

Mobility: Immigration alert

October 2021



China

New requirements for Official Invitation (PU) letters sponsored by companies based in Beijing

Executive summary

The Chinese Government recently started accepting requests for Official Invitation (PU) letters from dependent family members of foreign assignees who are sponsored to work in China by Beijing-based companies. The new changes are already in effect in most districts in Beijing.

Background

The Chinese authorities started requesting PU letters in April 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, to manage the entry of non-Chinese citizens into China.

Assignees and business visitors

Non-Chinese nationals aged 18 or older who enter China as business visitors or are sponsored to work in China by Beijing-based companies, are now required to submit their travel history for the 28 days immediately preceding their PU letter application filing date, as well as proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as part of their PU letter application. These applicants must submit a certificate proving that they received the required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved in China or by the World Health Organization. The certificate must contain the name of the COVID-19 vaccine and the date(s) on which it was administered.

PU letter application requirements vary slightly depending on the district in Beijing where the sponsoring company is located. Applicants sponsored by companies in the Haidian District must submit a form called the "Declaration Form for foreign nationals arriving in Beijing" to the Haidian District authority after their arrival.

Dependent family members of assignees

Dependent family members of assignees who are sponsored to work in China by Beijing-based companies are now eligible to obtain PU letters for the first time since November 2020. Dependent family members are defined as married spouses of primary assignees and minor children (under the age of 18) of the primary assignee. Dependents are subject to the same vaccination and travel history requirements as primary applicants, and they must provide proof of their relationship with their primary assignee (e.g., legalized marriage or birth certificate). Dependent family members of business visitors are not eligible to obtain PU letters.

Exemption from the PU letter requirement

Foreign assignees and their dependent family members, as well as business visitors, are no longer required to obtain PU letters if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccine produced in China (i.e., Sinopharm or Sinovac). In order to avail of this exemption, these travelers must obtain a vaccination certificate confirming that they received two doses of the Sinopharm or Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine (in or outside of China).

Key steps

These changes positively impact foreign assignees working in Beijing, as their qualifying dependent family members may now join them in China for the first time since November 2020. EY will continue to monitor these developments and further official announcements. Should you have any questions, please contact any of our immigration professionals.

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ey.com

Ben Fan

Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: + 86 21 2228 2257
Email: ben.fan@cn.ey.com

Sheree Cang

Associate Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: + 86 21 2228 3661
Email: sheree.cang@cn.ey.com