

## J-1 STUDENTS

### ARE YOU PREPARED FOR TRAVEL TO THE USA IN 2009?

This year more than any other J-1 students need to be prepared for traveling to the USA. In the current economic climate jobs are more difficult to find, the competition for each job is more intense and accommodation costs continue to be high. Students who take the time to be prepared are far more likely to have a successful and enjoyable summer experience.

#### BEFORE YOU LEAVE IRELAND

- Bring/have access to sufficient money to cover your expenses. A minimum of \$2,500 - \$3,500 is recommended depending on where you are traveling to. The cost of living is higher in large cities.
- Have access to backup/emergency funds as it may take longer to find a job this year.
- If you have local contacts in the USA use them to help you to find accommodation and jobs. The job market is tough in most areas so personal contacts are more important than ever.
- Research local conditions, unemployment rates, seasonal job opportunities before you arrive
- Prepare a US style resume (1 page in length) and bring references from Irish employers.
- Make copies all your important documents - DS 2019, passport, J1 visa and your flight tickets. Leave one copy at home and take one copy with you but pack separately from your originals.
- Contact the Irish Center in the area to get local information. A list of Irish Centers in the US can be found at [http://www.ciic-usa.org/howeare\\_findcenter.html](http://www.ciic-usa.org/howeare_findcenter.html).
- If possible secure a job before you travel.
- Make a list of emergency contacts for your destination city in case you run into problems.
- Read the materials from your sponsoring agency and/or contact Crosscare Migrant Project in Dublin [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie) to make sure that you are fully prepared before you travel.
- For information on departing and reentering the US with useful tips on documentation and procedures go to [http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent\\_exchng\\_fs.htm](http://www.ice.gov/sevis/factsheet/100104ent_exchng_fs.htm)

#### WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN THE USA

- Contact your Program Sponsor to activate your SEVIS record as soon as you arrive in the US. You can use a temporary address and update it as necessary when you move.
- Wait for at least two days after you register with SEVIS before you apply for your Social Security Card. It can take 4-6 weeks before you get your card, but will take longer if you have not registered with SEVIS. You will have difficulty securing a job if you do not have a Social Security Card so make sure to get the application in as soon as possible.
- Make contact with any friends, family, organization or Irish Center contacts that you have locally to help you with securing jobs and accommodation.
- Begin looking for accommodation and jobs as soon as you can, it often becomes more difficult to get both as more foreign students arrive.
- Always carry official identification with you in addition to making back-up copies to keep at home

## ACCOMMODATION

- Be aware that most apartments in the US come unfurnished unless listed otherwise.
- In most areas you will be required to pay first and last month's rent, and a security deposit up front
- Before you sign any lease make sure that you are dealing with a legitimate Real Estate Agent and that have read and understood the lease. Seek advice from local Irish Centers who have experience with local laws and conditions.

## JOBS

- Local contacts, friends and family to help you secure a job especially in a tight labor market
- Travel to areas that are looking for large numbers of seasonal workers.
- Irish Centers often have job boards and some even organize summer job fairs.
- Bring a US style resume, and dress appropriately when you go for a job interview.
- Follow up with a thank you letter or email to the person who interviewed you.
- Apply for a range of jobs and take the first job that you are offered you can always change later.
- Many employers require routine alcohol and drug screening before hiring.

## STAYING SAFE

- If you travel out of the USA bring the appropriate documentation – you will not be re-admitted to the USA without it. Contact your sponsoring organization for more information
- The US State Department continues to issue travel alerts for those intending to go to Mexico. While many people safely visit Mexico each year it is important to know that violence there has increased significantly. Most of the violence is near the US border, including in Tijuana. Reports of shoot out's in the streets among Mexican drug cartels are a regular occurrence. It is imperative that travelers understand the risks of travel to Mexico, so please read the latest warnings/alerts from the State Department at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1766.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html)
- Public disorder offences are often penalized more severely in the US so keep party noise levels to acceptable levels.
- Drug offences may result in deportation and a permanent bar from re-entering the United States.
- In most states drinking alcohol in public is an offense that may result in an overnight in jail and a court date. Failure to appear for a court date can result in an arrest warrant and will cause problems for future visits to the United States

## Please take the time to prepare for your trip.

Research job and accommodation prospects before you travel and bring/have access to sufficient funds to keep you going until you find a job. Keep the emergency number for your sponsoring agency handy at all times. Be aware of and observe the laws and have enjoyable summer in the USA.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish Consulates in the US: <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=5535>  
Irish Centers in the US: [http://www.ciic-usa.org/whoweare\\_findcenter.html](http://www.ciic-usa.org/whoweare_findcenter.html)  
Crosscare Migrant Project: <http://www.migrantproject.ie/>  
Irish Embassy Mexico: Emergency Message Phone System: +52 55 5520 5803