

# Steps for getting a Residency Visa (Leje Qëndrimi) in Albania

## First Time Applicants

**1) Apply for your Cults letters (via AEP office) before arriving in Albania**, so that the letters are ready when you arrive. To request the Cults letter send an email requesting the Cults letter to the AEP office along with a scanned copy of all adult passports and the name of the city where you will live in Albania.

**Within a week of arriving in Albania, you have 10 days to present yourself to the nearest Immigration Police.** You must show your passport and to fill in a form (name, passport no, address in Albania, name of the organisation etc.). (These countries are exempt from this process: Australia, Andorra, European Union, Schengen Zone, Israel, Japan, Canada, Lichtenstein, San Marino, Vatican, USA or New Zealand).

**Apply for your LQ early.** You have an automatic three-month visa issued when entering Albania (Americans have a 12-month visa). Aim to complete your residency application within the first month.

If you have all the papers together, you can declare their presence in Albania and apply for a LQ at the same time. Americans have to apply for their visa within ten months of being in the country if they intend to stay longer than a year.

**Important:** If you hold a LQ but leave Albania for more than six months, your LQ will automatically expire, and the process needs to be started from the beginning again.

### **AEP Charge:**

The AEP office charges 800 lekë per adult to cover expenses.

Your first LQ is issued for one year (unless you are American and can apply for a five year LQ). After that you can apply for two-year LQs, and after five years of consecutive LQs you can apply for a lifetime LQ.

### **Please note:**

Unfortunately, because of a recent change in the law, missionaries are no longer eligible for free residency visas, except if applying through VUSH. We are working on renewing AEP's agreement with the government to once again qualify for free visas as we had under the old law.

If your organisation is a member of VUSH (Evangelical Alliance) you can request the initial documents (Cults letter) from VUSH, and your LQ will be free as VUSH has an agreement with the Government. The VUSH office will charge you 3000 lekë for the letter.

The Government charge for residency visas (payable at a bank via the immigration office) is:

1 year visa	– 10,000 lekë
2 year visa	– 15,000 lekë
Lifetime visa (after 5 years of consecutive visas)	– 25,000 lekë
American citizens (for all visas)	– 7,000 lekë

## ***First Time Application for adults***

*(please put each person's application in the following order and secure with a paperclip)*

1. Completed **Formular punesimi (Employment form)** (AEP provides blank copies).
2. Photocopies of **passport** It must expire at least three months after the period of time you are asking for a Leje Qendrimi.
3. **Court/police certificate** from your home country, \* stating whether there are criminal proceedings pending against you, and that you have not been in jail or arrested during the previous six-month period. This needs to be legalized **with an apostille stamp**.  
  
\*\* See note below for information on apostilles and notarising them in Albania.
4. Notarised **rental contract, or home ownership documents**.
5. **A notarised copy of a “Certifikata e Rregjistrimin ne Pune (Exemption for a work permit)” issued by the Labour office**. Keep the original, as it will be needed for your next renewal. This document is valid for as long as you are ‘working for the Organisation through which it is applied for. See the separate list for documents needed and the procedure for applying for the certificate (on page 8 of this document).
6. **AEP Reference Letter (in place of a work contract)** in Albanian for every adult (AEP provides this).
  - a. **A photocopy of your health insurance certificate**. This needs to be certified and stamped by the AEP administrator on the AEP Reference Letter.
  - b. **A letter from your organisation saying that your living and accommodation expenses will be covered** by your organisation for the duration of your time in Albania. This needs to be certified and stamped by the AEP administrator on the AEP Reference Letter.
7. **Letter from the Cult’s Committee** (Ministry of Religions) – The AEP office applies for this letter (which says your religious-oriented work is approved) on your behalf. The process takes a month so you need to request this before you arrive in Albania.
8. **Copy of the AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides this).
9. **Three colour photos** (“passport” sized, i.e. 3.5x4.5cm).

*\* If you are from the USA, we understand you can get the court/police certificate document from the American Embassy in Tirana.*

*\*\* If you are coming from a country that has joined HC-1961(Hague convention), then your court/police certificates (and children’s birth certificates) must have been authenticated or legalized with an **apostille stamp** within the previous six months. These*

*certificates and the apostille need to be translated into Albania and notarised when you get to Albania (it is much simpler and cheaper to do the translation and notarization in Albania).*

(See <http://www.apostille.biz/apostille-countries> for the list of countries that are a member of the Hague convention and which require an apostille).

