

O-1 VISA QUICK-START GUIDE: 7 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE RIGHT NOW TO JUMPSTART YOUR AMERICAN DREAM

ACTION ITEM #6. JUDGE SOME CONTESTS: "PARTICIPATION AS A JUDGE OF THE WORK OF OTHERS IN THE FIELD."



Guess what. We're done with the hard part.

Our last 2 "acclaim" action items are short and sweet. You're going to judge some competitions, and you're going to write some technical articles. This will take some effort, but compared to what you've accomplished in the first 5 action items, it's a piece of cake.

For mysterious reasons known only to USCIS, these 2 categories - judging and authorship - are "gimme" criteria that are ridiculously easy to satisfy, compared to all the others. They're the categories that EVERYONE should have, no matter what their field of specialization might be.

If you judge 3 or 4 events, and write 3 or 4 technical articles in your field, you'll satisfy these 2 criteria. USCIS's interpretation of these categories is so generous, lenient, and inclusive that it seems unbelievable - especially compared to others that seem impossible to satisfy.

Since these "judging" and "authorship" categories create a hugely disproportionate amount of "extraordinariness" for O-1 purposes, you should work this to your advantage as much as you possibly can.

Compared to what you've already done - collecting these 2 piles of nuggets will be like panning for gold in the "Gold Rush" exhibit at your local history museum.

JUDGE SOME COMPETITIONS.

This O-1 category requires *"participation on a panel, or individually, as a judge of the work of others in the same or in a field of specialization allied to that field for which classification is sought."*

Seek out opportunities to judge some pitch competitions. Evaluate some business plans. Volunteer as a peer reviewer or an editorial board member for a technical publication. Evaluate speaker applications for TedX events or SXSW events. The definition of judging is pretty elastic, as long as you supply the evidence items listed below.

Prestige still counts, so you might as well aim high. Volunteer for events at the national and international level. However, unlike the other categories, it won't hurt your case to include "judging" events at a local or regional level.

There's a great return on investment here. Doing several of these events can really improve your O-1 chances, without a lot of effort on your part.

For each instance of "judging," here's the evidence you need to gather to satisfy this criterion.

- Proof of selection to serve as a judge, on a topic related to your field. A letter or email formally telling you that you're serving on the panel.
- Actual participation as a judge. You have to prove that you actually did it, not just that you were invited to do it. Save the program with your name in it, showing the event, and the date, and what you did. This is called "contemporaneous documentary evidence of actual service."
- Some news clippings about the event to show it actually happened.
- Some evidence about the selection criteria you're using.
- The names of the entrants in the competition that you're judging.
- The outcome of the judging, that is, who won. Include some "contemporaneous documentary evidence" about the field of competitors, the winners, what they won, and why.
- Maybe some evidence about the prestige of the selectors, including you. Make the event look big.

That's it. Action Item #6, Judge Some Competitions. It seems ridiculous, compared to the amount of preparation and reverse engineering the other action items require. But take it and run with it!