

**J VISA PRE-ARRIVAL
AND
ORIENTATION HANDBOOK**

July 2009

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Background Information

The purpose of the J Visa program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by providing foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experiences. These cultural and educational Exchange visitors enter the United States on a J visa. Their dependents under age 21 may enter on a J-2 visa.

NorthWest Research Associates (NWRA) is a designated J visa sponsor, and has accepted considerable responsibility to administer this program. We share responsibility with the applicant in assuring that all information that is passed to the US Government is complete and accurate. Any misrepresentation can jeopardize not only the applicant's status, but also NWRA's sponsorship of the J Visa. Therefore, the utmost care must be taken in preparing for, and maintaining your status as a J Visa Exchange Visitor.

Your point of contact at NWRA is the J-1 Responsible Officer (RO) or the Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO). This person will guide you through the process of applying, will issue your DS-2019, and will assist you in maintaining your status during your stay.

Program Specifics

What is the DS-2019?

After NWRA has received your completed application for a J-visa exchange, and has agreed to sponsor your exchange visit, the Responsible Officer will issue you, and each of your dependents, a DS-2019 form. This form is your certificate of eligibility for Exchange Visitor status and allows you to apply for a visa. Check this document carefully for accuracy and then sign and date it. The DS-2019 lists beginning and ending dates of your exchange program, the category of participation and the amount and source of your funding. Your DS-2019 must remain valid at all times and you should keep all DS-2019's ever issued to you as a permanent record. If you come as a repeat J visitor, a new DS-2019 must be completed for each visit.

What is SEVIS?

SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. This is an Internet-based system that provides tracking and monitoring functionality, with access to accurate and current information on nonimmigrant students (F and M visas) and exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2 and J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications, via the Internet, to the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State throughout a student's or exchange visitor's stay in the United States.

Types of Exchange Visitors

There are several types of Exchange Visitors, each with its own maximum duration of stay. At NWRA you may come on one of three types of exchanges: a Research Scholar, a Short Term Scholar or a Specialist. A Bachelor's degree is required for a Specialist position. The Short Term Scholar and Research Scholar require that the J Visa applicant have a Master's Degree or a Ph.D., or be enrolled in a Ph.D. program, in a closely related field. Documentation of degrees, and a translation if applicable, is required before you may be accepted to NWRA's program.

Research Scholar

The purpose of the Research Scholar is to foster the exchange of ideas and stimulate international collaborative teaching and research efforts, and to promote mutual enrichment and linkages between research and educational institutions in the U.S. and foreign countries. The Research Scholar will engage in research and may provide occasional lectures and consultations which are incidental to their primary research program activities. The maximum duration of stay is five years. A Master's Degree, a Ph.D., or enrollment in a Ph.D. program in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Research Scholars will be employees of NWRA.

Short Term Scholar

The Short Term Scholar will come to lecture, observe, consult and participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, professional meetings or similar types of activities. The maximum duration of stay is six months. A Master's Degree, a Ph.D., or enrollment in a Ph.D. program in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Short Term Scholars who are anticipated to be at NWRA for less than three months will be consultants at NWRA. If staying longer than three months, they will be an employee.

Specialist

The Specialist category recognizes the value-added of an individual who contributes to a project as a supporting scientist or engineer but who may not have, nor need, a Master's Degree or Ph.D. to serve in that capacity. This individual would bring a technical specialty to the project derived from their experiences in their country, such as knowledge of a specific modeling code developed in their country or more generally, specialized skills in computing, math, or some other technical knowledge important to the success of NWRA's research endeavors. Maximum duration of stay is one year. A Bachelor's Degree in a field closely related to the research to be performed is required. Specialists who are anticipated to be at NWRA for less than three months will be consultants at NWRA. If staying longer than three months, they will be an employee.

English Language Proficiency

The prospective EV must demonstrate proficiency in the English language. This can be accomplished in one of four ways:

- You are a native English speaker. You will be asked to certify this on the J-1 Application.
- You have published first author papers in a peer-reviewed journal in English.
- You have received a total iBT TOEFL (internet Based Test, Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 80 points.

- You have received a total iBT TOEFL score of 60 points AND your supervising NWRA Principal Investigator certifies that he or she is fluent in your native language.

Two-Year Bar to Repeat Participation

When an exchange visitor has completed a J visa program as either a “Research Scholar” or a “Professor”, they must wait for two years before they can reside in the U.S. as a J visa Research Scholar or Professor. Once two years have passed from the time you completed your J Research Scholar or Professor program, you will be eligible for another five- year period in either one of these J categories.

