

A photograph of a city street scene, likely in New York City, featuring tall buildings and a yellow overlay. The text "O VISA JOURNEY" is centered on the yellow overlay. The background shows a mix of classical and modern architecture, with a street sign for "14 WALL STREET" and a "SKYLINE RESTORATION INC" sign visible in the lower right.

O VISA JOURNEY

WHAT IS AN O VISA?

“The O-1 nonimmigrant visa is for the individual who possesses extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics, or who has a demonstrated record of extraordinary achievement in the motion picture or television industry and has been recognized nationally or internationally for those achievements.”

O-1A: individuals with an extraordinary ability in the sciences, education, business, or athletics

O-1B: individuals with an extraordinary ability in the arts or extraordinary achievement in motion picture or television industry

MY O VISA JOURNEY

June 2014

Graduated from RISD

February 2015

Started my visa application

August 2015

Submitted my visa application

August 2015

Received Request For Evidence (RFE)

September 2015

Visa Approved

January 2017

Went through the visa interview in Seoul and got the stamp

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

You have to establish at least three of the six enumerated criteria, which are:

1. Evidence that you have performed and will perform services as a lead or starring participant in productions or events that have distinguished reputation;
2. Evidence that you have received national or international recognition for achievements evidenced by critical reviews or other published materials by or about you in major publications;
3. Evidence that you have performed and will perform in a lead, starring, or critical role for organizations and establishments that have a distinguished reputation;
4. Evidence that you have a record of major commercial or critically acclaimed successes as evidenced by such indicators as title, rating, standing in the field, and other reports in publications;
5. Evidence that you have received significant recognition for achievements from organizations, critics, government agencies, or other recognized experts in the field;
6. Evidence that you have either commanded a high salary or will command a high salary or other substantial remuneration for services in relation to others in the field.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Simplified version:

1. You have performed and will perform a lead in productions



2. You have published materials by or about you in major publications



3. You will perform for organizations that have a distinguished reputation



4. You have major commercial or critically acclaimed successes



5. You have received significant recognition from experts in the field



6. You have or will receive a high salary in relation to others in the field.



GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

How you can fulfill the criteria:

1. Provide your portfolio with endorsement letters from people who you worked with (they will be attesting to your involvement in the event or production)

2. Provide published work about you or about your work (websites, magazine articles, journals, etc)

3. Receive verification letters that your employers (past or present) have distinguished reputation in the industry

4. Show proof that your project got rave reviews on the press, or has been commercially successful

5. Receive 8-12 recommendation letters from experts in the field

6. Show proof that you are highly paid compared to others in your field

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

I fulfilled:

1. Provide your portfolio with endorsement letters from people who you worked with (they will be attesting to your involvement in the event or production)

2. Provide published work about you or about your work (websites, magazine articles, journals, etc)

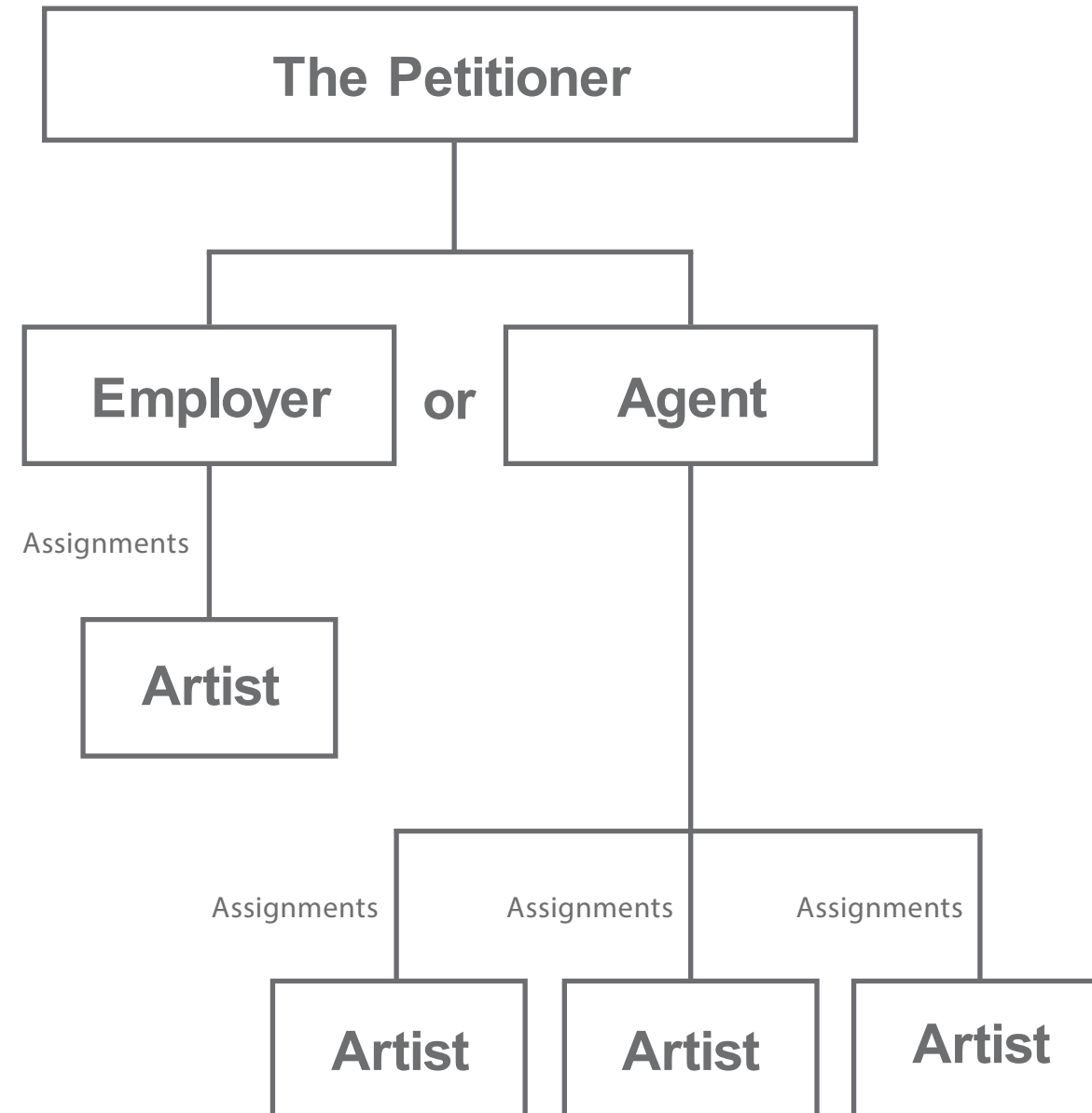
3. Receive verification letters that your employers (past or present) have distinguished reputation in the industry

