

Consider New U.S. Visa Integrity Fees When Planning Your Business Travel Budget



Does your company have any permanent residents, students, foreign workers, or others that need a non-immigrant visa to get into the U.S.? If so, the costs of sending these employees south of the border to conduct business may have just gone way up. On October 1, 2025, the U.S. government began charging Canadians and other travelers from abroad a pricey new “Visa Integrity Fee.” Here are the 4 things about the new fee that HR directors need to know to plan their travel budgets for the end of the year and beyond.

FAQ 1. What's the Point of the Visa Integrity Fee?

Answer: The fee is the most recent action by the Trump administration to tighten border security and crack down on illegal immigration. Last April, the U.S. implemented a [new policy](#) requiring

Canadians and other foreign nationals who stay in the U.S. for more than 30 days to register with the U.S. government and, in some cases, undergo the indignity of fingerprinting. The purported objective of the Visa Integrity Fee is to deter people from overstaying their visas or breaking the rules of their stay.

FAQ 2. How Much Is the Visa Integrity Fee?

Answer: Travelers will have to pay the new Integrity Fee of US \$250 (approximately CA \$350) at the time their visa is issued. The Fee is in addition to existing visa application fees, which currently start at US \$185 (CA \$360), at least for most travelers. The Fee is also subject to annual increases for inflation, starting in 2026.

FAQ 3. Are There Any Loopholes to Avoid Paying the Visa Integrity Fee?

Answer: No. The Visa Integrity Fee is mandatory and may not be waived. Technically, the Fee is refundable. But actually getting a refund won't be simple. To qualify, travelers must strictly adhere to the terms of their visa and either leave the U.S. within 5 days before it expires or get an extension or green card allowing them to

stay.

The other problem is that there's no official refund process and it's expected to take the U.S. Department of State several years to establish one. Moreover, refunds won't be available until the visa expires. As a result, visa holders won't even be able to apply for refunds until years after they pay the Fee. Accordingly, the nonpartisan U.S. Congressional Budget Office predicts that only a small fraction of Fee payers will ever get their money back.

FAQ 4. Who Has to Pay the Visa Integrity Fee

Answer: The good news is that most Canadians traveling to the U.S. won't have to pay the fee. That's because the Visa Integrity Fee applies to "any alien issued a non-immigrant visa at the time of such issuance." Canadian citizens generally don't need a visitor visa to enter the U.S.

However, permanent residents, students, or foreign workers in Canada that need a visa to enter the U.S. may be subject to the new fee. If you have any such individuals on your payroll, be prepared to shell out the fee before sending them to the U.S. on a business trip, or reimburse it later, even for a short visit.

Also keep in mind that Canadian citizens need a non-immigrant visa when traveling to the U.S. for specific reasons, including:

- Joining a U.S. fiancé(e) (K-1 and K-2 visas).
- Completing a family immigration process (K-3 and K-4).
- Working as a treaty trader or investor (E-1 and E-2).
- Serving as a diplomatic or international official (A, G, NATO).
- Assisting in law enforcement operations (S-5, S-6, S-7).