If the *Two-year Home Residency Rule* does not apply, previous J visa participants may enter and/or reside in the U.S. under another J visa category, such as a Short Term Scholar or Specialist, or any other visa category that they qualify for, such as an H1-b, tourist, etc.

Two-Year Home Residency Rule

In some cases, you will be required to return to your home country and reside there for two years before you can return as a J visa Research Scholar or Professor. You are ONLY subject to the Two-Year Home Residency Rule if one of the following applies:

1. You obtained government funding for your J visa program
2. Your home country government has designated you based on a pre-determined Skills List
3. You are participating in a J program for graduate medical training.

If you are subject to this rule, you must reside in your home country for an aggregate of two years, or obtain a waiver of the requirement. This means that during those two years you may not be in the U.S. on some other work visa, such as an H1-b, L visa or green card. You may enter the U.S. under some other visa category if you are eligible, however you must fulfill the requirement of residing in your home country for two years before returning as a J visa participant.

Dependents of J-1 Visitors

If you have a spouse or unmarried children under the age of 21, they may come with you to the U.S. as a J-2 dependent. Each J-2 dependent must have a DS-2019 form, issued by the NWRA Responsible Officer. J-2 dependents’ status only remains valid while the J-1 is in the U.S. You should not leave your J-2 dependents in the U.S. if you leave the country, unless it is only for a few days. Check with the NWRA Responsible Officer before leaving the country for any reason. A child’s J-2 eligibility expires when they reach their 21st birthday. J-2 dependents are allowed to work in the U.S., but they must receive permission from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Employment will not be authorized if it is needed to support the J-1. There are no restrictions on study for persons holding J-2 status.

Dependents are expected to reside with the J-1 during their stay in the United States.

Medical Insurance Requirement

Each exchange visitor is required to have insurance in effect which covers the exchange visitor and all J-2 dependents for sickness or accident during the period of time that the exchange visitor participates in the sponsor's exchange visitor program. Minimum coverage per individual is: 1) medical benefits maximum cannot be lower than \$50,000 per accident or illness; 2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7500, should you die in the United States; 3) medical evacuation to the home country in the amount of \$10,000; 4) a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness; 5) the co-insurance payable by the exchange visitor or dependents may not exceed 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness. The policy must be underwritten by an insurance company rated A- or above by A.M. Best. More information on medical insurance is covered later in this packet.

An exchange visitor who willfully fails to maintain the insurance set forth above while a participant in an Exchange Visitor Program shall be deemed to be in violation of the Exchange Visitor regulations and is subject to termination as a participant.

Payment of SEVIS Fee

The SEVIS I-901 fee is mandated by Congress to support the program office and the automated system that keeps track of exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the United States. The SEVIS fee will be paid by NWRA for each Exchange Visitor. J-2 dependents do not have to pay a SEVIS fee. NWRA will issue the EV a receipt showing payment of the SEVIS fee, which will be needed to receive the visa stamp at the consulate.

The SEVIS I-901 fee does not replace the visa fee that you pay at the consulate or border crossing. The visa fee is to defray the cost for machine-readable visas and to support the consulates.

Initiating a J-Visa Exchange

1. Complete the NWRA Cultural and Educational Exchange Application for a J visa exchange. This application is attached to this packet. Once completed, the application goes to the NWRA Principal Investigator (PI) requesting the exchange. The PI then completes their section and submits the request to the RO. All information included on the application must be complete and accurate.
2. The RO at NWRA completes the DS-2019 on SEVIS.
3. The RO at NWRA pays the SEVIS I-901 fee.
4. The completed DS-2019 and SEVIS receipt are sent to the applicant.
5. Applicant requests J Visa stamps from the U.S. Consulate or Embassy in his/her country. The applicant should check with the Embassy or Consulate regarding the procedures to

be followed in applying for the visa/s. Most participants, including the J-1 and their dependents, must appear in person and present their passports and DS-2019's at the Consulate or Embassy. Each applicant must submit a Form DS 156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application (accessible on each Embassy and Consulates website) and bring two passport photographs. Some applicants are also required to submit a Form DS 157. Please make sure to consult the relevant Embassy or Consulate's website.

6. Arrangements are made for required medical insurance while under the J visa. The RO will assist the J Visitor with this requirement.
7. Upon arrival in the U.S., check in immediately with the NWRA Responsible Officer. If your status is not verified by the RO within 30 days, your J visa program will be cancelled.