***However**, if you are coming from a country that has **not** joined the HC1961 then your **court/police certificates** need to be legalized in the Foreign Affairs Ministry in your home country and then at the closest Albanian consulate to your home country before you arrive. When you arrive in Albania they must be translated into Albanian and notarised, then legalized at the Albanian Foreign Ministry.*

### ***First time application for children***

***(Please put each child's application in the following order and secure with a paperclip)***

1. Completed **Formular Bashkim Familjar (Family reunification form)** (AEP provides blank copies)
2. **Copy of passport** (with the first page and the entry stamp page). It must expire at least three months after the period of time you are asking for a Leje Qendrimi.
3. Copy of **Birth certificate** (legalised with an **Apostille stamp\*\*** within the last six months), which is translated and notarised in Albania (**keep the original** for renewal applications).
4. **A notarised declaration of both parents** (both parents need to declare that they agree to allow their child to apply for a LQ in Albania – this is best prepared by a notary in Albania).
5. **Copy of the notarised house contract or home ownership documents.**
6. **Photocopy of both parents Letter from the Cult's Committee**
7. **A photocopy of each parents AEP Reference letter and a copy of health insurance, and the parents letter of financial support attached** stapled together and certified and stamped at the AEP office (see no 6 of the parents list).
8. **Photocopy of both parents Leje Qendrimi** (if they already have one).
9. **Copy of AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides this).
10. **Three colour photos** (passport sized, i.e. 3.5x4.5cm).

## Renewal process for Leje Qendrimi's

**Submit your renewal application to the police station at least two months before your current LQ expires!** Request your Cults letter from the AEP office three months before your LQ expires to ensure that everything is ready on time. Late submissions can incur a fine from 50,000-100,000 new lekë (\$500-\$1000US)!

**You must be in the country when you submit your application**, but if you are going on Home Assignment, then you can request permission to submit it early – but tell them how long you are going to be away and when you will return.

**Important:** If you leave Albania for over six months, your LQ will automatically expire, and the process needs to begin from the beginning again.

### **AEP Charge:**

The AEP office charges 800 lekë per adult to cover expenses.

### **Please note:**

Unfortunately, because of a recent change in the law, AEP members are no longer eligible for free residency visas. We are working on renewing AEP's agreement with the government to once again qualify for free visas as we had under the old law, but in the meantime our members have to pay for their visas.

If your organisation is a member of VUSH (Evangelical Alliance) you can request the initial documents (Cults letter) from VUSH, and your LQ will be free as VUSH has an agreement with the Government. The VUSH office will charge you 3000 lekë for the letter.

The Government charge for residency visas (payable at a bank via the immigration office) is:

1 year visa	– 10,000 lekë
2 year visa	– 15,000 lekë
Lifetime visa (after 5 years of consecutive visas)	– 25,000 lekë
American citizens (for all visas)	– 7,000 lekë

### ***For a two-year (or five-year for Americans) renewal you need the following:***

*(Please put each person's application in the following order and secured with a paperclip)*

1. Completed **Formular punesimi (Employment Form)** (AEP provides blank copies).
2. A **copy of your passport**. If your passport number has changed since your previous Leje Qendrimi was issued, you must submit a copies the passport pages from both your old and new passports. Your passport must expire at least three months after the period of time you are asking for a Leje Qendrimi.
3. **Photocopy of your Leje Qendrimi** that is about to expire.
4. **Notarised** copy of your **rental contract or home ownership documents**.
5. A **notarised copy of a "Certifikata e Rregjistrimin ne Pune (Exemption for a**

- work permit)” issued by the Labour office.** Keep the original, as it is valid for your next renewal. See the separate list for documents needed and the procedure for applying for the certificate (also on page 8 of this document).
6. **Letter from the Cult’s Committee** (Ministry of Religions) – The AEP office applies for this on your behalf. The process takes a month so you need to request this early.
  7. **AEP Reference Letter** in Albanian fully completed for every adult (AEP Provides this).
    - a. **A photocopy of your health insurance certificate.** This needs to be certified by the AEP administrator on the AEP Reference Letter.
    - b. **A letter from your organisation saying that your living and accommodation expenses will be covered** by your organisation for the duration of your time in Albania. This needs to be certified by the AEP administrator as part of the AEP Reference Letter.
  8. **Copy of the AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides this).
  9. Three colour **passport photos**

### ***Renewal Process for children:***

*(Please put each child’s application in the following order and secure with a paperclip)*

1. Completed **Formular Bashkim Familjar (Family Reunification Form)** (AEP Provides blank copies)
2. **Copy of passport** (with the first page and the entry stamp page). It must expire at least three months after the period of time you are asking for a Leje Qendrimi.
3. Notarised copy of the **apostilled birth certificate** that was submitted with the original application.
4. **A notarized declaration of both parents** (both parents need to declare that they agree to allow their child to apply for a LQ in Albania – this is best prepared in Albania).
5. **Copy of house contract**
6. **Photocopy of both parents Leje Qendrim** (if they already have one).
7. **Photocopy of both parents Letter from the Cult’s Committee**
8. **Photocopy of parents AEP Reference letter with a copy of health insurance, and letter guaranteeing financial support attached** stapled together and stamped at the AEP office (see no 7 of parents list).
9. **Copy of AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides this).
10. **Three colour photos** (passport sized, i.e. 3.5x4.5cm).

