



United States Olympic Committee

Visa and Entry Handbook for International Visitors





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The U.S. Olympic Committee is committed to providing international sports leaders, athletes and officials with first-rate, personalized visa and entry assistance.

The following pages provide important information for prospective travelers to the United States.

Should you have any questions regarding the visa and entry process or require additional assistance please contact our visa assistance team at international@usoc.org.



Do I require a visa to travel to the United States?

To determine if you require a visa to travel to the United States, please review the instructions below or visit the U.S. Department of State's [Visa Wizard](#).

A visa will be required of all visitors to enter or transit through the United States with the exception of nationals of Canada, Bermuda and countries that are part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Currently 38 countries participate in the VWP:

Andorra	France	Liechtenstein	Singapore
Australia	Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
Austria	Greece	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Belgium	Hungary	Malta	Spain
Brunei	Iceland	Monaco	Sweden
Chile	Ireland	Netherlands	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Italy	New Zealand	Taiwan
Denmark	Japan	Norway	United Kingdom*
Estonia	Korea, Republic of	Portugal	
Finland	Latvia	San Marino	

**To be eligible to travel under the VWP, British citizens must have the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Also of note: The countries of Curacao, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba and St. Maarten (of the former Netherland Antilles) are not eligible to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program if they are applying for admission with the passports from these countries.*

Travelers from these countries who are eligible to travel visa free will need Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to travel. Travelers should check ESTA status well ahead of traveling, and those who are applying for ESTA for the first time should apply early, but not later than 72 hours prior to traveling.

Nationals of Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somali, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen are subject to various travel restrictions contained in [Presidential Proclamation 9645](#), subject to exceptions and waivers set forth in the Proclamation. Nationals of these countries should apply at least six months in advance to allow for visa processing. Information on the Proclamation may be found on the Department of State's website at: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/presidential-proclamation-archive/june_26_supreme_court_decision_on_presidential_proclamation9645.html

The following travelers who have traditionally been eligible to travel and enter the U.S. through the VWP will need to obtain a U.S. visitor visa:

- Citizens of VWP countries who have traveled to or been present in **Iran, Iraq, Libya, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria** or **Yemen**, on or after March 1, 2011.
- Dual citizens of VWP countries who are also nationals of **Iran, Iraq, Sudan** or **Syria**.

Though these citizens are no longer eligible to travel under the VWP (even if they had previously been granted Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approval), they are still welcome to enter the U.S. with a valid visitor visa, which can be obtained using the regular process at U.S. Embassies or Consulates.

For additional information on the Visa Waiver Program, please refer to **Section B**.

If you require a visa to travel to the United States, please refer to **Section A**.



SECTION A: I REQUIRE A VISA TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

Application Process

When should I initiate the application process?

Apply early! Although the majority of applications are processed and ready to pick up within a few business days, some applications will require administrative processing. It is recommended that you apply several months before you plan to travel.

Please note that consular operations are limited in Cuba, Venezuela, and the Russian Federation. Visa applicants may be required to apply outside of the respective country. For questions on visa operations at a U.S. embassy or U.S. consulate General, please contact oltp@usoc.org.

Visa applicants can apply at any U.S. embassy or consulate. For countries that do not have a U.S. embassy or consulate, please apply at a post of your choosing and contact the U.S. Olympic Committee to notify us of your interview location so that we may better assist you.

The wait times for interview appointments by consular post are available at the [Department of State travel site](#).

How do I apply for a visa?

- Complete the online Nonimmigrant Visa Application Form [DS-160](#).
- Upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [photograph requirements](#).
- Pay the required visa application fee, if required to do so prior to the date of your interview. For additional information on fees, please visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/Visa-Reciprocity-and-Civil-Documents-by-Country.html>.
- Print the application confirmation page and bring to your interview.
- Schedule an interview appointment. Appointments should be scheduled as soon as possible. For instructions and information, please consult <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/>. Please note, interview appointments must be scheduled by the applicant, they are not assigned by the Embassy/Consulate.

Note: Filling out the application form is free and easy. You do not need the assistance of a travel agent or visa facilitator.

*If there are no interview appointments available prior to the date of the meeting or event, please confirm the earliest appointment available and notify oltp@usoc.org immediately. By confirming the earliest appointment available, the applicant is considered to be entered into the U.S. Department of State network.

Do all nonimmigrant visa applicants have to come to the Embassy for an interview?

Yes, for most applicants. There are only a few exceptions to the interview requirement. The following applicants generally do not have to appear in person:

- Applicants for A1, A2 (official travelers on central government business), C2, C3 (central government officials in transit on central government business) or G1, G2, G3, G4 (central government officials traveling in connection with an international organization, or employees of an international organization).
- Children under 14 years of age at the date of the initial visa interview in the Embassy or Consulate if either of the parents have a valid nonimmigrant visa.
- Applicants older than 79.

I have a nonimmigrant visa that will expire soon and I would like to renew it. Do I need to go through the entire visa application process again?

Yes.



Preparing for Your Interview

How should I prepare for my interview appointment?

