



USA VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION

Bridges - City of Asylum Pittsburgh Creative Summit

If you live outside the United States, you will most likely need a travel visa to visit the United States.

Below we have collected the most relevant information about the type of visa you can apply for, about the application process, which documentation you will need for applying and what to be aware of when applying for a travel visa to the US.

1. STEP 1: CHOOSING YOUR VISA TYPE

VISA WAIVER PROGRAMME: THE ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (ESTA)

Eligibility: For citizens and nationals of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom.

Application link: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta>

Cost: \$21.00 USD.

If you are eligible for an ESTA, you do not need to apply for another type of visa to visit the US.

You may, however, be required to apply for a transit visa depending on your flight booking. Please check Step 5 for more information and requirements on transit visas.

Please note: Residents with citizenship in their new country of residence may be eligible for an ESTA. However, this depends on the person's country of origin and/or if the person has visited, on or after March 1 2011, certain countries, like: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen.

If you are unsure if you are eligible for an ESTA, you can always try to apply. Its neither time consuming nor expensive. And you will in most cases receive a reply within 72 hours. If your ESTA application is rejected, you can apply for a B-Visa, see below.

VISA CATEGORY B (B1/B2): NON-IMMIGRANT VISA

If you are visiting the US only for the duration of the Creative Summit, you can apply for Visa Category B1 (Business visa). If, however, you are intending to stay for a few extra days, you need to apply for the **Visa Category B1/B2 (Business and Tourism)**. **We recommend the latter option.**

Eligibility: Citizens and nationals of countries which are not part of the ESTA visa waiver programme.

Passport validity: Your passport will need to be valid for 6 months beyond the period of your stay in the US. There are exemptions for some countries and the list can be found [here](#).

Cost: approx. \$185 USD.¹ The payment is non-refundable regardless of the outcome of the visa application. Please note that there will be additional costs related to travelling to the US Embassy/Consulate for a potential interview.

We recommend that everyone begins their visa application process as soon as possible.

2. STEP 2: VISA CATEGORY B: The DS-160 FORM

Everyone applying for a Visa Category B needs to complete the DS-160 Form. You can find the DS-160 form here: <https://ceac.state.gov/GenNIV/Default.aspx>

To complete the DS-160 Form, you will need to attach a 50x50mm photograph of yourself taken within the last 6 months. (without borders, in colour, full face view, directly looking at the camera, neutral facial expression, no glasses, off-white background)

Once completed, please save the confirmation page with the alpha-numeric barcode and print them ready to book and attend your interview at the US Embassy near you.

3. STEP 3: BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT AT AN EMBASSY OR CONSULATE OF THE USA

Most of those applying for US Visa Category B will need to attend an interview appointment at the US Embassy or specific Consulates offering visa services in their country of residence.

The location of the US Embassy or Consulate selected at the beginning of the DS-160 Form must be the same US Embassy where your interview will be held.

To book your interview, please find your US Embassy here: <https://www.usembassy.gov/>, and follow the process as outlined on the website of your chosen US Embassy.

Important:

Interview appointment waiting times differ depending on the applicants' country of origin, their current legal status in their country of residence, and the chosen US Embassy/Consulate.

¹ Some countries of origin also require the payment of an additional Reciprocity Fee (MRV fee) once the visa has been approved but before it is delivered. Please check on the website of the US Embassy or Consulate you will be attending.

For writers, artists, and journalists, it is recommended that their ICORN coordinator calls the relevant US Embassy once the DS-160 Form has been submitted and ask for consideration to speed up the interview scheduling process, explaining the purpose of the visa.

4. STEP 4: ATTENDING YOUR INTERVIEW AT AN EMBASSY OF THE US

To attend your interview at your chosen US Embassy, you will need to bring the following documents:

- DS-160 Form confirmation page, with the alpha-numeric barcode
- Proof of payment for the visa application
- Proof of payment for the postage of your passport and visa after it has been processed
- Current passport and all old passports, if available
- A physical copy of a 50x50 mm photograph (without borders, in colour, full face view, directly looking at the camera, neutral facial expression, no glasses, off-white background) of yourself taken within the last 6 months
- Travel itinerary, ideally with confirmed return flight and hotel bookings. It is possible to book fully refundable tickets which can be cancelled or changed depending on the outcome of the visa application.
- Travel history, including previous travels to the United States and other international travel for the past 5 years may be requested
- CV and education history may also be requested
- Bank statements or statements from a guarantor, showing sufficient funds to cover expenses during your stay in the United States. Please check the relevant US Embassy for specific amounts of funds required.
- Documents or evidence that you are settled in your country of residence and that you have reasons to return e.g. housing, work, children, education, etc. This can include, but is not limited to, rental or mortgage agreements, university or language courses, evidence of children or dependents in your country of residence.
- Other documents: if additional information is requested, it would be useful to have support letters from the city/country of residence, relevant authorities and politicians, and ICORN readily available. Because of this, interested residents should ask coordinators to reach out or for assistance to the relevant people mentioned, with templates of the support letters to be supplied. ²

Whether your visa application is approved or rejected will be determined at your interview at the relevant US Embassy. Once this has taken place, the status of your visa application can be tracked here: <https://ceac.state.gov/CEAC>

² If you are interested in attending you will likely require letters of support, please email us at event@icorn.org for templates to use and request letters from ICORN.

5. STEP 5: PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL TO THE USA

Please be aware that after attaining your Category B or ESTA visa, you may need a 'transit visa', depending on your connecting flights to the United States.

Pittsburgh currently has 3 direct international flights through airports whose requirements are:

- **Montreal, Canada**

To determine whether you need a transit visa and what its cost would be please fill out [this form](#). Information on applying for a transit visa can be [found here](#).

- **Reykjavík, Iceland**

To determine whether you need an airport transit visa, please read the stipulations [here](#). If you have a valid residency permit in a Schengen country, you are exempt from applying for a transit visa to Iceland.

You can find information and [instructions on applying for a transit visa here](#). Please read the full page of circumstances which may exempt you from requiring a transit visa.

- **London, United Kingdom**

To determine whether you need a transit visa, please [fill out this form](#). Based on your answers, please read the full page of information. Some people will require no visa, some will require a Direct Airside Transit, and some will require a Visit in Transit visa.

If the questionnaire shows that you will need a transit visa, please follow the next steps or click on [this link](#). Information on applying for a transit visa [can be found here](#).

Most of our residents in Europe will need a transit visa in the UK. We would recommend that residents (who are not EU/Schengen citizens) do not travel through the UK.