

Information Leaflet for J-1 Summer Exchange Students 2009

Pre-Departure Preparation & Practical Advice

Irish J-1 students have faced difficulties on arrival in the US in recent years in relation to issues such as:

- social security numbers
- finding a job
- accommodation
- lost/stolen identification
- travel to Mexico
- breaking the law
- overstaying visas

This year, the US Department of State has warned that due to the continuing economic downturn, students should anticipate a weak summer job market in the US, so this year in particular, preparation and research may be key to having an enjoyable and successful time this summer.

The **Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres (CIIC)** has produced a useful practical information leaflet for J-1 students who are travelling to the USA in 2009. The leaflet contains pre-departure advice in addition to information on social security numbers, accommodation, jobs and staying safe while travelling: http://www.ciic-usa.org/pdfs/J1_Info_2009.pdf.

- **Job and accommodation** prospects should be well researched before travelling. Students should at the very least know what to expect what to pay in rent and what the work availability situation is like.
- Every year students are forced to return home early as they have misjudged the amount of money they need to bring with them or have misjudged how difficult it will be to get a job or how much accommodation will cost.
- If you have not pre-arranged employment and you enter the US and are not able to find a job, you should be prepared to live on your **savings** until you return home.

Students should make use of all support services available to them, including information and orientation packs that have been provided by their **sponsoring organisations**, as these contain valuable pre-and post-departure information - including advice and links to numerous websites for job-hunting and finding accommodation, as well as practical information on living and working in various cities throughout the US:

- www.j1online.ie
- www.sayit.ie/j1home.asp
- www.go4less.ie/j1/intro.asp

The following **websites** may also be useful sources of information when looking for jobs and accommodation:

- www.irishvoice.com
- www.irishecho.com
- www.craigslist.org

Obeying the Law

- Some students have misjudged what a publicly acceptable level of partying is and have ended up in trouble with the local police force. Students should be aware that some public disorder offences and what might be perceived as misdemeanours in Ireland are often penalised much more severely in the States.
- You are advised to treat US police officers with respect. They will assume you are a threat to them until you prove otherwise, so do everything you are told to do. Don't argue with or annoy them: they will have no hesitation in handcuffing you and putting you in a cell to cool off.
- Offences such as drinking alcohol in public can result in an overnight in jail and a court date. If you do not appear for a court date, an arrest warrant may be issued for you which can cause problems for future visits to the US.
- Drug offences and criminal arrests/convictions in the US may result in deportation and will affect your future prospects for re-entering the US.

Overstaying Your Visa

- The J-1 visa allows you to travel and work legally in the US for **up to 4 months** beginning from the date on your DS-2019 form, and ending no later than 10th October 2009. This is the last date you can legally work in the United States.
- You may however remain in the U.S. for up to 30 days after the expiry date on your DS-2019 form. This 30 day period is **for travel purposes within the US only**. You may not work and you may not leave and re-enter the US during this time.
- **You are strongly advised not to overstay your visa.** Overstaying a visa in the US, even by one day, results in your visa being automatically voided and can leave you liable for arrest, detention and deportation, and/or severely affect your chances of obtaining a visa to enter the U.S. in the future.
- You should be aware that much more comprehensive computerized records of departure are maintained nowadays than in previous years, so it is likely that the authorities will have a record of your entry and exit dates.
- If you overstay for less than 180 days and leave, you will not incur an automatic penalty; however if you try to come back to the US, your record is likely to show up on the computer and you will need to explain to an immigration officer why you overstayed and also try to convince the officer that you will not overstay again, which is difficult to do.
- If you overstay by more than 180 days but less than one year you will be subject to an automatic 3 year **ban on re-entry**.
- An overstay of more than one year results in an automatic 10 year ban on reentry.

Travel Advice

The **Department of Foreign Affairs** has information on its website for intending travellers to the US:

- Travel advice for J-1 students: <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=283>
- General travel advice for the US: <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=447>

Mexico

While most people visit Mexico safely each year, there are some risks involved in travelling there which you should be aware of.

