





# INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to the new edition of “Going to the USA” publication. Ireland has a long history of emigration to the USA. Continuing the work of Emigrant Advice, Crosscare Migrant Project will continue to assist intending Irish emigrants. Our extensive experience of working with intending Irish emigrants has shown us the importance of pre-departure information. Therefore when developing this edition of the booklet we were very conscious of a number of points.*

The first point was that the information in the booklet could become outdated quite quickly. At Crosscare Migrant Project, we are committed to providing up-to-date information in a manner that is accessible to all.

In this edition of ‘Going to the USA’ you will note that beside some of the numerical figures used in the booklet we have put the following: (2007 figure). As some of these figures change we will update the ‘Going to the USA’ publication on our website so that you will be able to access the most current, up-to-date information.

Secondly many people who choose to leave Ireland often feel overwhelmed with the amount of issues they have to consider. Our aim was to try to make the information as simple as possible and so we decided to present the publication in 'question and answer' format. However, in some cases the booklet will not be enough to answer your query. Please refer to the relevant websites listed in the booklet for more detailed information.

This booklet is designed to provide you with accurate information on USA immigration procedure, as well as give you an insight into the costs involved in emigrating, for example the cost of medical cover, accommodation etc. This is to help you to make an informed decision as we feel the more information you have the more prepared you will be. The saying "forewarned is forearmed" applies to any person who is making a decision to emigrate no matter what destination they choose.

## Interesting facts

- The USA is vast - Over 300 million people in an area that spans 5 time zones
- A trip from coast to coast takes as long by plane as it does to fly from Ireland to New York or 6 days by car
- Some of the most popular city destinations for Irish emigrants have huge populations (general population figures 2006):
  - New York 8.2 million
  - Los Angeles 3.8 million
  - Chicago 2.8 million
  - San Francisco 0.8 millions
  - Philadelphia 1.5 million
  - Boston 0.5 million
  - San Diego 1.2 million.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We wish to acknowledge the following people and organisations for their contribution to the development of the “Going to the USA” publication.*

Sheila Gleeson from the Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres (CIIC) in the USA, Abby Colbert from the Irish Immigration Centre in Boston, Noreen Bowden (EAN) and Fr. Alan Hilliard from the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants (IECE), the Department of Social and Family Affairs and Supporting Irish Abroad SIA/IECE for funding this publication.

## **How to use this guide...**

This guide gives details of the majority of options open to people wishing to move to the USA to live and work, whether for a year or 2 or for longer. It is broken into different chapters some of which may not be relevant to you. Make sure to double-check all information before making a final decision.

## What chapters should I look at?

Everyone should read **Chapters 2 - Visiting the USA** and **Chapter 3 - General Information**. They contain essential information about the pre-entry and entry procedures you will have to go through. Not all the information will necessarily apply to you, but make sure you know what you need to do before you leave Ireland.

Go to **Chapters 4 - Working in the USA**, **Chapter 5 - Immigrant Visas**, and/or **Chapter 6 - Non-immigrant Visas** if you think they might apply to you. You can use the index at the beginning of each chapter to see what section or page has the information you want.

**Chapter 7** is very important as it covers healthcare. You should read this through so you know what you are entitled to and where you should go if you need medical attention.

**Chapters 8-9** cover accommodation and employment. They should be useful for everyone.

**Chapters 10-11** are very important for anyone intending to work in the USA, so read them both to make sure you know what you have to do to get your finances and tax situation organised as soon as possible after arrival.

**Chapter 12** has useful information on driving in the USA.

**Chapter 13** has all the contact details of Irish organisations and Irish Embassies and Consulates in the USA. Have a look at these before you go, as they will be up-to-date and will give you an idea of your nearest Irish contacts.

Make sure to read **Chapter 15 - Dos and Don'ts!**

With so much to organise and remember, below is a list of the most important things you will need to do.

**Within the first few weeks you will need to:**

- Find or have already found temporary accommodation
- Open a bank account
- Apply for private health insurance
- Get a map of the area and find out about transportation in your area
- Find the contact details for an Irish organisation in your community
- Fill out the forms for a Social Insurance Number
- Try to find a job.

**Within the first year you will need to:**

- Find more permanent accommodation
- Get a telephone installed
- Register your children in school
- Get a family doctor
- Get an American driver's licence
- Understand your rights and responsibilities under American law.