

The O-1A visa is for Individuals with an extraordinary ability in the sciences, education, business, or athletics (not including the arts, motion pictures or television industry). O-1 petitions may only be filed by a U.S. employer, a U.S. agent, or a foreign employer through a U.S. agent on behalf of the beneficiary. O-1 visas will be granted for the length of time necessary for a particular event, up to a maximum of 3 years, with unlimited extensions in 1-year increments. If your spouse and children under the age of 21 will accompany you or join you later (called “following to join”), they may be eligible to apply for an O-3 nonimmigrant visa that will be subject to the same period of admission and limitations as you. They may not work in the United States under this classification, but they may participate in full-time or part-time study on an O-3 visa.

To qualify for O-1A, the applicant must provide evidence of having received a major internationally recognized award, such as the Nobel Prize, or three or more of the following:

- **Receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field in which extraordinary ability is claimed.**
- **Membership in associations in the field of extraordinary ability which require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized experts in the field.**
- **Evidence of authorship of scholarly articles in the field, in professional journals, or other major media.**
- **Published material in professional or major trade publications or major media about the applicant's work.**
- **Evidence of participation on a panel, or individually, serving as the judge of the work of others in the field of extraordinary ability.**
- **Evidence in the form of numerous letters from prominent colleagues who can confirm the applicant's original scientific or scholarly contributions of major significance to the field. The case is strengthened by letters from outside of the employment and academic circle of the applicant. Recommendations from experts in other countries are particularly desirable.**
- **Evidence of employment in a critical or essential capacity for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation.**

- **Evidence that the applicant commands a high salary or other compensation for his or her services.**

If the above standards do not readily apply to the beneficiary's occupation in the arts, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence to establish eligibility (this exception does not apply to the motion picture or television industry).