

Visa Guide

Introduction:

The process to apply for a United States visa is a challenging one for many countries for a number of reasons; and it can also be difficult for teams coming from Visa Waiver countries. We have created this step-by-step guide in order to help you through the application process, beginning with whether you will need to apply for a visa. Please follow it closely to best ensure approval of your visa application.

Section I. Do you need to apply for a visa?:

Before applying for a visa, confirm that you need a visa to travel to the United States for the FIRST Global Challenge. Check this link: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit/visa-waiver-program.html>

If your country is listed on the above document, it is a Visa Waiver Country and you will need to apply for an ESTA (the Electronic System for Travel Authorization) and depending, on the result, you may also then need to apply for a visa.

Please note that in the rare case that a member of your team is not a citizen of your nation, they will not be able to apply for an ESTA under the Visa Waiver Program and will need to apply for a U.S. Visa. If this is the case for a member of your team, please notify liz@FIRST.global immediately so that we may prepare accordingly.

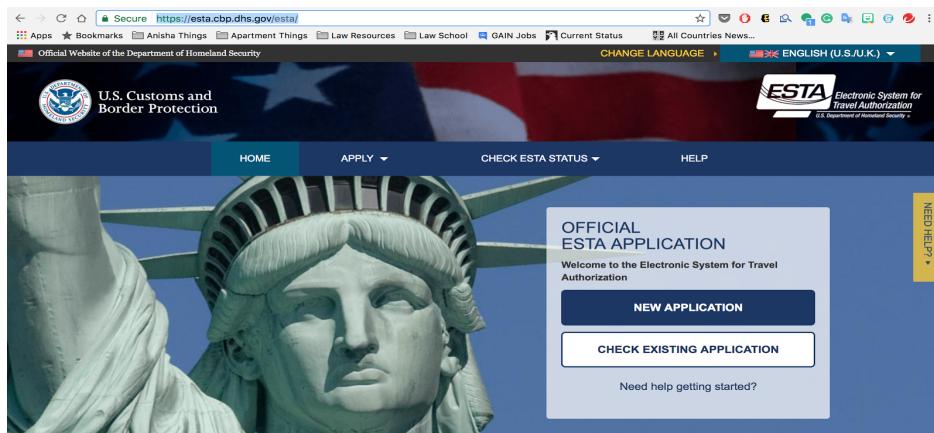
If your country is not listed, then your nation is not a Visa Waiver Country and you will need to apply for a visa. Proceed to **Section III** for further instructions

Section II. ESTA (the Electronic System for Travel Authorization):

ESTA is an automated system that determines the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

If you have determined your country to be a Visa Waiver Program country, you will need to apply for ESTA. Go to <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/> and fill out the form. The application allows for individual and group applications. Your mentor should fill out a group ESTA form to ensure accuracy.

When you go to the form, you will see the screen below. **Click on New Application.**



Then select **Group Applications** when you see this screen:

The screenshot shows the 'NEW APPLICANTS' section of the ESTA website. At the top right, there is a dark blue button labeled 'INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION'. To its right, a white button labeled 'GROUP OF APPLICATIONS' is visible. Below these buttons, a note says 'Pay for multiple applications with one transaction.' On the left, under 'Who You Are:', there is a list of requirements. On the right, under 'What You Need:', there is another list. A faint watermark of the American eagle logo is in the background.

INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION

GROUP OF APPLICATIONS

All eligible international travelers who wish to travel to the United States under the **Visa Waiver Program** must apply for authorization.

Who You Are:

- You are a citizen or eligible national of a **Visa Waiver Program** country.
- You are currently not in possession of a visitor's visa.
- Your travel is for 90 days or less.
- You plan to travel to the United States for business or pleasure.
- You want to apply for a new authorization for one person or a group of applications for two or more persons.

What You Need:

- Valid passport from a **Visa Waiver Program** country.
- Valid credit card (MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and Discover (JCB, Diners Club)) or PayPal to pay the US \$14 per application.
- Your contact information.
- Your most recent employment information, if applicable.

The person filling out the form (preferably the team mentor) should then go through and **enter their contact information**, as the form requires. It should look like this:

The screenshot shows the 'GROUP CONTACT PERSON' section of the ESTA application. It includes fields for Family Name, First (Given) Name, Organization, Date of Birth, E-mail Address, and Confirm E-mail Address. The 'CONTINUE' button is at the bottom right.

Required fields are indicated by a red asterisk *.

GROUP CONTACT PERSON

The contact person must be 18 years or older.

Family Name * Hindocha

First (Given) Name * Anisha

Organization Team France

Date of Birth * 10 October 1994

E-mail Address * hindocha.anisha@gmail.com

Confirm E-mail Address * hindocha.anisha@gmail.com

CONTINUE

Continue to fill out the form, entering each student and mentor's personal information, passport number, passport date of issuance and expiration, birthday, address, etc.