Gather and prepare the following required documents before your visa interview:

- Ensure your passport is valid for travel to the United States. Many passports must be valid for at least six (6) months after your planned departure from the United States unless exempted by [country specific agreements](#).
- Print your application fee payment receipt, if you are required to pay before your interview.
- Print your Nonimmigrant Visa Application, DS-160 Form confirmation page.
- Upload your photo while completing the online Form DS-160. If the photo upload fails, the applicant must bring one printed photo to your interview. Your photo must be in the format explained in the [photograph requirements](#).
- Additional documentation may be required: Review the instructions for how to apply for a visa on the website of the [embassy or consulate](#) where you will apply. Additional documents may be requested to establish if you are qualified. It is recommended that you bring these documents in the case that they are requested. For example, additional requested documents may include evidence of:
 - o The purpose of your trip.
 - o Your intent to depart the United States after your trip.
 - o Your employment and/or your family ties may be sufficient to show the purpose of your trip and your intent to return to your home country. If you cannot cover all the costs for your trip, you may show evidence that another person will cover some or all costs for your trip.

Please be prepared for a short interview. Ensure that your answers are clear and concise.

Please obtain a new passport before your interview if:

- Your passport expires in less than six (6) months after the time you enter the U.S. Unless exempted by [country specific agreements](#).
- The film on the biographic data pages of your passport (i.e. page with your photo is peeling, or
- Your passport is otherwise torn, damaged, mutilated or has been washed or laundered.
- Your passport has no more blank pages

Do I require an official letter of invitation?

Official letters of invitation are not required and you can apply for a visa without an official letter of invitation.

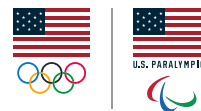
However, official letters of invitation are strongly recommended and the USOC will provide letters to all official delegates upon request.

Is there anything I should know about attending my visa interview?

During your visa interview, a consular officer will determine whether you are qualified to receive a visa. You will need to establish that you meet the requirements under U.S. law to receive the category of visa for which you are applying. Ink-free, digital fingerprint scans will be taken as part of your application process. Fingerprints are usually taken during your interview, but this varies based on location.

After your visa interview, your application may require further administrative processing. You will be informed by the consular officer if further processing is necessary for your application. When administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on the individual circumstances of each case. Visa applicants are reminded to apply early for their visa – well in advance of the anticipated travel date.

When the visa is approved, you may pay a visa issuance fee if applicable to your nationality, and will be informed how your passport with visa will be returned to you and approximately when your passport with visa will generally be ready for pick-up or delivery by the courier.



About My Visa

How do I read and understand my visa?

As soon as you receive your visa, please check to make sure all your personal information printed on the visa is correct. If any of the information on your visa does not match the information in your passport or is otherwise incorrect, please contact the issuing authority (i.e. the U.S. Embassy) immediately.

The expiration date of your visa is the last day you may use the visa to enter the United States. It does not indicate how long you may stay in the United States. Your stay is determined by the Department of Homeland Security at your port of entry. As long as you comply with the Department of Homeland Security's decision on the conditions of your stay, you should have no problem.

My visa was printed incorrectly. What do I do?

If you think your visa was printed incorrectly, please email oltp@usoc.org and explain why you think there is an error.

My visa will expire while I am in the United States. Will this be an issue for me?

No. You may stay in the U.S. for the period of time and conditions authorized by the Department of Homeland Security officer when you arrived in the U.S., which will be noted on the I-94, even if your visa expires during your stay.

Further information about understanding your visa can be found by visiting [visa FAQs](#).

What if my request for a visa is refused?

The consular officer has the sole authority to issue or refuse a visa in accordance with regulations that have been established by Congress. The consular officer's decision cannot be overruled. There is no formal appeal process for a visa refusal.

If your visa is refused, please contact oltp@usoc.org immediately with the reason for refusal. It is possible that with additional information the refusal may be reconsidered and the applicant may reapply.

Entering the United States

What will happen when I enter the United States?

Upon granting entry to the United States at the port of entry, the Customs and Border Protection officer will stamp the travel document of each arriving non-immigrant traveler. The admission stamp will show the date of admission, class of admission and the duration of admission. Upon arrival, travelers will also receive a flier alerting them to visit cbp.gov/I94 for their admission record information. This online record replaces the paper I-94 form. VWP travelers receive Form 1-94W. On this form, the officer records either a date or "D/S" (duration of status). If your I-94 records a specific date, then that is the date by which you must leave the United States. In either case, VWP travelers are not permitted to remain in the United States more than 90 days.

A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States, but allows a foreign citizen coming from abroad to travel to a U.S. port of entry and request permission to enter the United States. The Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have authority to permit or deny admission to the United States, and determine how long a traveler may stay.

