

International Travel

The International Reading Association [invites](#) and welcomes members and non-members from every part of the world to attend and participate in the 57th IRA Annual Convention. Participants are not required to be a presenter in order to attend the convention. Please allow ample time for visa processing, as the application process can take several months in some countries.

Important Links

[Interactive Printable Invitation Letter](#)

[Visa Application Information](#)

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Temporary International Visitor Requirements

For information on applying for a Visa, travel without a Visa, and the Visa waiver program, visit the [Visa Applications page](#).

To find out if you need a Visa, or for more information on the application process, please visit the [U.S. State Department, Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#). Non-immigrant visas are for international travelers, (citizens of other countries), coming to the U.S. temporarily for a wide variety of reasons, including tourism, business, medical treatment and certain types of temporary work. While in the U.S., temporary visitors are restricted to the activity or reason for which their non-immigrant visa was issued, with few exceptions. Please allow ample time for visa processing, as the application process can take several months in some countries. Should you need a Letter of Invitation for your Visa application, click here for the interactive printable form.

To obtain a visa and enter the United States, you must begin by completing an application form, [DS-156](#). Contact the [U.S. Embassy](#) in your country to make an appointment. Take your application, passport, a photograph, and supporting documents to the embassy or consulate, where you will be interviewed about the purpose of your visit. The Consular Officer at your embassy or consulate will decide what kind of visa you need, when you apply. You must also pay an application fee. The visa allows you to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry where an official will again look at your travel documents before granting you permission to enter the country. To find out if you need a Visa, or for more information on the application process, visit the [Visa Applications page](#).

Traveling to the United States

The United States welcomes international visitors. All international visitors (foreign nationals) entering the U.S. are generally required to present a passport and valid visa issued by a U.S. Consular Official.

Passports

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. A valid passport issued by the visitor's home government is required to enter and leave the United States. Passports should be obtained in the visitor's home country. Only the U.S. State Department has the authority to grant issue or verify United States passports.

Non-immigrant visas are for international travelers, (citizens of other countries), coming to the U.S. temporarily. This visa allows you to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (airport, for example) and request permission of the Department of Homeland Security immigration inspector to enter the U.S. A visa does not guarantee entry into the United States.

International travelers come to the U.S. for a wide variety of reasons, including tourism, business, medical treatment and certain types of temporary work. The type of visa needed is defined by immigration law, and relates to the principal purpose of your travel. While in the U.S., temporary visitors are restricted to the activity or reason for which their non-immigrant visa was issued, with few exceptions. The Consular Officer at your embassy or consulate will decide what kind of visa you need, when you apply.

ALL persons traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda are required to present a valid passport or Air NEXUS card.

Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

U.S. visa policy permits citizens of certain countries to travel to the U.S. without a visa. Most Canadian citizens and many citizens from [Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)](#) countries can come to the U.S. without a visa if they meet certain requirements. The VWP allows foreign nationals from certain countries to be admitted to the U.S. under limited conditions and for a limited time without obtaining a visa. The foreign nationals must be coming from an eligible country, staying no more than 90 days, for pleasure/medical purposes, and able to prove they are not inadmissible. The foreign national is still required to have a passport. Visa waiver travelers from ALL 27

VWP countries must present a machine-readable passport at the U.S. port of entry to enter the U.S. without a visa; otherwise a U.S. visa is required.

Citizens of Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda

Currently, Canadian citizens need proof of both their identity and citizenship in order to apply for entry into the U.S. Citizens of Canada traveling to the U.S. do not require a non-immigrant visa, except under unique circumstances. Citizens and permanent residents of Mexico generally must have a passport and a non-immigrant visa or Border Crossing Card (also known as a "Laser Visa"). A visa and passport are not required of a Mexican national who is in possession of a Form DSP-150, B-1/B-2 Visa and Border Crossing Card, containing a machine-readable biometric identifier, issued by the U.S. State Department and is applying for admission as a temporary visitor for business or pleasure from contiguous territory. If the traveler is not coming from the Western Hemisphere, a passport is required.

Citizens of the British Overseas Territories of Bermuda do not require a visa unless they have a criminal ineligibility, or have previously violated the terms of their immigration status in the United States. Currently, citizens of Bermuda need proof of both their identity and citizenship in order to apply for entry into the U.S.

Citizens of all of these countries and territories are advised to visit the following U.S. State Department website http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1260.html to verify their travel documentation needs.

Arriving in the U.S.

On the airplane, you will be asked to complete a short arrival/departure form. You will need your visa and/or passport handy. You will need to present your visa and/or passport at the port of entry in the United States. Most often that port of entry will be the airport where you land.

When you deplane, follow signs for non-citizen entry. At that location, a Department of Homeland Security official will interview you and verify all of your paperwork. Under the [US-VISIT](#) Program of the Department of Homeland Security, most people arriving in the U.S. will submit to a finger scan of the two index fingers and a photograph. Once admitted, you will receive an immigration stamp and proceed to baggage claim and customs. For information about arriving in the U.S., including arriving by land or sea, see [US-VISIT](#).

Upon arrival in the U.S., certain foreign citizens are required to register under Special Registration, which is the National Security Entry Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program. Registration under NSEERS is a distinct process from [US-VISIT](#).