

## Republic of Panama



### About Panama

#### Capital City:

- Panama City

#### Monetary Unit:

- Balboa & US Dollar (PAB & USD)

#### Major Language:

- Spanish

#### Main Exports:

- Crude Oil & Petroleum
- Bauxite & Aluminum
- Fish & Agricultural products

### Our Immigration Services in Panama

#### Business and Special Visitor Visas –

Guidance and assistance with visa applications filed with the Panamanian Consulates abroad

#### Temporary Visitor Visas & Work Permits –

For foreign executives, investors, individuals involved in reforestation projects, and under the Marrakech Treaty

#### City of Knowledge (Ciudad Del Saber)

**Work Visa Program** – For foreign nationals who will work for a company that leases or rents an office or building within the former Ft. Clayton Military Base

#### Immigrant Visa as a Permanent Employee of the Panama Canal Authority –

For foreign nationals who will transfer to Panama for extended assignments or permanent relocation

### The Panamanian Economy

Home to over three million people, Panama is the southernmost country of Central America and is of immense strategic importance to the U.S. Panama is most known for its canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, which is currently over ninety years old and undergoing substantial expansion. Each year hundreds of thousands of people make the eight-hour journey through the waterway. The canal, the natural attractions of its pristine forests and coastlines, and a lively, modern capital are fuelling a growing tourism industry. Source: <http://newsvote.bb.co.uk>

While revenues from the canal toll and infrastructure development represent a significant portion of Panama's GDP, Panama also has a very healthy logistics and services sector. Panama has long been reputed in the region for its efforts to attract investment. In 2007, it enacted comprehensive legislation aimed at providing fiscal, tax, and immigration incentives for multinational organizations seeking to bring regional or global operations to the middle of the hemisphere. These efforts have paid off as many large multinationals such as Caterpillar, Proctor & Gamble, and Hewlett-Packard have set up regional training and coordination centers in Panama. Source: <http://panamcham.com>. For more information about investing in Panama, please visit: <http://proinvex.mici.gob.pa/>

### Business Travel to Panama

Foreign nationals who wish to travel to Panama for business should ensure their passports are valid for at least six months past the date of intended entry and have sufficient blank pages for any visa stamps. Yellow fever vaccinations are recommended prior to traveling to Panama.

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Passport holders from a list of countries may be eligible to enter Panama without a visa for stays of up to 30 days. As of July 21, 2009, individuals who hold a passport valid for at least three months AND a valid visa from the US, UK, Canada, Australia or any of the member countries of the EU, WHICH has been used at least one time to enter those countries, to enter Panama by purchasing a Tourist Card upon arrival at the Panamanian airport, regardless of their nationality.

Otherwise, travelers may require a visa stamp to enter Panama. Business visitors may engage in limited, non-remunerative activities while in Panama, including professional and commercial activities such as consultations, negotiations, business meetings, marketing and product promotion activities, and conferences. Business activities for compensation are prohibited. U.S. and Canadian citizens, as well as many EU-state passport holders, may enter Panama without a visa for business purposes as indicated above. If the stay will involve more than simple business meetings, a visa stamp may be required.

For more information about foreign entry requirements to Panama, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/3cd2jnsy>

### Living in Panama

While Panama has long been a destination of expatriates from around the world, it has recently become more popular amongst retirees and snow birds. The warm climate and relative political and economic stability of Panama make it popular destination amongst North Americans. To add to its attractive familiarity, most U.S. consumer goods are relatively easy to find, driving is on the right

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side of the road, and the U.S. dollar is the primary form of currency.

Panama City is the country's capital and the principal commercial center. It lies on the Gulf of Panama in the Pacific Ocean. Colon, the country's second largest city, is located on the Caribbean Coast. Its economy is dependent on traffic through the Panama Canal and on business activity in the Colon Free Trade Zone, the largest duty-free zone in the Americas.

## Panamanian Business Culture

Panamanian businesspeople are generally accustomed to interacting with international professionals. Although one may be kept waiting for a business meeting, one should be punctual. Business greetings are formal and professional titles should be used. An exchange of business cards is normal. Proper etiquette suggests that one side of the business card be translated into Spanish, with the Spanish side facing the recipient. Suits are necessary for business meetings.

## Panamanian Work Permit Process

**1** Application with the Ministry of Labour  
– or –  
For the City of Knowledge, certificate from the Foundation of the City of Knowledge, confirming that the applicant is involved with a registered business

**2** Upon issuance of the Resolution issued by the Ministry of Labour, approving the work permit, and Labour Permit Card, temporary residence application  
– or –  
For City of Knowledge, application & issuance of Temporary Immigrant Card (valid for 3 months)

**3** Registration, or "filiación," at the Immigration Department  
– or –  
For City of Knowledge, 2-Year Work Permit Card issued by the Immigration Department

## How Goel & Anderson can assist your organization in Panama

Organizations that wish to employ foreign workers abroad require an immigration service provider with a record of successfully coordinating and delivering global, business immigration services for multinational organizations. Goel & Anderson practices exclusively in the field of immigration to assist your company with the recruitment, hiring, and retention of foreign workers across the globe, including Panama. We understand that time and resources are valuable to your business and that staffing an international project can be critical to your business' reputation and success. We are committed to efficiently delivering business immigration solutions that combine broad global coverage with a depth of local expertise.

We carefully select co-counsel who share our service and compliance-oriented approach to meet the needs of organizations doing business in the global marketplace. Our Global Immigration Practice group and local counsel work closely together to ensure comprehensive business coordination and seamless delivery of services. Our immigration services include end-to-end processing, including: Work Permit and Visa Application preparation and

filing; detailed guidance on the visa stamping and post-entry process; and tracking key expiration dates. Personal representation at the Panamanian Embassy or Consulate abroad and Local Police or Immigration Department may be available.

Generally, there are restrictions on the number of foreign national workers that may be sponsored and salary thresholds must be met for certain work permits. Thus, if your company's office in Panama anticipates engaging foreign talent, an early analysis of immigration options and strategies, as well as a thorough understanding of the sponsorship obligations, will better position your project for success. We also understand that despite careful planning, emergent issues can arise. We are well positioned to assist your business to address unexpected business requirements. Because global immigration matters do not occur within a vacuum and the law is infrequently static, we seek local experts who may also assist with a range of related legal services, including corporate formation, contracts, employment agreements, licensing, and transactions and who will advise of changes in policy and procedures.

With headquarters outside of Washington, DC in Reston, Virginia and operations in Pune, India, Goel & Anderson is an immigration firm that is international in scope and personal in nature. We are known as a firm that is highly professional and also highly human. We offer clients extensive experience and a comprehensive understanding of all areas of business, employment, and family-based immigration law worldwide.

For more information about our Global Immigration Practice and services, please contact Jill Marie Bussey at [jill.bussey@goellaw.com](mailto:jill.bussey@goellaw.com) or +1 703.796.9881.

\*Goel & Anderson, LLC does not engage in the practice of law within India. All services in India are provided by our affiliate, G&A Immigration Services Private Limited.

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Innovative Approaches to Immigration Law

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