VISA STATUS

In order to perform services in the United States, and more particularly at Northwestern University, you must have an immigration status that permits you to receive independent contractor payments. **You will not be allowed to perform services or receive payment without having an appropriate immigration status and being able to provide the University with the required documentation.** Listed below are details regarding the type of documentation required to be able to perform services at Northwestern for the most frequently encountered statuses.

If you are currently in the United States...

**in B-1/B-2 (Visitor for Business) or WB/WT Status (Visa Waiver for Business/Tourist),** you will need to show your I-94. Please note that you are only allowed to receive honoraria and associated incidental expenses for "usual academic activity" lasting no longer than 9 days at a single academic institution. Individuals cannot accept honoraria from more than five institutions within a 6 month period.

**in J-1 Research Scholar Status,** you will need to show your (a) I-94, (b) DS-2019 form, and (c) a letter from your Responsible Officer (RO) or Designated School Official (DSO) authorizing the employment at Northwestern University as incidental to your program objectives. The letter should specify the dates and activities that you will be engaging in while at Northwestern and also include information regarding any reimbursement for travel expenses. You should contact the RO or DSO at your J-1 sponsor for assistance.

**in H-1B Status, TN, E-3, and O-1 status,** you will need to show your (a) I-94 and (b) I-797 approval notice. Please note that because H-1B, TN, and O-1 status are employer specific, you may only be reimbursed for travel and reasonable, incidental living expenses for activities performed at Northwestern. Further, these activities must be incidental to your primary employment. **You cannot receive speaker’s fee or honorarium from Northwestern.** Individuals in O-1 status must list Northwestern University on their itinerary or they cannot be paid.

**in any other status,** please contact the Payroll Office prior to coming to Northwestern University to determine whether you have the proper status and/or authorization to work in the United States.

If you are currently outside of the United States...

**B-1/B-2 or WB/WT (visa waiver) status:** The B-1/B-2 (Visitor for Business) or WB/WT (Visa Waiver for Business/Tourist) is a visitor to the United States for business or leisure purposes. Individuals in B-1/B-2 or WB/WT status may engage in "usual academic activities" for no more than 9 days at a single academic institution. Additionally, they cannot accept honoraria from more than five institutions or organizations within a six-month period. To obtain B-1/B-2 or WB/WT status, you will need to request an offer letter from the inviting department describing the purpose and length of the visit as well as the amount to be paid as honoraria and for expenses.

The WB/WT (Visa Waiver Business/Tourist) applies to citizens of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. It permits citizens of those countries to enter the United States without first obtaining a visa. An individual in WB/WT status is, however, limited to a maximum stay of 90 days and cannot apply for a change of status in the United States. To obtain WB/WT status, the individual must show their passport (proving that they are from one of the eligible countries) and the offer letter from the department at Northwestern. They must also have a machine readable passport.

**Beginning 1/12/2009,** those traveling to the U.S. on a visa waiver must first have **Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)** approval. ESTA is a free, automated system used to determine the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the visa waiver program. It collects the same information as the paper I-94W form that WVP travelers fill out en route to the United States. ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel. An ESTA authorization generally will be valid for up to two years. Authorizations will be valid for multiple entries into the United States. DHS recommends that travelers submit an ESTA application as soon as they begin making travel plans. Please visit the CBP website for the ESTA application. 


Individuals from any country not eligible for the WB/WT program or those from a visa waiver eligible country who wish to remain in the U.S. for longer than 90 days must apply for a B-1/B-2 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate before entering the United States. Take your passport and the offer letter to the embassy or consulate to apply for the visa. You may also need to show the letter at the port of entry. After you have arrived at Northwestern, you will need to show your I-94 and visa to prove that you have the proper status to receive honoraria and expense reimbursement from Northwestern University.