.

This visa is different from the one that can get you a "green card." For lawful permanent residency, the investment is at least \$500,000 to one million. But for those who don't have a cool million lying around, the investor's visa works just fine. Also, you do need to renew every two years.

Aside from business people, we will be speaking with potential immigrants and those with questions in obtaining visas from the U.S. Embassy in Manila. Despite the recent immigration restrictions and the failure to pass a comprehensive immigration reform, there are still many ways to immigrate to America and the investor's visa remains feasible choice.

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