You will be directed to a page asking for a point of contact and the address you will be staying at in the United States. It will look like this:

The screenshot shows a web browser with the URL <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/application.html?execution=e1s1>. The page is titled "U.S. POINT OF CONTACT INFORMATION". It contains fields for Name, Address Line 1, Address Line 2, Apartment Number, City, State, Phone Number, and a dropdown for State. Below this, there's a section for "ADDRESS WHILE IN THE U.S." with fields for Address Line 1, Address Line 2, Apartment Number, City, State, and a dropdown for State. A checkbox labeled "SAME AS U.S. POINT OF CONTACT INFO ABOVE" is present. At the bottom, there's a section for "EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION IN OR OUT OF THE U.S.".

U.S. POINT OF CONTACT INFORMATION

Name * Joseph Sestak

Address Line 1 * 325 Commerce Street

Address Line 2

Apartment Number

City * Alexandria

State * VIRGINIA

Phone Number * 6107575051

ADDRESS WHILE IN THE U.S. ?

Address Line 1 1900 F St NW

Address Line 2

Apartment Number

City Washington

State DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SAME AS U.S. POINT OF CONTACT INFO ABOVE

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION IN OR OUT OF THE U.S.

For point of contact, you should enter:

Name: Joseph Sestak

Address Line 1: 325 Commerce Street

Address Line 2: -leave blank-

Apartment Number: -leave blank-

City: Alexandria

State: Virginia

Phone number: 610-757-5051

For address while in the U.S., you should enter:

1900 F St NW

Address Line 2: -leave blank-

Apartment Number: -leave blank-

City: Washington

State: District of Columbia

NOTE: This is the address for the dormitories at George Washington University where check-in will take place, and where we plan on your accommodations being (if we have “overflow” teams, a few may be housed at a nearby university). However, the State Department has allowed us to use the centralized check-in location at George Washington University as the address to put on the form to avoid any confusion and delays).

Continue to fill out the form including answering the eligibility information.

Next, pay the \$14 U.S. Dollars per person fee for the ESTA.

You should receive a decision with regards to your ESTA within 3 days. When you receive a decision, email liz@first.global and anisha@first.global to let us know if you were approved or declined. If you are approved, the ESTA is valid for 2 years, and you are ready to enter the United States. If you are not approved, you will need to apply for a visa to enter the United States. In that case, follow the steps in Section III to apply for a visa.

Section III. VISA:

If you are not from a VISA Waiver country or your application for an ESTA was denied, you will need to apply for a visa.

In order to apply for a visa, visit this link to be directed to a spreadsheet detailing the visa information and linking to the US Embassy in your country (if applicable):

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qaJPaYPEjGkJQH8uMqF_yxoaq3fZR-3UfVw-NnyKPoU/edit#gid=0

NOTE: You may apply for a visa from ANY U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy around the world. Therefore, if visa services are not available in your country, select the embassy or consulate that is most convenient for you. In some instances, the United States has designated embassies to handle consular affairs. That information is also detailed in the spreadsheet linked above.

You will be filling out the DS-160 Application. The embassy website should direct you to the following web address: <https://ceac.state.gov/GenNIV/Default.aspx>. The screen will look like this:

The screenshot shows the "Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (DS-160)" page. At the top, it says "Apply For a Nonimmigrant Visa". Below that, there's a "Welcome!" section with links for "Important: Before You Start" (including "Learn about Types of Visas", "List of Documents and Information you will need", "Browser Requirements", and "How to complete the application"), "Get Started" (with a dropdown menu for "Select a location where you will be applying for this visa" set to "SELECT ONE"), and "Enter the code as shown: DYT5V". There's also a note about translating the application. On the right, there's a box for uploading a passport-type digital photograph, a "START AN APPLICATION" button, and a link for "Select a location then select an application that you previously saved on your computer".

On this screen, you will have to select the location that you will be applying (and interviewing) for the visa. **At this point, email liz@first.global and anisha@first.global the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate location that you select. This is important because we will be**

sending information to the US State Department to help facilitate the visa process and this information should match.

Progress to the next page and **take note of your Application ID** in the top right corner as well as the security question and answer you enter.

Please record your Application ID in a safe and secure place.
If there are technical issues with the system, or you want to complete your application later, you can save the application and return to it later, start where you left off. In order to access your application later, however, you will need: (1) your Application ID, and (2) the answer to the security question that you will choose on this page.

To choose a security question, pick the one you like the best from the dropdown list, type your answer to that question in the box below, and click "Continue." Remember: In order to access your application later, you will need to know the answer **exactly as you wrote it on this page**.