Who is the NWRA Responsible Officer (RO)?

The RO's name and contact information are:

Anita Whitney
NorthWest Research Associates
Human Resources
4118 – 148th Ave NE
Redmond, WA 98052 USA
425-556-9055 ext. 280; 425-556-9099 (fax)
JVisaRO@nwra.com

Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO):

Pederson Immigration Law Group, P.C.
Attn: Jan Pederson
2001 L Street, NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20036-4954
202-785-1960; 202-785-3815 (fax)
jpederson@usvisainfo.com

Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO):

Debbi Bardsley
NorthWest Resource Associates
Human Resources Administrator
4118 – 148th Ave NE
Redmond, WA 98052 USA
425-556-9055, ext. 213; 425-556-9099 (fax)
debbi@nwra.com

After Hours Emergency number: 425-652-5431

NWRA Office Locations

Redmond/Seattle, Washington State
NorthWest Research Associates, Inc.
4118 – 148th Ave NE
Redmond, WA 98052
425-556-9055

Boulder, Colorado
NorthWest Research Associates, Inc.
3380 Mitchell Lane
Boulder, CO 80301
303-415-9701

Fees Payable to Program Sponsor

The J-1 must pay for visa, travel, medical and living expenses related to any J-2 dependents. For the J-1, the SEVIS I-901 fee, visa, travel and medical will be paid for by NWRA. Living expenses for the J-1 will be covered via a salary, if the EV stays for three months or longer, or a consultancy fee if they are expected to stay at NWRA for less than three months, the amount of which will be determined after review of the visa application and consultation with the PI requesting the exchange.

Receiving Your Visa Stamp

A visa is a stamp in your passport that allows you to ask for permission to enter the United States upon reaching a U.S. border. The visa will contain your personal information, the visa type (J-1 or J-2), date issued, expiration date and your photograph and fingerprints. To obtain your visa you need to make an appointment with the nearest U.S embassy or consulate. This should occur after you receive the DS-2019 and the receipt for your SEVIS I-901 fee. Take all of your documents with you to the appointment at the consulate, including your DS-2019, your SEVIS receipt, documents that establish your funding, your passport and if you have dependents, their DS-2019's, passports and marriage and birth certificates showing the family relationship. Contact the Embassy or Consulate in advance to determine their procedure; your dependents may have to appear in person as well as yourself.

Canadian citizens do not require visas to enter the U.S. as an Exchange Visitor, but they must present their DS-2019 and SEVIS receipt to the immigration officer at the port of entry.

Entering the United States

Before arriving at an airport, the airline will give you a form I-94 (white) Arrival/Departure Record to complete. The form asks for basic identification information and the address where you will stay in the United States. This document is very important to your immigration status in

the United States, so be sure to make photocopies of the front and back of the card and keep the original in a safe place. Upon leaving the airplane you will be shown to the inspection area where a U.S. Customs official will review your documents. If everything is in order the officer will stamp your I-94 and DS-2019 for “duration of status” (D/S). The completed form I-94 will show what immigration classification you were given and how long you are allowed to stay. You should keep your I-94 in your passport, along with your DS-2019. As these documents are your only proof of your J-1 status, it is advisable to make photocopies of your passport identification page, visa stamp, I-94 and DS-2019. Keep the copies in a separate place in case the originals are lost.

Hand carry your documents. You will need to have access to them before you retrieve your luggage.

You must enter the U.S. within the 30 days prior to your program start date. If an Exchange Visitor must arrive later than the program start date shown on their Form DS 2019, the Visitor must let the RO know so that the SEVIS record can be amended to reflect a later arrival date. When the Visitor arrives in the United States, prior to validating the SEVIS record, the RO will change the program begin date, then validate the record, confirming arrival in the U.S. and the commencement of the participant’s exchange visitor program.

Required Medical Insurance

As described previously, all J-1’s and their dependents must have the following minimum benefits in place for the duration of their stay: 1) medical benefits maximum cannot be lower than \$50,000 per accident or illness; 2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7500; 3) medical evacuation to the home country in the amount of \$10,000; 4) a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness; 5) the co-insurance payable by the exchange visitor or dependents may not exceed 25% of the covered benefits per accident or illness.