5. Receive 8-12 recommendation letters from experts in the field

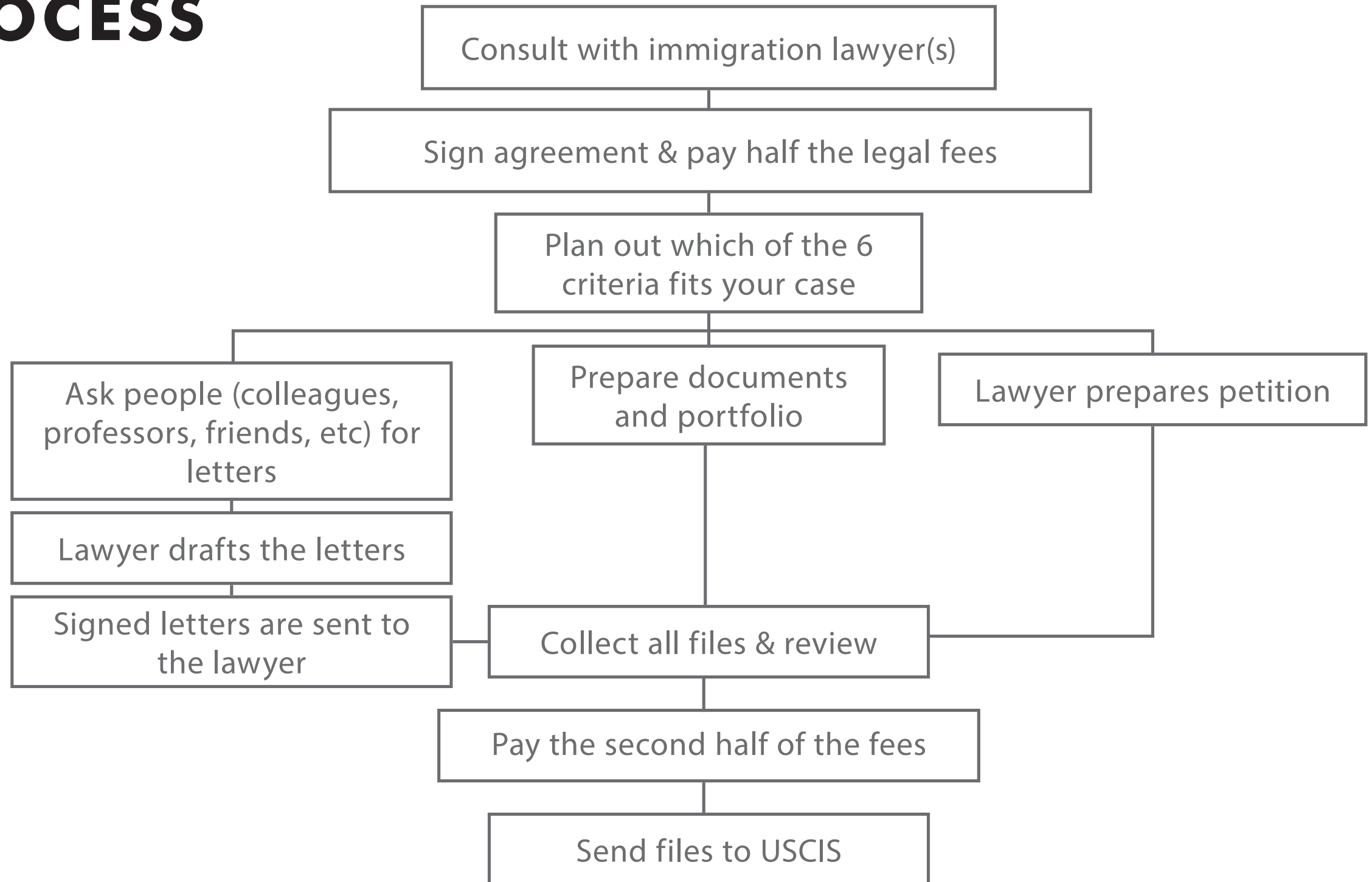
BASIC OVERVIEW

An agent can be:

- The actual employer of the beneficiary;
- The representative of both the employer and the beneficiary; or
- A person or entity authorized by the employer(s) to act in place of the employer(s) as an agent.



MY PROCESS



MY APPLICATION PROCESS

Talked to 6 immigration lawyers

Took 6 months

Cost \$5850

- legal fees \$4000
- nonimmigrant visa petition \$325
- premium processing fee \$1225
- additional administrative fee \$300

Received:

- 10 recommendation letters
- 4 endorsement letters
- 1 advisory opinion letter
- 2 critical role letters
- 3 employment letters

Letters from:

- 4 professors
- 6 colleagues
- 2 friends

Prepared:

- 1 portfolio with 16 projects
- 1 three year itinerary

SAMPLE 3 YEAR ITINERARY

[Name] – Three-Year Itinerary

2015 September

BDO Ad Campaign

Develop new BDO campaign for 2015 including new poster, TV commercials, brochure and print advertisements. Create mood boards, storyboards, and creative guidelines for the ad campaign. Collaborate with copywriters, account managers, and art directors to develop themes, storyline, copy, visual elements and script. Check to see that the design, typography, and colors follow BDO's creative guidelines for print advertisements. Utilizing tools such as: Adobe Photoshop CC, Adobe Illustrator CC, Adobe InDesign CC and Final Cut Pro.

Contact: [name], Principal / Creative Director

Address: [address]

T: [telephone number]

E: hello@hello.com

PORTFOLIO SAMPLE

On regular paper (no texture, no gloss, and non-thick)

Clear and concise description of the project

Around 8 to 20 projects

Endorsement letters highly encouraged

AFTER THE APPROVAL NOTICE

-Keep ALL YOUR DOCUMENTS

-Choose a consulate (home country is the best)

-Fill out form DS-160 online and print out confirmation

-Gather I-129 (visa petition), I-797 (approval notice), a receipt after paying the MRV fee, a passport photo, and all the visa related documents

