PHOENIX
IMMIGRATION CONSULTING SERVICES

EB-2 National Interest Waiver: Employment-Based Green Card (Self-Petition)

EB-2 NIW

A self-petitioned U.S. green card for qualified professionals, with no job offer, no employer sponsor and no PERM labor certification.

None	45	$ 1,015	5 years
Employer sponsor or job offer required	Business days for premium I-140 decision	USCIS I-140 fees, self-petitioners	Green card to citizenship eligibility

Why the EB-2 NIW

The EB-2 National Interest Waiver lets qualified professionals apply for a U.S. green card on their own, with no job offer, employer sponsor or PERM labor certification. The case rests on your qualifications and a clearly defined proposed endeavor. USCIS decides whether that work has substantial merit and national importance, whether you are well positioned to advance it, and whether waiving the job-offer requirement benefits the country.

Key benefits

No employer needed
No job offer, employer sponsor or PERM labor certification required.

File from anywhere
Adjust status in the U.S. or complete consular processing abroad.

Family included
Spouse and unmarried children under 21 receive green cards as derivatives.

No PhD required
A PhD, publications or citations are helpful but not mandatory.

At a glance

Visa type
Immigrant (green card), EB-2

Employer sponsor
No: self-petition on Form I-140

Typical timeline
Often 1–2+ years, per Visa Bulletin

Family
Spouse, unmarried children under 21

Program overview

- Self-petition on Form I-140 in the EB-2 category, filed from the U.S. or abroad
- You control the case and may change employers, provided you continue in your proposed endeavor
- Permanent residence opens the path to U.S. citizenship after five years

Pakistan +92 312 8873639 / +92 335 2735392 **USA** +1 689 286 3561 info@phoeniximmigrations.com phoeniximmigrations.com

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Qualifying criteria

Qualify on one EB-2 basis, then meet all three Dhanasar prongs argued in your petition.

Advanced degree

Master's+

A U.S. master's or higher (or foreign equivalent), or a bachelor's plus five years of progressive post-degree experience.

Exceptional ability

3 of 6

Exceptional ability in the sciences, arts or business, shown by at least three of six USCIS criteria.

Dhanasar prong 1

Endeavor

A specific proposed endeavor with substantial merit and national importance.

Dhanasar prong 2

Well placed

Education, skills, track record and plans showing you are well positioned to advance the endeavor.

Dhanasar prong 3

On balance

On balance, the U.S. benefits from waiving the job offer and labor certification.

Eligibility requirements

- A credential evaluation for any foreign degree
- Recommendation letters from independent experts and U.S. stakeholders, typically 4–7
- Evidence such as experience letters, publications, patents, contracts and plans

Professional and third-party costs are separate from government fees.

Good to know

- USCIS fees: **$715** for Form I-140 plus a **$300** Asylum Program Fee for individual self-petitioners (**$1,015** total).
- Premium processing is an optional **$2,965**; Form I-485 is **$1,440** per applicant aged 14 or over.
- I-140 approval does not end the wait: the final green card stage depends on your priority date.
- Nov 2026 EB-2 final action dates: Rest of World (incl. Pakistan) 1 Apr 2025, China 1 Oct 2021, India 1 Nov 2013.

Your application journey

Onboarding

01 Free profile assessment and consultation with Phoenix

02 Confirm your EB-2 basis and define a focused proposed endeavor

03 Gather evidence: degree evaluation, publications, patents, plans

Petition

04 Secure letters from independent experts and U.S. stakeholders

05 Prepare the petition letter, exhibits indexed to each Dhanasar prong

06 File Form I-140 (premium processing optional); sets priority date

Green card

07 Respond to any Request for Evidence

08 **When your priority date is current, file I-485 or process abroad**

Talk to a Phoenix advisor

We assess your eligibility, compare the routes open to you and manage your application from first consultation to approval.

Karachi
Burj Ul Minal Tower 2, Office 407,
Gulistan-e-Johar Block 11

Austin, Texas
5900 Balcones Dr, Suite 12802, Austin,
TX 78731

Book a free consultation

Scan to visit our website

+92 335 2735392 (WhatsApp)
+1 689 286 3561
info@phoeniximmigrations.com

Program rules, government fees, processing times and visa-free access can change at any time. Figures are indicative as of November 2026; please confirm current terms with Phoenix Immigration Consulting Services before applying. This fact sheet is for general information and is not legal advice.