

September 24, 2014

Unconditional landing status is determined by J'can authorities

Q: *My child is a U.S. citizen, but I want him to live with me in Jamaica and attend school here. How can we get permission to do this?*

Foreigners who arrive in Jamaica are generally allowed to stay for six months. However, a status called “unconditional landing” allows foreign passport holders to live, study and work in Jamaica without a special Jamaican visa. Children holding U.S. passports, for instance, may attend Jamaican public schools with an unconditional landing stamp. Adults, likewise, may work in Jamaica without a special permit.

There is a misconception that the U.S. Embassy in Kingston can provide an unconditional landing stamp for U.S. passports. This is absolutely not the case. Status in Jamaica is determined exclusively by Jamaican authorities, not the U.S. Embassy. The Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency of Jamaica (PICA) handles all unconditional landing requests.

Unconditional landing is generally restricted to persons born overseas of Jamaican parentage; Jamaican citizens who are also holders of non-Jamaican passports; and people who naturalized as Jamaican citizens. Certain skilled workers from CARICOM nations may also qualify.

For a child born in the United States, PICA generally wants to see the U.S. birth certificate and proof that at least one parent is a Jamaican citizen. Individuals seeking copies of their own or their children’s birth certificates must contact the vital records agency in the city, county or state that issued the original. The U.S. Embassy is unable to help parents obtain certified copies of U.S. birth certificates.

To receive unconditional landing, an individual must fill out PICA’s Application for Extension of Time Form and select “unconditional landing.” There is a fee of \$10,000 JA. The whole process generally takes one day. Unlike a U.S. visa, an individual must have the unconditional landing stamp in their current passport. There is a \$5,000 JA fee to transfer the stamp from an expired U.S. passport to a current one. Further information can be found at the PICA website, www.pica.gov.jm.

It is not necessary to receive permission from the U.S. Embassy to seek to unconditional landing in a U.S. passport.

Some parents have found that obtaining a Jamaican passport is a more convenient option for their child than seeking the unconditional landing stamp. PICA can also provide detailed information about that process.

For further information contact PICA – offices are located at 25C Constant Spring Road, Kingston or 49 Union Street, Montego Bay. You can also go online at www.pica.gov.jm or call 754-4488.

You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, www.kingston.usembassy.gov. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica> and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.