

Every year, the United States takes in hundreds of thousands of international students a year. In 2015, Midori Morimoto was one of the 974,926 [students](#) the U.S. welcomed. She was born and raised in Japan and came to America to further her education in the business field.

She explains that America excels in innovation while Japan excels in developing and adding value to products. For people like Midori who dream of gaining global business experience, America can be a great opportunity. There are many opportunities in the business field. It's easier to start a business in the United States. The regulations are more lax than in other countries. The key to gaining this experience comes in the form of a visa. Without these special non-immigrant visas, foreigners like Midori wouldn't be able to live, go to school, or work in America.

Midori explains that before anyone applies for a visa, **you have to \$50,000 in your bank account**. The money can come from your parents or your own funds. The government needs to know that you'll be able to afford to live in the U.S. This limits the amount of people who come over for study. Also, you cannot have a criminal background at all.

Student Visas

Getting an F1 student visa is simple. All you need is the funds and an ID. It lasts for 5 years. The government assumes it takes 4 years to gain the degree with an additional year just in case. On this type of visa, the student can't get a job. Because they don't have a social security number, no company can hire them. The government also believes the reason you are in the country is to study. This is why the student has to have so much in their bank account before studying in the U.S.

Midori tells the story of a student who was getting poor grades in school. The teacher reported the student to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. The student's visa was cancelled and thus he had to return to his country. When your visa is voided, you have 60 days to leave the country.

Training Visas

After one graduates from school, they are eligible for an Optional Practical Training (OPT) visa. This visa that lasts for a year and allows the student to get a job. The job must relate to their field of study. Once you get approved through an interview process, you obtain a work permit called an **employment authorization document** (EAD card) then they obtain a social security number. The person also has to find a company that will sponsor them.

Work Visas

The most common type of work visa is a H1. They will last for 3-6 years. This is very difficult to get for a variety of reasons. There is a lot of paperwork necessary to apply for this visa. You have to be interviewed, explaining why you believe you deserve the visa. You also need a lawyer and a company that will agree to sponsor you. This visa also relies on a lottery system. The applications are released on April 1st and close the next day. The problem is that even if

you get everything together and find an employer who will sponsor you, if you don't win the lottery system, you have to return to your country within 60 days. This is why many companies are hesitant to sponsor foreigners.

Midori is one of the lucky ones. Because of her business degree, she qualified for an E2 investment visa. It's good for 5 years. The qualification was getting sponsorship from a qualifying business. The business needs to be owned by your own country. For example, since Midori is from Japan, the company she works for has to be at least 50% Japanese. The business has to have at least \$20,000 in American resources. If an American company absorbed her company, her work visa would then be voided and she would have 60 days to return to Japan.

During the interview, they ask a variety of personal questions to ensure you haven't created any roots in America. People like Midori can't really have relationships while working here. Midori explains how it can be difficult for people like her to relate to Asian Americans. They have some privileges that foreigners don't have. Things like changing jobs, getting a boyfriend, or even filling out a 'references' section on a volunteer app is a struggle.

Things like renting an apartment, finding a job, or getting a car is also a challenge for the non-immigrant foreigners like her. We don't realize how much our credit score affects our lives in America. In Japan, everyone starts at a perfect scored credit. It is the individual choices that makes it go down. In America, however, it is the opposite. We have to rid our credit scores up by borrowing and returning things on time. We have to take out credit cards and loans to create better credit. Since she is a foreigner, it's difficult for her to do these things like a citizen.

Despite all of this, Midori doesn't regret it. Like so many others, she is on the path to making her dream come true.