

**PRE-ARRIVAL CHECK LIST**

- **1. RECEIVE YOUR DS-2019**
    - Check your personal information for accuracy.
    - Contact the sponsoring department administrator immediately if you need a correction.
    - The exchange visitor or dependents above 14 years of age should sign and date the Certification section at the bottom of the form.
  
  - **2. PAY THE SEVIS FEE**
    - This fee can be paid via Internet, via Western Union, or by mail. For faster processing, pay at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
    - Read *SEVIS FEE: How to Pay* info sheet for more information
  
  - **3. SCHEDULE A VISA INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT AT THE US EMBASSY OR CONSULATE**
    - Visa procedures and appointment scheduling: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>
    - Visa wait time: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait\\_4638.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html)
    - Read **How to Apply for a US Visa** info sheet for additional instructions and guidance
    - Be prepared for delays in visa issuance due to clearances. Security clearances may take more than 4 weeks for approval.
    - **Canadian Citizens:** A visa stamp is not required to enter the U.S.A. Do **not** apply for a visa (skip step #4).
  
  - **4. GATHER DOCUMENTS FOR THE VISA INTERVIEW**
    - Form DS-2019—**Original** form, do not use a copy.
    - Passport (valid for minimum of 6 months)
    - Invitation or Offer Letter evidencing financial support
    - SEVIS Fee (I-901) Payment Receipt
    - Evidence of ties to your home country, i.e. family ties, bank accounts, assets, employment, etc.
    - Payment of visa application fees (MRV fee)
    - One 2x2 photograph —Visit [http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/guide\\_2081.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/guide_2081.html) for details
    - Visa application forms. Visit the consulate website for specific information.
  
  - **5. MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH INSURANCE**

We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance for up to 1-2 months after your arrival since you may not get medical coverage immediately. See **Health Insurance Requirement** info sheet for more information.
  
  - **6. MAKE HOUSING AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE ARRIVING IN LOS ANGELES**
    - Living expenses in the Los Angeles area are extremely expensive. You should plan on a monthly budget of at least \$1,700 to \$2,500 depending on your needs.
    - Additional \$500-\$1,500 is needed if your family members are coming with you.
    - You should not carry large amounts of cash with you but we recommend either traveler's checks or bank cards to transfer or withdraw funds from your bank account to cover your initial expenses.
  
  - **7. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR ENTRY INTO THE U.S.**
    - Visit the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>  
[http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/content\\_multi\\_image\\_0006.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/content_multi_image_0006.shtm)
    - You may enter the U.S. up to **30 days before** the start date on Section #3 of the DS-2019.
    - **REQUIRED: Original form DS-2019, passport, J-1 visa stamp** (Dependents: J-2 visa).
    - **RECOMMENDED:** Invitation or employment offer letter and evidence of financial support if CSMC is not providing salary.
    - Do not store these documents in your checked in baggage, have them readily available with your personal carry-on luggage for the immigration inspection process.
    - Be sure the Immigration Officer at the port of entry returns all documents to you after processing your entry.
- You will be given a white I-94 (Arrival/Departure) Card. The name and date of birth written on the card should match the DS-2019 and passport.
  - The card will be processed with an entry stamp. Please make sure it is stamped with the proper annotation “J-1 D/S” and “J-2 D/S” for dependents.
  - Do **NOT** discard or lose the small white I-94 card.
  - Additional information is available at [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id\\_visa/i-94\\_instructions/filling\\_out\\_i94.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/i-94_instructions/filling_out_i94.xml)
- **CANADIAN CITIZENS ONLY:** Carry your DS-2019, passport and SEVIS fee payment receipt to gain entry. You do not need a visa stamp but will be given the I-94 card at the port of entry.