You can also use your Application ID and security question to retrieve your Confirmation Page after you have submitted your application, or to use your previously provided application information to complete a new application at a later date.

If you do not plan to complete your application within the next 30 days, download your application to your computer by clicking the "Save" button at the bottom of the last completed page. Follow the instructions. When you are ready to complete your application, select "Open My Application". NOTE: Only download your application to a computer that can be accessed by anyone who does not have your permission to see or record your personal data. If you download your application to a shared or public computer, such as a computer in a cyber café or library, your personal information may be able to be accessed by other users.

Note: Electronically submitting your DS-160 online application is the FIRST STEP in the visa application process. The next step is to review the internet page of the embassy or consulate where you plan to apply for your visa. Most visa applicants will need to schedule a visa interview, though some applicants may qualify for visa renewal. The embassy or consulate information may include specific local instructions about scheduling interviews, submitting your visa application, and other frequently asked questions.

Security Question ?
WHAT IS THE GIVEN NAME OF YOUR MOTHER'S MOTHER?

Answer

Continue Cancel

Continue through the form, filling out your Personal Information, Address and Phone, and Passport.

When you reach the Travel section, you will be asked to enter the visa type. **You should select B1/B2 Visa.** Activities permitted under B1 Visas include attending a scientific, educational, professional, or business convention or conference, while under a B2 some activities include tourism and participation by amateurs in musical, sports, or similar events or contests, if not being paid for participating. It is best to enter both, and there is no extra fee.

Next you will be asked to enter travel plans. **You should select NO, and when you are asked to enter the estimated arrival date, enter July 14, 2017. Then when you are asked for your length of stay, enter 6 days.** This is standard for everyone coming for the FIRST Global Challenge; if you have different plans (for example, if you will be staying extra days after the event or if you will be leaving on July 18th or 19th after the event) enter them accurately.

On that same screen, you will be asked for the place you will be staying in the United States.

You should enter:
1900 F St NW
Address Line 2: -leave blank-
Apartment Number: -leave blank-

City: Washington
State: District of Columbia

NOTE: This is the address for the dormitories at George Washington University where check-in will take place, and where we plan on your accommodations being (if we have “overflow” teams, a few may be housed at a nearby university. However, the State Department has allowed us to use the centralized check-in location at George Washington University as the address to put on the form to avoid any confusion and delays).

You will also be asked who is funding your trip. **You must choose the appropriate option at this point.** Feel free to email liz@first.global if you have any questions with regards to this portion of the form.

The screenshot shows a web browser window for the Nonimmigrant Visa - Travel Info page. The URL is https://ceac.state.gov/GenNIV/General/complete/complete_travel.aspx?node=Travel. The 'Intended Length of Stay in U.S.' field contains the value '6' with a dropdown menu open. Below it, the 'Address Where You Will Stay in the U.S.' section is filled with '1900 F ST NW' for Street Address (Line 1) and 'WASHINGTON' for City. The State dropdown is set to 'DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'. The ZIP Code field contains '20002'. A dropdown menu titled '-SELECT ONE-' is open, showing options: SELF (with a checked checkbox), OTHER PERSON, and OTHER COMPANY/ORGANIZATION. At the bottom, there are 'Back: Passport', 'Save', and 'Next: Travel Companions' buttons. The footer includes a logo and links to Copyright Information, Disclaimers, and Paperwork Reduction Act.

You will then be asked if you are travelling as a group. **You should select yes, and have the standard name for your group, such as “FIRST Global Team India”.**

The screenshot shows the 'Travel Companions Information' page. The sidebar on the left has 'Travel Companions' selected. The main content area has a note: 'NOTE: Provide the following travel companion information.' It asks if there are other persons traveling with the user, with 'Yes' selected. It also asks if the user is traveling as part of a group or organization, with 'Yes' selected. The 'Group Name' field contains 'TEAM INDIA'. Navigation buttons at the bottom include 'Back: Travel', 'Save', and 'Next: Previous U.S. Travel'.

You will then be asked about your Previous U.S. Travel. Fill the information out correctly.

Next you will be asked for a point of contact in the United States.

You should enter:

Surnames: Sestak

Given Names: Joseph

Organization Name: FIRST Global

Relationship to You: Other

U.S. Street Address (Line 1): 325 Commerce Street

U.S. Street Address (Line 2): -leave blank-

City: Alexandria

State: Virginia

Zip Code: 22314

Next fill out the Family, Work/Education/Training, and Security and Background Sections to the best of your ability.

You will then be asked to upload a picture of yourself. Click the appropriate links to understand the guidelines the State Department requires for your picture. If your picture does not meet the standards, you may be asked to take passport-sized pictures with you to your interview.