## Lifetime Leje Qendrimi

**Make sure you submit your renewal application to the police station at least two months before your current LQ expires!** Request your Cults letter from the AEP three months before your LQ expires to ensure that everything is ready on time. Late submissions can incur a fine from 50,000-100,000 new lekë (\$500-\$1000US)!

**You must be in the country when you submit your application**, but if you are going on Home Assignment, then you can request permission to submit it early – but tell them how long you are going to be away and when you will return.

**Important:** If you hold a LQ but leave Albania for over six months, your LQ will automatically expire, and the process needs to be started from the beginning again.

### **AEP Charge:**

The AEP office charges 800 lekë per adult to cover expenses.

### **Please note:**

Unfortunately, because of a recent change in the law, AEP members are no longer eligible for free residency visas. We are working on renewing AEP's agreement with the government to once again qualify for free visas as we had under the old law, but in the meantime our members have to pay for their visas.

If your organisation is a member of VUSH (Evangelical Alliance) you can request the initial documents (Cults letter) from VUSH, and your LQ will be free as VUSH has an agreement with the Government. The VUSH office will charge you 3000 lekë for the letter.

The Government charge for residency visas (payable at a bank via the immigration office) is:

1 year visa	– 10,000 lekë
2 year visa	– 15,000 lekë
Lifetime visa (after 5 years of consecutive visas)	– 25,000 lekë
American citizens (for all visas)	– 7,000 lekë

### **For a lifetime renewal you need the following:**

*(Please put each person's application in the following order and secure with a paperclip)*

1. **Formulari i perhershëm (Permanent Form)** (AEP provides blank forms)
2. **Photocopy of passport**
3. **Photocopy of Leje Qendrimi's for the past five consecutive years.**
4. Notarised copies of **rental contract or proof of home ownership.**
5. **A notarised copy of a "(Certifikata e Rregjistrimin ne Pune) Exemption for a work permit" issued by the Labour office.** Keep the original in case it is

needed at a later date. See the separate list for documents needed and the procedure for applying for a voluntary the exemption (on page 8 of this document).

6. **Court/police certificate (deshmi penalitet)** from the city where you live in Albania.
7. **AEP Reference Letter** (AEP provides this)
  - a. **A letter from your organisation saying that your living and accommodation expenses will be covered** by your organisation for the duration of your time in Albania. This needs to be certified by the AEP administrator on the AEP Reference Letter.
  - b. **A photocopy of your health insurance certificate.** This needs to be certified by the AEP administrator on the AEP Reference Letter.
8. **Letter from the Cult's Committee** (Ministry of Religions) – The AEP office applies for this on your behalf. The process takes at least a month so you need to request this early.
9. **Copy of AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides this).
10. **Three colour photos** (passport sized, i.e. 3.5x4.5cm).

### ***Lifetime Renewal Process for children:***

*(Please put each child's application in the following order and secure with a paperclip)*

1. Completed **Formular Bashkim Familjar (Family Reunification)** (AEP provides blank copies)
2. **Copy of passport** (with the first page and the entry stamp page). It must expire at least three months after the period of time you are asking for a Leje Qendrimi.
3. **A translated and notarised copy of birth certificate**
4. **A notarised declaration of both parents** (both parents need to declare that they agree to allow their child to apply for a LQ in Albania – this is best prepared in Albania).
5. **Copy of house contract** (notarised)
6. **A photocopy of both parents Leje Qendrimi** (if they already have one)
7. **Photocopy** of both parents **AEP Reference letters with a copy of health insurance, and letter of financial support attached** stapled together and stamped at the AEP office (see no 5 of parents list).
8. **Photocopy of both parents Letters from the Cult's Committee**
9. **Copy of AEP Foundation Statutes** (AEP provides a copy of this).
10. **Three colour photos** (passport sized, i.e. 3.5x4.5cm).

## **Exemption for a work permit (Certifikata e Rregjistrimin ne Pune)**

Apply for this document from the immigration department of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (Ministria e Mireqenies Sociale dhe Rinise) on Rruga Kavaje. The person to see is Alban Haxhi and he is on the fourth floor (level 3 in the lift) and his office is usually open until 4.30pm.

### **Documents needed for everyone:**

- 1. Photocopy of passport**
- 2. Vendimi Gjykatës** of your organisation (if your organisation is registered in Albania), or from AEP (if your organisation registered outside Albania).
- 3. NIPT** of your organisation (if registered in Albania), or from AEP (if registered outside Albania).
- 4. Kerkese (Work contract/agreement)** from your organisation, or AEP (if registered outside Albania) in English and Albanian (AEP has a template of both the Albanian and English versions of this document for you to adapt. Please email [aep@aepfoundation.org](mailto:aep@aepfoundation.org) for copies of the templates).

### **Extra documents needed for those with passports from all countries other than the European Union, Schengen countries and the USA:**

- 5. Completed application form** (available from AEP office)
- 6. Five passport photos**