NWRA has selected MedEx to provide this insurance. The Choice Inbound plan covers all the J visa requirements. Most exchange visitors and their visiting dependents will need to sign up for this plan initially. Some higher coverage limits are available for an additional cost. If you are coming as an employee of NWRA at one-half time or more, you will be covered under the NWRA medical as of the first day of the first full calendar month of employment. After you have become covered under the NWRA medical you need only maintain the evacuation and repatriation coverage which is the SafeTrip plan.

If you wish to have a more comprehensive health plan while you are here and you will not be eligible for the NWRA health coverage, there are numerous insurance companies who offer individual and family coverage. Often these will require a health screening and can be expensive. There are many options to choose from and your RO can help you understand how the plans work. The websites below give you information about some of the options available. A sample rate chart is included in the appendix for your reference.

Washington State:

Premera Blue Cross – www.premera.com

Regence Blue Shield – www.wa.regence.com

Group Health Cooperative – www.ghc.org

Colorado State:

Anthem Blue Cross BlueShield – www.anthem.com

Kaiser Permanente – <https://www.kaiserpermanente.org/>

If you are coming to NWRA for less than three months, you will be a consultant to NWRA. In this case, you will be required to maintain the complete J visa insurance coverage as described above.

Please contact the RO for information about how to enroll in these plans. Ideally enrollment should take place **before** you leave your home so that you are covered from the time you arrive in the U.S. You must be covered under the required medical for each day you are under J status.

Check in with Responsible Officer

Upon arrival in the U.S., check in immediately with the RO. We have 30 days from the program start date to validate your record in SEVIS. If this is not done, the record will automatically go to invalid status which will require the payment of an additional fee to correct.

During Your Stay in the U.S.**Orientation Upon Arrival**

As soon as possible after your arrival in the U.S. the RO or ARO will meet with you, and your family if desired, review the program requirements and assess your needs. The RO or a local staff member will also be assigned to assist you in making your initial living arrangements and will be available to you for ongoing questions specific to the community you are living in.

Any questions regarding your status as a J-1 or J-2 should always be directed to the RO or the Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO).

Description of Your Program

In most cases you will come to NWRA as a J visitor at the request of an existing NWRA scientist. The requesting scientist may ask you to come to assist with research on a project, to lecture, consult, attend a research-related conference or other activities allowed by the J Visitor Program. This NWRA scientist will supervise your efforts while working for NWRA. Since you will be working directly with an NWRA scientist, and our offices are relatively small, it is expected that you will have contact with each other on almost a daily basis. In the event that you come to NWRA with your own contract or grant funding, the division manager, who works on

the premises, will be your supervisor and will be available to you as a resource. The duration of your stay at NWRA will depend on several things, including adherence to the J Visitor Program regulations, the duration of stay that was initially approved and the availability of funding for your particular activity.

Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

You will need a Social Security number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to work in the United States.

A Social Security Number (SSN) is a nine digit number the Social Security Administration (SSA) assigns to individuals to identify their records of earnings in employment or self-employment and to pay benefits. Social Security numbers can be assigned to foreign workers who are authorized to work in the United States.

The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is a 9-digit Federal tax processing number issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). While an ITIN may look similar to a SSN, the first digit in an ITIN is the number 9 and the fourth digit is the number 7 or 8. SSA does not issue SSNs in the “900” series. *The IRS issues ITINs to foreign nationals and other individuals who have Federal tax reporting or filing requirements, but who do not have, and are not eligible to obtain, an SSN from the Social Security Administration (SSA). By law, an alien individual cannot have both an ITIN and an SSN.*

It may take several weeks to get your Social Security number, so plan to apply early. It is not required that you have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service requires employers to report wages using a Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from the Social Security Administration stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the United States. Employers can find more information at www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm.

To find out more about requirements for application for a Social Security number and card, you can go to the website www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10107.html. Information about the ITIN can be found at the IRS website at www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96287,00.html.

See appendix for additional references that may be helpful:

- Foreign Workers and Social Security Numbers
- Delays in Issuing SSNs to Aliens by the Social Security Administration
- New Rules for Getting a Social Security Number and Card

Contacting Social Security

The Social Security website (www.socialsecurity.gov) is a valuable resource for information about all of Social Security’s programs. In addition to using the website, you can call the SSA toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call the TTY number, 1-

800-325-0778. They can answer specific questions from 7 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday, and provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

Social Security Administration Phone Number:

Toll-Free 1-800-772-1213

TTY 1-800-325-0778

M-F 7 am – 7 pm, automated phone service 24 hours a day

Local Social Security Offices:

Bellevue Social Security Office:

Suite 301 Park Plaza

505 106th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

M-F 9 am – 4 pm

1-800-772-1213

Boulder Social Security Office

Suite 101

4949 Pearl East Circle

Boulder, CO 80301

M-F 9 am – 4 pm

1-800-772-1213

Dealing with Medical Insurance in the U.S.

