Information on Visas and ESTA approvals

Visitors wishing to come to Indiana who are not U.S. citizens should plan their travel to the United States as early as possible to insure a successful trip. If you should be denied an ESTA application, Embassies and Consulates are not able to provide details or resolve the issue that caused the denial. Thus, we encourage travelers to apply as soon as possible.

If you are a citizen of a country that participates in the US “Visa Waiver Program”, please refer to the article below for VERY IMPORTANT new information regarding ESTA Mandatory Approval (Electronic System for Travel Authorization). The Travel Authorization is not a visa.

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced the launch of an
Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)

Understanding ESTA
ESTA is a new online system, designed to determine the eligibility of visitors to the U.S. before they travel. ESTA applies to citizens of all countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), who are travelling to the U.S. for business or leisure trips of 90 days or less. Specifically, this impacts citizens of 34 countries, including Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – and newly added: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia.

Currently these travelers complete a form on arrival into the U.S. (I-94W) with basic biographical and eligibility information. Under ESTA, VWP travelers will now be required to complete this information online and receive approval prior to commencing their trip. Accompanied and unaccompanied children, regardless of age, will be required to obtain an independent ESTA approval.

When Does ESTA Come Into Effect?
The ESTA website is available for voluntary use since August 1, 2008; ESTA will become mandatory on January 12, 2009. The website can be found at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/. After this date, impacted travelers will require an approved ESTA prior to travelling to the U.S. Travelers date, impacted travelers will require an approved ESTA prior to traveling to the U.S. Travelers who fail to obtain ESTA approval after ESTA becomes mandatory may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing, or be denied admission into the U.S.

How To Apply For ESTA Approval
To apply for ESTA approval travelers must log on to the ESTA website – https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov – and complete the online application form. Travelers are required to complete personal biographical and eligibility information. There is no charge for applying for the ESTA. Some third-party entities are charging a fee.

Specific travel plans are not required at time of application, meaning an ESTA request can be submitted at any time prior to travel to the U.S.; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security encourages VWP travelers to seek ESTA approval as soon as they begin to plan their trip. Travel information can be updated online once travel details are finalized. It is however strongly recommended that ESTA applications are submitted no less than 72 hours prior to travel.

Once approved, an ESTA is valid for multiple entries to the U.S., and remains valid for up to two years or until the applicant’s passport expires.