



## [How to Choose an International Staffing Agency](#)

If you want to live and work in America as a licensed healthcare professional, you'll likely need to find an international staffing agency to assist you. There are many reputable agencies out there that have your best interests in mind. But unfortunately, there are also entities (or individuals) out there that exist to prey on those eager to improve their lives and careers in the USA. *PassportUSA* has seen enough examples of both to advise you on how to choose an international staffing agency.

The following are considerations when choosing the right international staffing agency to fulfill your ambitions of working in the United States:

### **Does Not Charge for Services**

On the [PassportUSA Facebook page](#), which has over **2 million** followers, one of the most common questions received is "How much do your services cost?" Candidates are clearly used to being charged upfront and paying fees for these services, which is a shame because that's not the reality when dealing with [a reputable international staffing agency](#). If you're asked for upfront money from an agency or individual, you should not contract with them.

## **Received the Joint Commission Certified Gold Seal of Approval**

When making a decision as important as choosing your international staffing agency, you should seek as much evidence as you can that you're dealing with a legitimate agency. The Joint Commission Certification is an important certification that all legitimate agencies should have received.

The Joint Commission is a U.S.-based nonprofit tax-exempt 501 organization that accredits more than 20,000 national healthcare organizations and programs. When assessing your agency, look for the "Gold Seal of Approval." [The Gold Seal Of Approval™](#) honors agencies that fully comply with the Joint Commission's national set of consensus-based quality standards, as well as those agencies that demonstrate a commitment to excellence in providing healthcare staffing.

Typically Joint Commission certified agencies will have more career opportunities to offer you as well as it is relatively common that U.S. healthcare systems will not contract with an agency or staffing provider that does not meet this standard.

## **Bound by the AAIHR Code of Ethics**

The American Association of International Healthcare Recruitment ([AAIHR](#)) is a Delaware not-for-profit 501(c)(6) organization that is the voice of the international healthcare recruitment industry.

Formed in 2006, the AAIHR represents the mutual interests of U.S.-based organizations that participate in the recruitment of foreign-educated healthcare professionals. Its goal is to promote legal, ethical, socially responsible, and professional practices for international healthcare recruitment.

Members of the AAIHR sign and must adhere to a [strict code](#). Ask the agency you're speaking with if they are members of any international staffing regulatory organization. If they aren't, ask them why.

## **Assists with U.S. Relocation**

This goes a long way in separating reputable agencies from the bad ones. How far are they willing to go to ensure you make it to the U.S. and that you're prepared? Take *PassportUSA* for example. Once a candidate is employed with PassportUSA, the agency sends a representative to meet them when they arrive in their city before their first day on the job. Furthermore, the PassportUSA representatives help candidates who are employed with them with numerous additional tasks, like:

- Short-term housing
- Guidance for long-term housing
- Setting up a bank account
- Getting a social security card
- Going to the grocery store
- Picking up a rental car
- Take you to your facility so you can see it ahead of time
- Providing an arrival bonus that can help you purchase items needed for initial housing purchases like bedding, linens, etc.

- and more!

Ask your agency how far they go to ensure their candidates are comfortable before starting a new job in a place they've never been to.

## **Provides Quality Employee Benefits**

Before you sign a contract, ask what kind of benefits are offered by the agency. The following is a shortlist of things you should expect are offered from any reputable international staffing agency once employed by them:

- Quality health insurance
- Disability insurance
- Professional Liability insurance

Those are the bare minimum. Better agencies may offer relocation assistance and the following additional items:

- Platinum level health insurance
- Dental, life, and disability insurance
- Paid time off (PTO)
- Allowances for continuing education courses
- Housing and relocation allowances
- 401(k) - with employer match. (A well-known and reliable way Americans set aside money for retirement)

It is important to note that there are charges for some of the benefits (medical and dental insurance) as you elect to participate in them, as is customary in the U.S.

## **Has a Track Record of Success**

It's a good idea to look into how long an agency has been in business. This is especially important for two reasons: an agency that has been in business for a long time is obviously a successful business and more trustworthy than say a business that's just recently emerged. But also, the experience is so important in international recruiting because you want to be dealing with an agency that can clear unexpected immigration hurdles like visa retrogression.

For example, *PassportUSA* has been in business for over 10 years and has endured numerous visa retrogression periods. The fact that they are still in business and placing international medical professionals in the U.S. is something to be very proud of. But more importantly, it says to you that an agency like *PassportUSA* can handle a visa retrogression and still get you where you want to go. Hear [real stories](#) of *PassportUSA* nurses who experienced retrogression and made it to the U.S. through the program.

## **Recruiters are Accessible**

It's unlikely you'll get anything but a positive response if you ask your agency "How accessible are

your recruiters?” But do they practice what they preach? If you find that your recruiter isn’t being responsive to you, then it might be time to consider other options. You need to be able to reach your recruiter. They often have answers to questions and the vital information you need for your new life in America. They should be easy to reach and welcome your calls or e-mails. PassportUSA even has its recruiters [take over their Instagram](#) to let candidates ask questions.

## **Provides Fair Compensation for Your Hard Work**

Compensation is much different than pay. Don’t base your decision entirely on pay. You should add all of these additional items into your compensation package that you are offered once employed with the agency: the value of your visa filing, relocation to the U.S., insurance and benefits package, stipends and reimbursements for expenses, retirement benefits *and your hourly wage*. Certainly, you must earn a respectable wage, but be aware that U.S. wages vary widely based on where in the country you will be working — as does the cost of living in that area. For example, a nurse in New York should not compare pay rates with a nurse in Arkansas. Their pay rates differ widely but the nurse in Arkansas earning less may actually be enjoying a higher standard of living because her earnings go further because of less expensive housing and so on.

## **Assists with Visa Filings for Your Family Members**

One of the greatest benefits of a reputable agency is once you are employed by them, they will help you bring your family and/or dependents to the U.S. with you as well. We know how lonely and intimidating traveling to a new country for a new job can be - we see it daily. Ask your agency if and how they will get your family to the U.S. too. If they don’t provide help, know that there are better agencies within reach that will assist you.

And if you’re considering *PassportUSA*, click the button below to apply to our program and take the first step in achieving your American Dream!

**Achieve Your #AmericanDream**

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