Need for Health (Medical) Insurance

Medical insurance in the U.S. is extremely complex and can be very expensive. Medical procedures and hospital stays can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. In some countries the government pays for medical care, but this is not usually the case in the U.S. Many people receive medical insurance through their employer, others through private-pay insurance. A very few, usually the poor, receive some insurance through a government program. **YOU CANNOT EXPECT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO PAY FOR YOUR MEDICAL COSTS WHILE YOU ARE HERE.** For this reason, it is critical for your own well-being, and required by the J Visa Program, that you carry some insurance while you are in the U.S.

How it Works

When you enroll in a medical insurance policy, you usually pay premiums each month. These premiums are pooled together and paid out to health-care providers when a covered individual has medical needs that are provided by the policy. Your coverage is only in force as long as you continue to pay your premiums. After enrolling in a policy, you should receive a medical identification card that you will show your doctor or hospital when you need care. Often, the doctor's office or hospital will bill the insurance company for payment. Sometimes, you will need to pay the cost and then file a claim form with the insurance company. If you are covered under the NWRA medical insurance, you will have some coverage for prescription medications.

If you are covered under the minimum policy for J visa visitors, you will not have prescription drug coverage. If you are coming for a short stay of three months or less, you may want to bring a supply of your medications with you, in their original container with your name on the container. Some unapproved medications will not be allowed to enter the U.S. Refer to http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/clearing_goods/restricted/medication_drugs.xml if you have questions, or contact the Federal Drug Administration at (301) 443-6553 or the Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Diversion Control, International Drug Unit, at (202) 307-2414.

Understanding Medical Terms

Medical terminology and their application can be very confusing in the U.S. We will cover some of the most common terms you will need to know.

- **Deductible:** if your policy has a \$500 deductible per occurrence, this means that you will pay the first \$500 of the cost EACH time you need care. If you have an annual \$500 deductible, you will pay the first \$500 of care each calendar year. Following the payment of the deductible and any co-insurance and co-pays that you are responsible for, the insurance company will pay the balance of your covered costs, up to the benefit maximum.
- **Co-insurance:** most policies require you to pay a percentage of the cost of your care. For instance, if you have an 80% policy, you will pay the deductible first, then the insurance company pays 80% of the covered costs and you pay 20%, up to the maximum out-of-pocket limit.
- **Co-pays:** many policies have an office visit and/or prescription copay. This means that each time you visit the doctor, clinic or hospital, or you get a prescription medication, you pay a fixed amount, usually \$15 - \$20. If you are visiting an emergency room, the copay can be much higher, such as \$75 - \$150.
- **Preferred/participating provider:** Most insurance companies have a network of health care providers that have contracted with the insurance company to charge certain rates. These contracted providers are often called preferred providers or participating providers. To get the highest benefit coverage possible you want to always use preferred providers (providers that are in your network of approved doctors). This applies not only to doctors, but also to clinics and hospitals. It is possible to go to a network hospital, but have a doctor at the hospital that is not preferred. If you can, you should ask and make sure that everyone treating you is covered by your insurance. Some networks have preferred and participating providers in the same network. In this case you want *preferred providers*. Using a participating provider will give some coverage, but not as much as a preferred provider.
- **Pre-certification:** most routine visits to the doctor for minor medical issues do not require pre-certification. However, if you are anticipating an expensive medical or dental procedure it is recommended that you receive written authorization from the insurance

company in advance. This will avoid unpleasant surprises when the insurance company does not agree to pay.

- Usual and customary: Insurance companies have determined what they think is a reasonable cost for each medical procedure, based on what most doctors charge in the geographical area where you received treatment. This is called “usual and customary”. Insurance companies will not pay beyond what is considered usual and customary. This means that if you go to an expensive doctor, you will pay the deductible, the copay, your co-insurance, and in addition, you will have to pay for anything that is above the usual and customary amount.
- Exclusions: All plans will have some things they won’t cover. These are called exclusions. You should check your policy and with the insurance company if there is any question about whether a treatment will be covered.

If you have further questions about your medical insurance, your RO can direct you to resources to help answer your questions.

