



Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco  
visti.sanfrancisco@esteri.it

### **ELECTIVE RESIDENCY VISA** (National Visa)

The elective residency visa is specifically for persons (especially those who are retired and/or of Italian origin) who wish to reside **permanently** in Italy and who can demonstrate a stable and ample pension income and high financial resources.

The elective residency visa is **NOT** for extended tourism. It is not an end-run around the limited validity of Schengen tourist visas or the visa-waiver program, nor is it for letting you join family members or friends who have accepted temporary jobs in Italy. An individual applies for the elective residency visa with the intention of establishing a permanent home in Italy.

Individuals who receive an elective residency visa **cannot work** in Italy; they must be able to sustain themselves from their existing financial assets, such as annuities, stocks, pensions, bonds, and so forth. Applicants are not permitted to work from home, blog for payment, offer consulting services to their previous employers, or otherwise dodge this restriction. If an applicant wishes to take a job in Italy after establishing residency in Italy, he or she must apply to the local Questura (police headquarters) for a change in his or her immigration category.

The elective residency visa is for **exactly 365 days**: no more, no less. An applicant must demonstrate housing and financial resources for **a minimum of one year**. Upon arriving in Italy, applicants must apply at the local Questura (police headquarters) for a permesso di soggiorno (residency permit). Each year, the Questura will verify that the applicant still meets all the requirements for the elective residency visa and re-issue the permesso di soggiorno.

The elective residency visa is **the most strictly regulated visa**. Consular officers are required by law to investigate elective residency visa applications thoroughly. The Ministry permits Consular officers to take up to sixty days to review and process an elective residency visa application. Therefore, although we take pride in keeping our processing time under twenty days, the visa department of this Consulate strongly recommends that applicants do not purchase airplane tickets until they have received their visas.



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You must submit all required documents. Visa applicants **must appear in person** to submit their visa request at this Consulate General or at the appropriate Honorary Consul (please see the [Consular Network](#) link on our website).

Applicants must pay the **national visa fee** for this visa.

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- **Passport** or travel document accepted by the Schengen countries valid for a period of 3 months beyond the applicant's last day of stay abroad (minimum one year past your planned date of arrival in Italy). The passport must have a blank page on which the visa will be affixed. **(plus photocopy of the official page with personal data and expiration date, plus page with signature if it does not appear on the same page).**
- **Proof of physical residence** in our jurisdiction, such as a photocopy of driver's license, state ID, or utility bill (please do not send us original IDs other than passports).
- **Proof of legal permanent residence** in the United States (only **non-U.S.** citizens): U.S. Alien Registration Card or valid long-term U.S. visa, valid for at least three months beyond the intended departure from the Schengen member states. **U.S. visas B1/B2 visas are not acceptable for this purpose.** If you have a B1 or B2 visa, you cannot apply for the Schengen tourist visa. **(plus: photocopy of the residence card or the passport page with the longterm U.S. visa).**
- **One** recent ICAO standard **photograph**: 45mm (1,77 inch) by 35mm (1,37 inch) in size, full face, front view, color. It must be glued to the Schengen visa application form, in the top right.
- **One [Long stay visa application form](#)** completely and clearly filled out.
- **Lease, rental contract, or deed for property in Italy.**
  - The lease, rental contract, or deed must be in the applicant's name.
  - If renting or leasing, the applicant must present an original copy of a "Contratto di Locazione ad Uso Abitativo", complete with proof your landlord has registered it with the Agenzia delle Entrate, the Italian tax authorities.
  - [Click here to download a sample contract](#). Your contract must be materially similar to this one.
  - A third party's offer of hospitality or a hotel stay is unacceptable. The Declaration of Hospitality form posted for tourists will not be accepted for an elective residency visa.
- Documented and detailed **guarantee of substantial and steady private income** (including pensions or annuities) from property, stable economic and commercial activities or from other sources and proof of financial means, such as letters from the applicant's bank indicating the financial status of their accounts, including amount of money in each account, copy of last pension check received etc.



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- **FBI Criminal Background check (“Identity History Summary”)**. Applicants can find instructions for ordering their background checks through [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov). Please note that these require fingerprinting by a local police authority.
- **One [Declaration for Mailing Passports](#)** completely and clearly filled out
- **A self-addressed** (from yourself and to yourself) **pre-paid US Postal Service envelope** so that your passport can be mailed back to you.
- **Bank statements for the last six months**
- **Two letters of reference from major banking institutions or chartered accountants**
- **Last two years of tax returns**
- **Letter from applicant specifying his or her reason for permanently staying in Italy, where he or she plans to reside, and the names of individuals accompanying the applicant, such as spouses or children.**
- **The national visa application fee** must be paid in exact amount by **cashier’s check** or **money order** upon presentation of the visa application. The fee adjusts every three months - Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> – based on the government’s official euro-dollar exchange rate.

Consular officers may request additional documents at their discretion. **Please be aware that submitting the required documentation does not guarantee the issuance of a visa.**

We strongly urge you to take a photocopy of the application and supporting documents with you to Italy, because the domestic immigration authorities may ask you to show the documents submitted to obtain a visa. There are nine time zones of difference between us and them, so if the authorities must wait for us to send them those documents, it may be inconvenient for you.