

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



WHY THE VWP WORKS FOR AMERICA

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM TRAVEL

NON-IMMIGRANT VISA TRAVEL

ELIGIBILITY

- Be a citizen of one of the 38 countries participating in the VWP. **These countries must adhere to the following strict security requirements:**
 - ✔ Issue biometric passports that conform to stringent international aviation security standards
 - ✔ Allow U.S. inspections of security standards, protocols and apparatus to ensure compliance with the highest security practices
 - ✔ Maintain a visa refusal rate and overstay rate of less than 3%
 - ✔ Submit data on lost and stolen passports into INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database
 - ✔ Share information about known or suspected terrorists and criminals with U.S. authorities
- Intend to travel to the U.S. for a stay of up to 90 days
- Possess a biometric passport



- Possess a valid passport
- Obtain a valid visa
 - Visa validity varies per country of citizenship
- Depending on the country of citizenship, visas are valid for up to 10 years and multiple entries

APPLICATION



- To apply for a visa, a traveler must:
 - Complete a visa application
 - Submit biometrics
 - Interview with a consulate official
 - Establish a qualified reason for the visa
- Traveler is vetted against security and law enforcement databases
- Consular officers adjudicate the application, referring it as needed to agencies in Washington for additional review
- Consulate officials may conduct a second interview with certain travelers following vetting

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL
(2 weeks to 3 months)

- Apply online via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)
 - ✔ Travelers are pre-screened and pre-approved via the ESTA system *before* stepping foot on U.S. soil, freeing up CBP resources to focus on lesser known travelers
 - ✔ Screening is conducted by the U.S. managed ESTA system, where the Department of Homeland Security can review several law enforcement databases, including:
 - The Terrorist Screen Database
 - Lost and stolen passports data (including INTERPOL's STLD database)
 - Visa revocations, previous visa refusals and other immigration violations



- Because non-VWP travelers are unknown, CBP must dedicate resources thoroughly vetting these travelers
 - CBP vets traveler using all available advance passenger data
 - CBP continually analyzes information using its Automated Targeting System (ATS)
 - CBP works in partnership with foreign law enforcement officials to evaluate potential risks
- The vetting process for international passengers continues while the flight is en route to the U.S.

PORT OF ENTRY

- Traveler submits biometrics
 - ✔ Traveler is screened and checked against biographic and biometric law enforcement databases and watchlists to verify identity
 - Traveler is admitted having been prescreened and preapproved by thorough security verification procedure
- The Department of Homeland Security monitor travelers to help reduce the number of visa overstays



- Traveler submits biometrics
 - Traveler is screened and checked against biographic and biometric law enforcement databases and watchlists
- Visa traveler may petition to extend the length of his/her stay in the U.S.
- The Department of Homeland Security monitor travelers to help reduce the number of visa overstays

ELIGIBILITY

APPLICATION/PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

PORT OF ENTRY