Medical Emergencies

If you have a medical emergency while in the U.S., you can summon emergency medical assistance from most areas by dialing 911 from any phone. Often pay phones will allow a 911 call to go through without payment. If 911 does not work, you can try dialing 0 to get a telephone company operator who can assist.

Hospitals/Medical Centers

Redmond Area

The Seattle area is served by several hospitals and medical centers. In the Bellevue and Redmond area, the main hospitals include:

- Overlake Hospital Medical Center, 1035 116th Ave NE, Bellevue 98004, 425-668-5000, www.overlakehospital.org. Full services are provided at the main location, and various additional locations provide services such as: 24-hour Urgent Care in Issaquah, Outpatient Rehabilitation, Senior Community Services, Bellevue Senior Health Center, Mercer Island Senior Health Center, Outpatient and Behavioral Health and the Specialty School, and Classes.
- Evergreen Hospital Medical Center, 12040 NE 128th St., Kirkland 98034, 425-899-1000, www.evergreenhealthcare.org. Evergreen Healthcare provides full medical services, including medical groups, home care, hospice and many other services.
- Group Health Cooperative, www.ghc.org/locations/eastKingCounty/index.html
 - Bellevue Medical Center, 11511 NE 10th St., Bellevue 98004. “Services you'll find include outpatient surgery, a 24-hour Urgent Care Center, specialty services, primary care services, infusion center, lab, pharmacy, eye care, and audiology services.”

- Redmond Medical Center, 159th Place Northeast and Redmond Way, Redmond 98052. “Our new primary care center near downtown Redmond will provide primary care as well as lab and pharmacy. Planned opening: Fall 2008.”
- Additional medical centers are located in Factoria, Northshore, and Renton.

Other major hospitals in the Seattle area include:

- Swedish Medical Center – www.swedish.org
- Virginia Mason Hospital and Medical Center - www.virginiamason.org
- Harborview Medical Center – www.uwmedicine.org
- University of Washington Medical Center – www.uwmedicine.org
- Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center – www.seattlechildrens.org
- Northwest Hospital and Medical Center - www.nwhospital.org
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance - www.seattlecca.org

Boulder Area

Boulder and Denver metropolitan areas are served by several hospitals and medical centers. In Boulder, these include:

- Boulder Community Hospital, P.O. Box 9019, 1100 Balsam, Boulder 80301-9019, 303-440-2273, www.bch.org. Additional locations include:
 - Boulder Community Foothills Hospital, 4747 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303, a 60-bed acute care hospital with emergency department and full maternity services.
 - Community Medical Center, 1000 W. South Boulder Road, Lafayette, CO 80026. Urgent care center, physician offices and special medical services.
 - Mapleton Center, 311 Mapleton Ave., Boulder, 80301-9130. Home to the Boulder Center for Sports Medicine, Rehabilitation Services, Behavioral Health Services, and Sleep Disorders Lab and Sleep Clinic.
 - Miriam R. Hart Regional Radiation Therapy Center, 905 Alpine Ave. Boulder 80304-3305. Radiation treatment for cancer patients.
- University of Colorado Hospital, 350 Broadway, Suite 200, Boulder 80302, www.uch.edu. Services in Boulder include Physical Therapy and University Family Medicine. The main location for this hospital system, The Anschutz Medical Campus, is located in Aurora, Colorado.
- Boulder Medical Center, 2750 Broadway, Boulder, 303-440-3015. Includes Urgent Care, Outpatient Surgery, and numerous other Health Services. Other locations are in Louisville, CO, and Boulder Foothills.

Additional hospitals in Denver include:

- Porter Adventist Hospital - www.porterhospital.org
- HealthONE Rose Medical Center - www.rosemed.com
- Denver Health - www.denverhealth.org
- The Children’s Hospital (Aurora) - www.thechildrenshospital.org
- HealthOne Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center - www.pslmc.com

- St. Anthony Central Hospital - www.stanthonyhosp.org
- Craig Hospital - www.craighospital.org
- National Jewish Medical and Research Center - www.nationaljewish.org

Transportation

Redmond Area

The Seattle NorthWest Research Associates' office is located in Redmond, Washington, a suburb approximately 20 minutes east of Seattle. Air transportation into and out of the Seattle area is through the Seattle Tacoma International Airport (www.portseattle.org/seatac). The airport code is SEA. The most convenient transportation options for getting to Redmond from the airport include taxi, shuttle (hotel shuttles and Shuttle Express), bus, or rental car. In most cases, when you arrive at the airport, a NorthWest Research Associates staff member will meet you. Other transportation options include:

