



Siam Legal International Outlines US Tourist Visa Options for Thai Partners

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Siam Legal International, a law firm in Thailand, is addressing a recurring question from US citizens with Thai partners: whether a formal sponsorship process exists for a Thai partner's US tourist visa, following continued inquiries from clients weighing a visit against longer-term immigration options.

There is no formal sponsorship process for a B-1/B-2 visitor visa in the way there is for a fiancé visa or a spousal visa. A US citizen sponsoring a K-1 fiancé or a CR-1/IR-1 spousal case is required to file a petition and typically sign a Form I-864 Affidavit of Support. No such petition or required financial document exists for a tourist visa application, and the consular officer evaluates the Thai applicant on their own circumstances rather than the US partner's finances. A narrow exception exists in Form I-134, a financial support declaration used only when a consular officer specifically requests it, which immigration professionals generally advise against submitting unprompted.

Every B-1/B-2 applicant is legally presumed to intend to immigrate permanently unless they can prove otherwise, a standard known as the presumption of immigrant intent that applies regardless of whether the applicant has a US partner. Overcoming that presumption typically requires evidence in four areas: financial

resources that are genuinely the applicant's own, stable employment or business ties, a history of international travel with timely returns, and property, family, or business commitments in Thailand that make an extended stay in the US unlikely.

A US citizen partner cannot substitute for those four categories directly, though certain steps can strengthen an application. Financial transfers made gradually over a period of several months are generally viewed as more credible than a single large deposit made shortly before an application is filed, since consular officers are trained to treat last-minute lump sums as a sign the funds are not genuinely the applicant's own. A specific itinerary, a booked return flight, and confirmed accommodation also support the case for a temporary visit, and Siam Legal International said officers cross-reference an application against publicly available information, including social media, making an honest and consistent account preferable to omission.

A letter of invitation carries different weight depending on the visa category. For a B-1 business visit, a letter from a company, conference organizer, or industry professional confirming a specific business purpose is standard supporting documentation. For a B-2 tourist visit, a letter written by a US citizen partner does not carry the same weight and can draw additional attention to the relationship without strengthening the underlying case.

Applicants whose ties to Thailand are limited, without stable employment, property, or a travel history, are unlikely to overcome the presumption of immigrant intent regardless of financial support from a US partner. Siam Legal International noted that entering the US on a tourist visa with the intent to marry and pursue a green card shortly afterward carries separate legal risk, since it can later be characterized as a misrepresentation of the original visa's purpose, with consequences that can include future inadmissibility. Couples in that position are generally better served by a K-1 or CR-1/IR-1 case built around the relationship itself.

"The biggest misconception applicants and their partners have is that a relationship with a US citizen automatically strengthens a tourist visa application," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "The officer is evaluating the Thai applicant's own ties and financial independence, so the strongest cases are built around the applicant's circumstances rather than the sponsor's."

Additional background on US visa developments affecting Thai nationals is available in a prior report on US visa changes affecting Thai nationals in 2026. Individuals weighing a tourist visa against a longer-term immigration route can confirm current requirements directly with the US Embassy in Bangkok or with an immigration attorney familiar with both visa categories.

Siam Legal International has advised foreign nationals on immigration, property, and corporate matters in Thailand for more than 22 years, with a team based in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm's practice spans visa and residency planning, property transactions, business formation, and litigation support.

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