Irish organisations and Consulates on the West Coast of the US and the Irish Embassy in Mexico have asked students to take extra caution with personal security if they intend to travel to Mexico.

- There are reports that there is a market for stolen passports in Mexico, so store your passport and other valuables safely and use alternative ID or a photocopy of the personal information page of your passport where possible. Make copies of your passport and DS-2019 form and leave them in the US when you travel.
- Unless you pay a substantial fine, you will be refused reentry into the US from Mexico if you cannot produce a valid passport and visa. It can take several days to obtain an emergency replacement passport.
- Your American mobile phone may not work in Mexico, check this before you travel.
- Do not walk alone after dark, and even if in a group be very vigilant.
- Use only authorized taxis from taxi ranks.
- Be very careful when withdrawing money from ATM machines, withdraw only small amounts and ensure that you use ATM machines in secure areas and during daylight hours.
- Exercise due caution at all times; remember that the consumption of a large amount of alcohol may impair your judgment and lead you into serious difficulties.

Both the US State Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs have issued travel advice for people intending to go to Mexico. These advisories include information on safety and security, crime, and on influenza A H1N1 (swine flu).

- **Dept. of Foreign Affairs Travel Advice for Mexico:**
<http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=452>
- **US Department of State Travel Advice:**
 - General info on Mexico: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html
 - Travel Alert: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4491.html

Useful Contact Details

Crosscare Migrant Project

1 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1

Tel: +353 1 873 2844

Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Web: <http://www.migrantproject.ie/>

Crosscare Migrant Project (*formerly Emigrant Advice*) is an information, advocacy and referral organisation for intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants, as well as immigrants and members of new communities in Ireland.

Sponsoring Organisations

Go4Less

30 Lower Abbey Street (Club Travel Offices), Dublin 1

Tel: +353 1 435 0000

Web: <http://www.go4less.ie/j1/intro.asp>

SAYIT

76 Grand Parade, Cork

Tel: 1850 487 283

Email: enquiries@sayit.ie

Web: <http://www.sayit.ie/j1/home.asp>

USIT

19/21 Aston Quay, Dublin 2

(USIT also has offices in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Athlone & Belfast)

Tel: +353 1 602 1906

Web: <http://www.j1online.ie>

Also from 8th June – 31st August you can contact **USIT New York**

Tel US Toll Free: 1866 647 3697

Email: newyork@usit.ie

Consular Services

If something goes wrong while you are abroad, or in the event of an emergency or a lost/stolen passport, you should contact the Consular Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs, or the nearest Irish Diplomatic or Consular Mission.

The Irish Embassy in Washington DC and the Irish Consulates in New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco offer consular assistance to Irish citizens.

Consular Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs

69-71 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Telephone: + 353 1 408 2308 / + 353 1 408

2585 /+ 353 1 408 2302

The Department of Foreign Affairs also has an after-hours Duty Officer who may be contacted in emergencies at:

Telephone: + 353 1 478 0822

Embassy of Ireland in U.S.

2234 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.

Washington D.C. 20008-2849

Telephone: +1 202 462 3939

Fax: +1 202 232 5993

Website: www.embassyofireland.org

Embassy of Ireland in Mexico

Cda. Blvd. Avila Camacho 76-3

Col. Lomas de Chapultepec

11000 Mexico DF

Mexico

Telephone: +52 55 5520 5803

Fax: +52 55 5520 5892

Website: www.irishembassy.com.mx

List of Irish Consulates in U.S.