- Yellow Cab Taxi – Approximately \$50 from Seattle Airport to Redmond Office, 425-455-4999
- Shuttle Express – Approximately \$36 from Seattle Airport to Redmond Office, 425-981-7000

Rental Car Companies

- Alamo, 20636 Pacific Hwy S, Seattle-Tacoma Intl Airport, SeaTac, WA 98188, 206-433-0182
- Dollar Rent a Car, 19820 International Blvd, Seattle-Tacoma Intl Airport, SeaTac, WA 98168, 206-433-7777
- Enterprise, 19031 International Blvd, Seattle-Tacoma Intl Airport, SeaTac, WA 98188 · 206-246-1953
- Hertz, 1501 8th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101 · 206-903-6260

Major city bus lines are operated by King County Metro (www.transit.metrokc.gov) and Sound Transit (www.soundtransit.org). Services are provided through the greater Puget Sound area, from Tacoma in the south to Everett in the north to Issaquah and North Bend in the east. Sound Transit also has scheduled commuter trains to and from Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett.

Several Metro bus routes serve NorthWest Research Associates' Redmond office. We are also within walking distance of the Overlake Transit Center, served by additional Metro and Sound Transit routes. An annual bus pass, purchased by NorthWest Research Associates, is available to all full-time employees working in our Redmond office.

Ferry service is operated by Washington State Department of Transportation (www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries), providing service to communities across the water west of Seattle, including the Kitsap Peninsula, Bainbridge Island, Vashon Island, and Whidbey Island. Additional ferries originating outside of Seattle provide service to the San Juan Islands and Vancouver Island, BC.

Amtrak operates train service to and from the King Street Station in Seattle (www.amtrak.com), and Greyhound (www.greyhound.com/home.asp) offers long-distance bus service from downtown Seattle.

Boulder Area

The NWRA Boulder office is located approximately 45 minutes northwest of Denver. Air transportation for the Denver metro area is through the Denver International Airport (Airport Code DEN, www.flydenver.com). In most cases, when you arrive at the airport, a NorthWest Research Associates staff member will meet you. Other transportation options from the airport include:

- Boulder Super Shuttle – 303-227-0000, www.bouldersupershuttle.com, (\$25-33 one way)
- Boulder Yellow Cab Taxi – 303-777-7777

Rental Car Companies

- Alamo, 24530 East 78th Ave, Denver, CO, 80249, 888-826-6893 ext:MAIN, local 303-342-7373 ext:LOCAL
- Dollar Rent a Car, Denver International Airport, Denver, CO, 80207, 866-434-2226
- Enterprise, 7720 Calawaba Court, Denver, CO 80249-6392, 303-342-7350
- Hertz, 24890 East 78th Avenue, Denver, CO, 303-342-3800

Major city bus lines are operated by RTD (Regional Transportation District), which serves the Denver metro area, including Boulder and Denver International Airport. RTD bus service from Boulder connects to light rail which serves downtown Denver, the Denver Tech Center and communities south of downtown Denver. The main bus serving NorthWest Research Associates' Boulder office is the BOLT. Other transportation options, including carpool, vanpool, and biking, are described at the City of Boulder website www.bouldercolorado.gov.

Amtrak operates train service to and from Denver's Union Station (www.amtrak.com), and Greyhound (www.greyhound.com/home.asp) offers long-distance bus service into and out of Denver.

Accommodations

Redmond Area

Hotels:

Hotels that are convenient to our Redmond office include:

- The Silver Cloud Inn – Redmond, 2122 152nd Ave NE, Redmond. Reservations 1-800-205-6934.
- Redmond Inn, 17601 Redmond Way, Redmond, 98052. Reservations 1-800-634-8080.

Short-term Housing Options:

- Extended StayAmerica – 11400 Main St, Bellevue. Reservations 425-453-8186
- Homestead Studio Suites – Bellevue, 3700 132nd Ave SE, Bellevue, 425-865-8680
- Homestead Studio Suites – Redmond, 15805 NE 28th St, Redmond, 425-885-6675.

Long-Term Housing Options:

Typical apartments in Redmond and Bellevue rent from \$1,000-2,000 for a 1-bedroom unit and \$1,200-2,000 for a 2-bedroom unit. Areas further from Redmond/Seattle can have lower rental rates. Rental and home sale information can be found through the local newspapers and Craigslist, as well as numerous other sources including real estate companies.

