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The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee is committed to working jointly with U.S. National Governing Bodies, International Federations and Local Organizing Committees to ensure efficient entry to the United States for eligible athletes and officials for international meetings and events.

The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee has a dedicated “sports liaison officer” in the Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs who serves as our main point of contact for all visa related inquiries. This individual communicates information to various consular posts around the world.

Once an event host has been selected, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee begins working with the Department of State to publish the event on the Department of State’s International Sports Events Advisory to notify the consular posts globally that the event is taking place. The purpose of this is to provide as much advance notice as possible that the event has been scheduled and that post can expect to receive visa applications related to event.

## 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 39 countries participate in the VWP:

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

*\*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.

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

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



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## 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 have been greatly impacted by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and in some cases, visa applicants may be required to apply outside of their respective country. For questions related to visa operations at a U.S. embassy or consulate, please visit [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov) or email [2023TRAWcup@usagym.org](mailto:2023TRAWcup@usagym.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 & Paralympic 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: [U.S. Visa Reciprocity](#). For country-specific information, please visit the [U.S. Embassy or Consulate website](#).
- Print the DS-160 barcode page and bring with you to your interview appointment.
- Schedule an interview appointment. Appointments should be scheduled as soon as possible. For instructions and information, please consult [U.S. Visa info](#). 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 [2023TRAWcup@usagym.org](mailto:2023TRAWcup@usagym.org) immediately. By confirming the earliest appointment available, the applicant is considered to be entered into the U.S. Department of State network.

#### Expansion of Interview Waiver Eligibility

On March 11, 2021 Secretary Blinken, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, has temporarily expanded the ability of consular officers to waive the in-person interview requirement for individuals applying for a nonimmigrant visa in the same classification. Previously, only those applicants whose nonimmigrant visa expired within 24 months were eligible for an interview waiver. The Secretary has temporarily extended the expiration period to 48 months. This policy is in effect until December 31, 2021. This change will allow consular officers to continue processing certain nonimmigrant visa applications while limiting the number of applicants who must appear at a consular section, thereby reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission to other applicants and consular staff. Travelers are encouraged to review the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for detailed information on what services are currently available as well as eligibility information and instructions on applying for a visa without an interview.

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

Yes, for most applicants. 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.

Source: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/sk/sk-niv-visarenew.asp>.

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 the DS-160 barcode page and bring with you to your interview appointment.
- 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 [U.S. 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 You may be asked to provide information about your current and previous education, work or sport.
  - 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



My visa was printed incorrectly. What do I do?

If you think your visa was printed incorrectly, please email [2023TRAWcup@usagym.org](mailto:2023TRAWcup@usagym.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. Applicants may reapply.

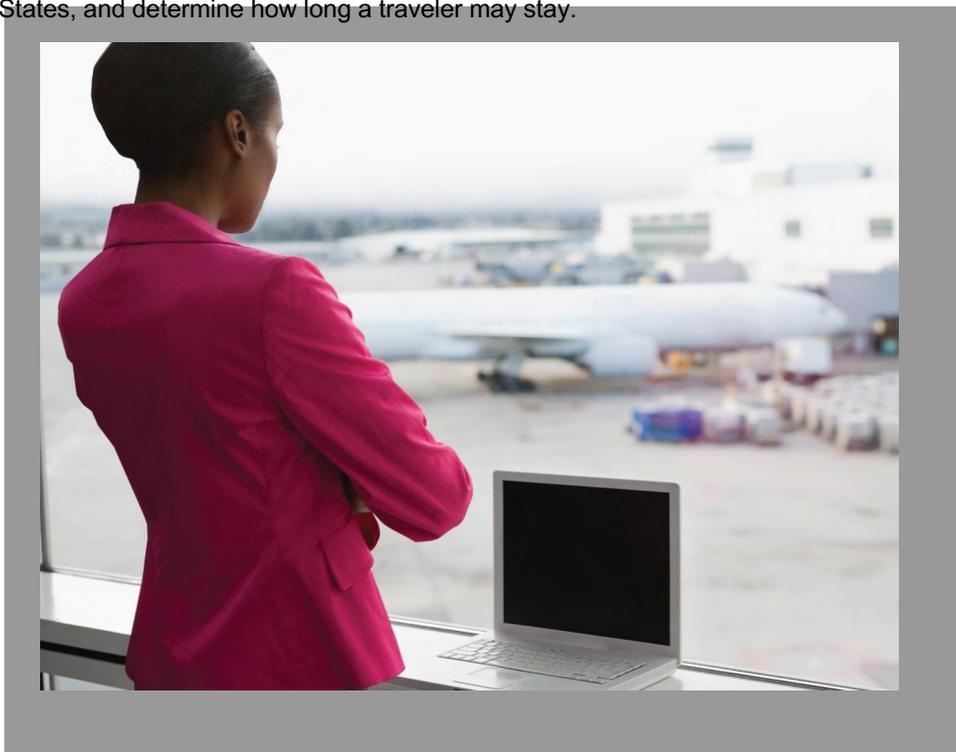
If your visa is refused, please contact [2023TRAWcup@usagym.org](mailto:2023TRAWcup@usagym.org) immediately with the reason for refusal. It is possible that with additional information the refusal may be reconsidered and apply with a new application.