<http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=5535>

Irish Immigrant National Groups

Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers

Contact: Sheila Gleeson
 551 Washington Street, Suite 4
 Brighton, MA 02135
 Phone/Fax: 617-987-0193
 Email: sheila@ciic-usa.org
 Website: www.ciic-usa.org
J-1 Information Leaflet: www.ciic-usa.org/pdfs/J1_Info_2009.pdf

Irish Apostolate USA

Contacts: Geri Garvey &
 Fr. Brendan McBride
 1005 Downs Drive
 Silver Spring, MD 20904
 Phone/Fax: 301-384-3375
 Email: administrator@usairish.org
 Website: www.usairish.org

Irish Immigration Centres in the USA

Many of these Irish Immigrant Support Groups and Organisations have been working with J-1 students down through the years and some may offer orientation days, accommodation & job handouts, information on socials security cards etc.

CALIFORNIA

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

5340 Geary Blvd., Suite 206
 San Francisco, CA 94121
 Ph. #: 415-752-6006 Fax #: 415-752-6910
 E-mail: iipc@pacbell.net
 Website: www.sfiipc.org

Irish Outreach San Diego

2725 Congress Street 2G
 San Diego, CA 92110
 Ph. #: 619-291-1630
 E-mail help@irishoutreachsd.org
 Website: www.irishoutreachsd.org

ILLINOIS

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

3525 South Lake Park Avenue
 Chicago, IL 60653
 Tel: 312 534 8445
 Fax: 312 534 8446
 E-mail: irishoverhere@sbcglobal.net
 Website: www.ci-is.com

MARYLAND

Irish Student Outreach Center

13701 Sailing Road
 Ocean City, MD 21842
 Ph. #: 410-250-0362 and 443-783-7893
 E-mail: wilfergus4@aol.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Irish Immigration Center

59 Temple Place, Suite 1010
 Boston, MA 02111
 Ph. #: 617-542-7654 Fax #: 617-542-7655
 E-mail: gconneely@iicenter.org
 Website: www.iicenter.org

Irish Pastoral Center

953 Hancock St.
 Quincy, MA 02170
 Ph. #: 617-479-7404
 Fax #: 617-479-0541
 E-mail: ipcboston@yahoo.com
 Website: www.ipcboston.org

NEW YORK

Aisling Irish Community Center

990 McLean Ave.
 Yonkers, NY 10704
 Ph. #: 914-237-5121
 Fax #: 914-237-1723
 E-mail: orla@aislingcenter.org
 Website: www.aislingirishcenter.org

Emerald Isle Immigration Center

59-26 Woodside Ave.
 Woodside, NY 11377
 Ph. #: 718-478-5502
 Fax #: 718-446-3727
 E-mail: siobhand@eiic.org
 Website: www.eiic.org

NEW YORK (contd.)

Project Irish Outreach

1011 First Avenue, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10022
Ph. #: 212-371-1011, ext. 3640
Fax #: 212-755-1526
E-mail: patricia.ocallaghan@archny.org

New York Irish Center

10-40 Jackson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101
Ph # (718) 482-0909
Fax # (718) 482-0908
Website: www.newyorkirishcenter.org
E-mail: info@newyorkirishcenter.org
Email: fatherc@newyorkirishcenter.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center

7 South Cedar Lane
Upper Darby, PA 19082-2816
Ph. #: 610-789-6355
Fax #: 610-789-6352
Emergency Pager: 610-912-9040
E-mail: irishimmigration@aol.com
Website:
www.philadelphiairishimmigrants.org

Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh

425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1410
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 1 412 394 3900
Fax: 1 412 394 0502
Web: www.iiofpitt.org

WASHINGTON

Seattle Irish Immigration Support Group

5819 St. Andrew's Drive
Mukilteo, WA 98275
Ph # 425-244-5147
Fax # 425-977-0244
Email: SIISG@IrishClub.org
Website: www.IrishSeattle.com

WISCONSIN

**Irish Immigrant Service of Milwaukee
At The Irish Cultural and Heritage
Center of Wisconsin**

2133 W. Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1910
E-mail: gleeson@uwm.edu
Website: www.ichc.net

DISCLAIMER: This is a reference guide only. All information should be checked with the relevant agency or organisation.