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P VISA OPTIONS

When people think about U.S. visas for talent, they often think of the O-1. But for many entertainers, performers, and cultural professionals, the P visa category may be the smarter, cleaner, and more strategic option.

We help entertainment groups, athletes, cultural performers, and international artistic people, identify the right P category — and structure the case properly from day one.

Below are the most common P visa pathways we handle.

P-1B: Internationally Recognized Entertainment Groups

Best for:

Established entertainment groups — not just musicians.

Who qualifies?

- Bands and music groups
- Comedy troupes
- Dance companies
- Theater ensembles
- Performance collectives
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If your group has been performing together for at least one year and has international recognition, P-1B may be ideal.

P-1A: Professional Athletes

Best for:

Internationally recognized athletes competing and training in the U.S. individually or as part of a team.

Our approach

- Flag inconsistencies before filing
- Align petition language with contract terms

P-2: Reciprocal Exchange Programs

The P-2 visa allows artists and entertainers to enter the U.S. under a formal reciprocal exchange agreement between a U.S. organization and a foreign organization.

It is commonly used by Canadian artists, but it is not limited to Canada. Any country can qualify — as long as there is a valid reciprocal exchange program in place.

Key Requirements

To qualify, there must be:

- A formal written exchange agreement between a U.S. and foreign organization
- A true reciprocal structure (U.S. artists go abroad and foreign artists come to the U.S.)
- Artists of comparable skill and professional level
- A U.S. petitioner and performance contracts/itinerary
- A required union consultation

The visa focuses on the exchange program — not on proving “extraordinary ability.”

Why P-2 Is Strategic

- No extraordinary ability standard (unlike O-1)
- Works well for established professionals who may not qualify for O-1
- Ideal for structured touring circuits and cultural exchanges
- Often cleaner and more practical for Canadian artists involved in cross-border programming

When It Works Best

P-2 is a strong option when there is an organized exchange program in place and the artist is entering as part of that structured relationship.

If no reciprocal agreement exists, another category (O-1, P-1, or P-3) may be more appropriate.

P-3: Culturally Unique Artists & Performers

Best for:

Artists or professionals performing, teaching, or demonstrating culturally unique traditions. Many people misunderstand how flexible this category is.

Examples may include:

- Cultural performance duos
- Traditional dance ensembles
- French regional chefs brought to open a restaurant- may be viable option if not H-1B
- Brazilian master woodworkers demonstrating heritage techniques
- Specialty artisans tied to cultural traditions

If the work is rooted in a distinctive cultural practice, P-3 may work — even when O-1A or H-1B does not.

When P-3 is a smart strategy

- O-1 criteria feel too high or unrealistic
- The strength is cultural authenticity, not awards
- Small groups or specialty performers
- Culinary or craft-based talent

We help define and document cultural uniqueness clearly and persuasively.

Please reach out to us if you know someone interested in one of these categories.