## 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, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer will stamp the travel document of each arriving 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/194](http://cbp.gov/194) for their admission record information. This online record replaces the paper I-94 form. VWP travelers receive Form I-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 present themselves for admission 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?

No. If you are otherwise eligible to travel on an ESTA but are traveling on a non-U.S. corporation private aircraft you will 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.

## Working Together

Once an event is awarded, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee is committed to working with NGBs, International Federations and Local Organizing Committees to develop a timeline to establish key dates that align with International Federation qualification timelines while supporting the visa and entry process.

### U.S. Department of State, International Sports Events Advisory

Once an event is awarded the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee will work with the Department of State to ensure the U.S. Embassies and Consulates are aware of the World Championships, by publishing information about the event on their International Sports Events Advisory.

The State Department requires the following details to list the event on their International Sports Events Advisory:

1. The name of the competition, conference, seminar, etc. being held in the United States which will be attended by international guests.
2. A listing of the invited countries and intending participants.
3. A description of the event including:
  - (a) Dates
  - (b) Location
  - (c) Anticipated total number of participants for each event
4. An estimate or expected number of delegates from each country listed.
5. The contact information for the main point of contact for the LOC or NGB.

### Event Registration

When developing the event registration criteria, passport information and information about visa status should be collected from the attendees including full name, gender, date of birth, nationality, passport number, passport expiry date, DS-160 applicant numbers and interview dates.

This information should be used to provide visa invitation letters to applicants. The USOPC will also use this information to post regular updates to the U.S. Department of State including the attendee roster to be included in the International Sports Events Advisory. A sample Visa Tracking Spreadsheet is included in Appendix 2 below.



## Appendix 1: Sample Invitation Letter DS-160 #

### SAMPLE -- ON HOST NGB/LOC LETTERHEAD

June 15, 2017

Mr. Saburo Kawabuchi, President  
Japan Basketball Association  
6F Kouraku-Kajima Bldg. 1-7-27  
Koraku, Bunkyo-ku , 112-0004 Tokyo

Dear President Kawabuchi:

It is my pleasure to write to you and extend a formal invitation to you and the Japan Basketball Association to participate in the USA Basketball International Invitational, which will be held August 17-20, 2017 at the United States Olympic Training Center (USOTC) in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

This letter confirms that ground transportation to training and competition, room and board will be fully underwritten by USA Basketball. Airfare will be the responsibility of the attendees. This annual event is played under international rules, as specified by FIBA.

Please begin the process of securing your travel visas for entry into the United States, by applying online here. Please note that all team/delegation members will need to file individual applications. Part of the application process also requires that each person schedules an appointment to appear in person for an interview at the Embassy or Consulate where they have filed their application.

To ensure that (Mr./Ms./team/delegation)'s application process is as efficient as possible, please ensure that each member of the delegation carries a copy of this letter to the interview date, and to present to the U.S. Customs official when he/she/they enter the United States.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly. On behalf of USA Basketball, we look forward to your participation in this event and wish you safe travels.

Sincerely,

Name, Title  
USA Basketball  
U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee  
One Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
+1-719-XXX-XXX  
FirstName.LastName@NGB.org

CC: David Francis, Manager, Government Relations, USOPC; David.Francis@usopc.org, +1-202-466-3399



## USA GYMNASTICS CONTACT INFORMATION AND ONLINE REFERENCES

Visa Wizard: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/wizard.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 Eligibility: <https://www.ustraveldocs.com/sk/sk-niv-visarenew.asp>

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

Country-Specific Agreements (Six-month Validity): <https://fam.state.gov/searchapps/viewer?format=html&query=d&links=D&url=/FAM/09FAM/09FAM040309.html>

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

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

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

### Contacts:

USA Gymnastics

Events Department

Attention: Grace Schumacher

Email: [2023TRAWcup@usagym.org](mailto:2023TRAWcup@usagym.org)