-Prepare for the interview

MY CONSULATE INTERVIEW

1. Can I see your last I-20?
2. Where do you work?
3. Who is (my agent)? Where does she live? Does she have any other graphic designer clients?
4. Can I see some of your work?
5. Did you win any awards?
6. Can I see your recommendation?
7. What's your salary? What was your total income last year?
8. Where do you live?

BENEFITS OF AN O VISA

- No annual cap
- Educational degree is not essential for approval
- No set filing period
- O-1 visa holders can apply for permanent residency
- The average processing time is 3-4 months which is shorter compared to other visas (different for premium processing)
- Good option for H-1B holders who are close to completing 6 years
- An initial period of up to three years with options to extend status in increments of one year (O-1 status could be extended indefinitely)
- May work for multiple employers if an U.S. agent represents for the beneficiary

FUN FACTS ABOUT O VISA

Famous people who received the O-1 Visa:

- Justin Bieber
- Iggy Azalea
- Psy



CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Talk about visa sponsorship and your status with your employer early on
- Even if you get a H1B sponsorship, it is safe to prepare for an O-1 visa (chances of winning lottery for bachelor degree holders is around 30% and for master degree holders is around 60%)
- O visa is case-by-case so do not compare yourself with others
- Talk to multiple immigration lawyers before working with one (some require consulting fee)
- Don't be afraid to reach out to people
- Remember, you go to one of the best design schools in America!

RESOURCES & LINKS

More about O visa

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/o-1-visa-individuals-extraordinary-ability-or-achievement>

<http://blog.wegreened.com/uncategorized/the-o-1-visa-as-an-alternative-to-h-1b/>

<http://faq.visapro.com/o1-visa-faq.asp>

<http://greencardlawyers.com/workvisas/O-1visa.html>