SECTION B: I AM FROM A VISA WAIVER PROGRAM COUNTRY

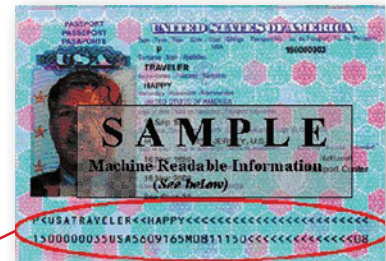
International travelers seeking to travel to the United States without a visa, who are nationals of VWP countries, should review the following important information on:

- 1) Traveler passport requirements under the VWP, and
- 2) Electronic submission of the ESTA form in advance of travel.

Passport Requirements

Your passport must meet the following requirements for VWP travel:

- **Six-Month Validity:** Many passports must be valid for at least six (6) months after your planned departure from the United States unless exempted by [country specific agreements](#).
- **Machine-Readable:** A Machine-Readable Passport contains two lines of text with numbers and chevrons (<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page with the passport bearer's picture. 
- **E-Passport:** The passport must be an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. As of April 1, 2016, all travelers must have an e-passport to use the VWP. An e-Passport, denoted by the symbol, is an enhanced secure passport with an embedded electronic chip. E-Passports are issued by the proper passport issuing authority and must meet international standards for securing and storing information corresponding to the passport and bearer. 



Applying for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)

In order to travel without a visa on the VWP, you must have authorization through ESTA prior to boarding a U.S. bound air or sea carrier. ESTA is the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection's automated web-based system to determine eligibility to travel without a visa to the United States for tourism or business. Travelers should check ESTA status well ahead of traveling, and those who are applying for ESTA for the first time should apply early, but not later than 72 hours prior to traveling. Visit the [ESTA website](#) for more detailed information and to apply.

There is a US \$14 fee for ESTA registration. The fee can be paid online using a debit card or any of the following credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover. Third parties (travel agents, family members, etc.) can pay your ESTA fee for you if you do not have the correct type of credit card. If the ESTA registration is denied, the fee is only US \$4.

What information is needed in order to complete the ESTA application?

The traveler must provide, in English, biographical data including name, birth date and passport information. The traveler will also be required to answer VWP eligibility questions regarding communicable diseases, arrests and convictions for certain crimes, and past history of visa revocation or deportation, among others.

What should I do if my ESTA application is not approved?

If an ESTA application is refused and the traveler wishes to continue with the trip, the traveler will be required to apply for a nonimmigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Can I apply for ESTA without specific U.S. travel plans?

Yes. VWP travelers are not required to have specific plans to travel to the United States before they apply for ESTA. If a traveler's destination address in the U.S. is unknown at the time of application, the traveler should enter the name of the hotel or approximate location he or she intends to visit. Travelers may update this information when their plans are finalized, but they will not be required to update their destination addresses or itineraries should they change after their ESTA has been approved. The Department of Homeland Security recommends that ESTA applications are submitted as early as possible, as soon as, or even before travel is planned. ESTA will accept applications from last-minute and emergency travelers.



Traveling Under the Visa Waiver Program

Am I eligible for ESTA if I am traveling on a private aircraft?

If you are otherwise eligible to travel on an ESTA and traveling on a U.S. CBP Signatory VWP Carrier Aircraft (<https://www.cbp.gov/document/report/signatory-visa-waiver-program-vwp-carriers>) you will not require a visa.

If I travel to the United States without ESTA, what happens?

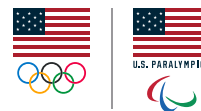
VWP travelers who have not obtained approval through ESTA should expect to be denied boarding on any air carrier bound for the United States. If you are allowed to board, you can expect to encounter significant delays and possible denial of admission at the U.S. port of entry (i.e. arrival airport). ESTA registration usually only takes a few minutes to complete; authorization can take up to 72 hours. The ESTA is valid for two years, unless the traveler's passport expires within that two-year period. In those cases, ESTA validity is limited to the passport's validity.

Do I need to apply for ESTA if I am in Canada or Mexico and want to drive to the United States?

If you are a citizen of a country that participates in the VWP and you enter the U.S. by land from Mexico or Canada, you are only required to complete the paper I-94W form at the land-border crossing. ESTA is currently required for air and cruise ship travel only.

Note: VWP citizens do not need an ESTA to travel on the ferries between Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia and Washington state. They are treated as a land-border port.





USOC CONTACT INFORMATION AND ONLINE REFERENCES

United States Olympic Committee email: ANOC.2019@usoc.org

Visa Wizard: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wizard.html>

Presidential Proclamation 9465: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/presidential-proclamation-archive/june_26_supreme_court_decision_on_presidential_proclamation9645.html

Visa Wait & Processing Times: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wait-times.html>

DS-160 Form: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

Photograph Requirements: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/photos.html>

Interview Waiver Program: <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in/in-niv-visarenew.asp>

U.S. Embassies & Consulates: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>

Country-Specific Agreements (Six-month Validity): <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2017-Dec/Six-Month%20Club%20Update122017.pdf>

Visa FAQs: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/frequently-asked-questions.html>

Arrival/Departure Forms: I-94 and I-94W: <http://www.cbp.gov/I94>

ESTA: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

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U.S. PARALYMPICS