Each country has different requirements for payment and scheduling interviews. **Be sure to follow the instructions to pay for your applications and to schedule your interview.** If possible, teams should try to schedule group interviews when they are an option.

Visa Interview Process:

1) Arrive at the consulate

When you arrive at the consulate for your visa interview, you may need to stand in a line outside the consulate. Only visa applicants may enter the consulate. Before entering the consulate, you may need to show your original passport, appointment letter, and visa application fee receipt to the security staff.

Please note that electronic equipment, cell phones, bags, sprays, perfumes, liquids, backpacks, bottles, food, sealed envelopes, sealed packages, and dangerous items are not allowed inside the consulate. There is no facility at the consulate to store prohibited items. If you bring prohibited items with you, you will have to dispose of them before entry. Water and bathrooms are available inside the consulate.

2) Security check

As soon as you enter the consulate, you will go through a security check, which may include a full body metal detector scan.

3) Fingerprint verification

After the security check, you will then proceed toward the fingerprint verification process. Fingerprinting requirements can change over time and across consulates. Follow instructions given to you by the staff at the desk.

4) Waiting area

Soon after fingerprinting, you will be directed to sit in the waiting lounge area. You must sit quietly and wait for your turn to be called for the interview. Keep your documents ready. When your name is announced, you will be asked to proceed to a particular window number. Walk towards the window, greet the interviewer with a smile, and follow the instructions given to you by the interviewer.

5) Visitor visa interview

The interviewer will be behind a glass window, and you will be able to speak through a microphone on the glass window. You will be able to hear the interviewer through a speaker, which is also on the glass window. A slot below the window will let you exchange documents with the interviewer.

The interviewer may ask questions and verify your documents. Answer truthfully and confidently. Answer only the questions you are asked. Do not provide more information than you are asked, and do not present any documents that you are not asked to. The primary goal of the interview is to verify all information presented in the application and to make sure that you qualify for the desired visa.

Visa Interview Tips:

1. Wear formal clothes, as if this is a formal business meeting.
2. Arrive 15 minutes early.
3. Be confident; don't be nervous. Smile when you meet the visa officer for the first time. Do not show signs of nervousness, such as flickering of eyes or trembling of fingers. Look in the officer's eyes while speaking. Have a confident posture.
4. Greet the officer with a smile and a "good morning (or afternoon!)".
5. Answer questions clearly and succinctly.
6. Be polite and courteous.
7. If you do not understand a question due to the interviewer's accent or microphone issues, do not be afraid to ask him/her to repeat the question.
8. Answer the questions in English if you can.
9. Be honest with your answers.

Documents to bring with you:

1. Photographs or copies of the first page, last page and remarks pages of your passport
2. Confirmation page of the online submitted Form DS-160 with CEAC barcode
3. Visa Fee Receipt
4. Official letter of invitation from International *FIRST* Committee Association
5. For students, your latest school results, transcripts, and degrees/diplomas
6. For adults, employment letter, salary slip (pay stub) and income tax returns
7. Photographs of your family to show your bonds (and therefore reasons to come home)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why do you want to travel to the USA?
2. Why do you want to visit at this time?
3. How long will you stay in the USA?
4. Where will you stay in the USA?
5. How much do you expect this trip to cost?
6. Do you have any relatives in the USA? Who are they?
7. Have you booked your airline tickets?
8. Have you been to the USA before?
9. Have you ever traveled internationally before?
10. When do you plan to travel?
11. Do you have a credit card?
12. Will you come back to [your home country] after your visit?
13. How can you assure me that you will come back?
14. What relatives do you have in [your home country]?
15. Are you going to the US for any terrorist activity?
16. What do your parents do?

For adults/mentors

1. What do you do in [your home country]?
2. Who will take care of your business while you are visiting the USA?
3. Could you please show me your visiting (business) card?
4. Can I see your leave of absence approval from work?
5. When did you retire?
6. How much pension do you get?
7. What is your annual income?
8. Do you pay income tax?
9. Do you have a car?

The interview itself is usually very short. You will have little time in which you will need to verbally explain compelling reasons why you will want to return to your home countries after visiting the United States. **The bottom line is you will need to verbally demonstrate your intent to return, which can include (based on the questions above) that:**

- You need to return home to complete their high school degree
- There is a university back home you want to attend in order to obtain a degree
- Your parents that have good jobs/employment which provide support (as appropriate)
- Your parents' education and earning level (if helpful).
- The closeness of your family, if it is significant.

*****Understand that under USA law you are presumed to be an immigrant applicant and the burden is upon you to prove to the Consular officer at the time of your interview -- and to the Immigration officer when you enter the United States at the airport -- that you have strong ties to come back to your home country.*****