



Irish Immigration Center
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J1 Irish Work & Travel Program Application Guidelines, Process, & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Application Guidelines

Complete the **J1 Irish Work & Travel Program Application Form** and submit it with:

- ⇒ A copy of your certified academic transcript *sent by your academic institution*, along with a letter confirming your full-time student status *or* a certified copy of your certificate, diploma or degree
- ⇒ A photocopy of your current, valid passport
- ⇒ A non-refundable deposit of \$100 USD by any of the payment methods below:
 - Calling (001) 617-542-1900 ext 14 *or* 16 with your credit card information
 - Online payments by credit card or bank account through PayPal at www.iicenter.org
 - Bank check in US dollars (no personal checks accepted) mailed to:
Peggy Comfrey
Director of International Programs
Irish Immigration Center
59 Temple Place, Suite 1010
Boston, MA 02111
USA

Application Process Timetable

- ⇒ The IIC receives your application (and required documents) and reviews them to ensure that all U.S. government requirements are met.
- ⇒ The IIC will set up an interview with you either by phone or via webcam.
- ⇒ The IIC will then issue a certificate of eligibility, DS 2019, which you take to the American consulate or embassy to apply for the J-1 visa. It is strongly recommended that you set up an appointment well in advance.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- ⇒ *What is the J1 Irish Work & Travel (I.W.T.) Visa?*

The J1 I.W.T. visa is a cultural exchange visa that allows students and recent graduates to work and travel within the United States for up to twelve months. Certain eligibility requirements apply.

- ⇒ *Am I eligible for the J1 Irish Work & Travel (I.W.T.) Visa?*

To be eligible you must be a citizen of Ireland and a currently enrolled *or* recent graduate of an Irish degree or certificate granting post-secondary institution. Recent graduates must have no more than twelve months between graduation and the program start date. Vocational students pursuing studies at a tertiary level accredited academic institution are not eligible for the program, unless their studies are part of a structured program leading to a degree or other credential recognized as equivalent to Level VI of the Irish Higher Education System.

⇒ *Do I need to find my own job?*

Yes. In addition, you will be authorized to work anywhere in the United States on this visa. Those seeking work in the Boston area will have access to the Irish Immigration Center's downtown cybercafé, for a small fee, which has job search resource lists and job openings posted.

⇒ *What does the \$ 600 fee cover?*

The \$ 600 fee to the Irish Immigration Center covers your visa sponsorship, information on obtaining your Social Security number, orientation to life in the United States, and a 24 hour emergency hotline. Participants coming to the Boston area also receive orientation to the area and access to programs and services of the Center.

⇒ *What expenses will I have besides the application fee?*

You will have to pay the US \$180 United States government SEVIS fee, the US \$131 visa application fee, your own travel costs and your living expenses in the United States. You need to have enough money to make your way in the United States for at least 30 days (or until you find employment). Many larger cities in the United States can be expensive but the experience of participants on past exchange programs has been that wages will enable you to live adequately and cover the cost of shared accommodation, transportation, health insurance, food, clothing, taxes etc.

⇒ *Is health insurance required?*

Yes, the U.S. State Department requires that each participant in the program have insurance in effect which covers them for sickness or accident during their time on the program. The insurance must be obtained and active by the time you enter the United States. The State Department is very specific about what the insurance needs to cover. IIC has researched insurance plans which meet these requirements and recommends Gateway USA (www.gatewayconnexions.com). Your employer may offer insurance coverage through their plan. You will need to look into cost and whether it meets the requirements.

⇒ *What do I do in case of an emergency during my time in the U.S.?*

The IIC maintains an emergency hotline that is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That number will be given to you upon arrival.

⇒ *Can I apply for a Social Security number before I arrive?*

No, this must be done in person at the Social Security office in the city where you will be residing with appropriate forms of documentation.

⇒ *How long will it take to get my Social Security number?*

Processing time for Social Security is approximately 4-6 weeks. When you apply, you are given a letter by Social Security acknowledging that you have applied. Most employers would accept this as proof until your number arrives.

⇒ *How much time do I have to find employment once in the United States?*

You will have up to 30 days to find employment. You are authorized to work anywhere in the U.S.

⇒ *Will my spouse and children be allowed to come with me?*

No, dependents and spouses are not allowed to accompany you on the J1 I.W.T. visa.

⇒ *Will I have to pay taxes while in the United States?*

Yes, anyone who earns income from a U.S. source must pay federal and state taxes. You will not have to pay Social Security, Medicare (FICA) or the Federal Unemployment tax (FUTA) because you will not be eligible to receive these benefits.

⇒ *Will I be able to change positions to another employer if things do not work out with my initial job?*
Yes. You will have up to 30 days to find new employment if you decide to change jobs.

⇒ *Can I extend my J1 visa if the company wants me to stay longer than a year?*
No, the maximum amount of time for the J1 I.W.T. visa is twelve months and it cannot be extended.

⇒ *Will I be eligible for another J1 visa in the future?*
As long as you maintain student status or start within twelve months of graduation, you may undertake additional J1 I.W.T. visa programs. You also may be eligible for formal J1 intern or trainee positions. Additional requirements and conditions may apply. Please contact the IIC to discuss your situation.

Have more questions?

If you still have questions that were not answered here, please contact the International Program staff at the IIC:

Peggy Comfrey, Director of International Programs
Phone: (001) 617-542-1900 ext 14
Email: pcomfrey@iicenter.org

Or

Ann-Marie Byrne, Assistant Director of International Programs
Phone: (001) 617-541-1900 ext 16
Email: amariebyrne@iicenter.org