- Seattle Times Rental ads – <http://marketplace.nwsourc.com/rentals>
- Rentals - www.seattlerentals.com
- Craigslist For Rent – <http://seattle.craigslist.org/apa>

Boulder Area

Hotels:

Some hotels in Boulder include the following:

- Boulder University Inn, 1632 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302. 303-417-1700
- Super 8 Motel, 970 28th Street. Reservations 1-800-695-8284.
- Quality Inn and Suites, 2020 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80302. Reservations 1-877-424-6423.

Short-term Housing Options:

- Homewood Suites by Hilton Boulder, 4950 Baseline Road, Boulder, CO 80303, 1-303-499-9922.
- Residence Inn Boulder, 3030 Center Green Drive, Boulder, CO 80301, 1-303-449-5545.

Long-term Housing Options:

Typical apartments in Boulder can rent from \$600-1,300 for a 1-bedroom unit and \$800-1,200 for a 2-bedroom unit. Rental information can be found through the local newspapers and Craigslist and, as well as numerous other sources including real estate companies:

- Housing Helpers (www.housinghelpers.com)
- boulderrealty.blogspot.com
- Colorado Daily (www.coloradodaily.com)
- The Denver Post (www.denverpost.com)
- Craigslist (<http://denver.craigslist.org/hhh/>)

School District/Childcare Information

Redmond Area

Schools

The Seattle Times provides a guide to schools in the Seattle area, both public and private, at community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/schoolguide/. Another site that provides links to area school districts is custom.superlativeinc.com/links/greaterseattle-schools.html. Schools in the Northwest generally operate on a September through mid-June calendar.

In addition, several universities, colleges and technical schools are located in the Seattle area, including the University of Washington, Seattle University, Seattle Pacific University, Bastyr University, North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central and S. Seattle Community Colleges, Bellevue College, Lake Washington Technical College and Renton Technical College.

Childcare Resources

For childcare possibilities in the Redmond area, go to <http://www.childcare.org/ccr/index.htm>, <http://yellowpages.aol.com/family-guide/day-care/wa/redmond/>, or <http://www.childcarenet.org/>.

Boulder Area

Schools

Boulder Schools are operated by the Boulder Valley School District (www.bvsd.org). Boulder schools operate from mid-August through the end of May. Additional information regarding Colorado schools can be found at the Colorado Department of Education website www.cde.state.co.us/index_home.htm. Colorado Student Assessment Program results are available at www.denverpostbloghouse.com/csap/.

Several universities and colleges are located in the Denver area, including the University of Colorado Boulder and Colorado Technical University.

Childcare Resources

To find childcare possibilities in the Boulder area, go to the Parenting Place website at www.boulderparenting.org/directory.html.

Banking

Several major commercial and savings banks as well as credit unions, serve the Redmond and Boulder areas, with branch networks, ATMs, and online banking to serve your needs. Banks generally operate Monday through Friday with some also offering reduced hours on Saturdays. Major banks operating through much of the United States, including Colorado and Washington States, include the following branches which are convenient to our offices:

Redmond Area

- US Bank, 3 locations, including Main Office at 10800 NE 8th St., Bellevue, WA 98004, 425-450-5803.
- Wells Fargo Bank, several branches including Overlake Park, 2201 156th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98007, 425-401-0076.
- Chase, Overlake Park Financial Center, 1955 156th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98007, 425-590-4010.

Boulder Area

- US Bank, 3 locations, including Main Office at 1650 28th St., Suite 1244, Boulder, CO 80301, 303-444-7017 and Downtown Office at 1495 Canyon Blvd., Boulder, CO 80302, 303-449-8172.
- Wells Fargo Bank, several branches including Boulder Canyon, 1690 Canyon Blvd., Boulder, CO 80302, 303-441-0341.
- Chase, 30th and Walnut Financial Center, 1880 30th St., Boulder, CO 80301, 303-449-3361.

Expenses

Living expenses generally include food, housing, utilities, transportation, clothing, personal items, insurance and entertainment. You may not receive your first paycheck for several weeks after you begin work, so be prepared to cover your expenses in the interim. Below are some *minimum* monthly costs to expect in Redmond and Boulder. If you are coming with dependents, these amounts must be increased accordingly.

When renting an apartment or house, a security or damage deposit is usually required. Most often this is equal to the amount of the first month's rent. For instance, if you rent an apartment for \$900, you will often pay a one-time \$900 damage deposit before you will be approved to rent a unit. If, at the end of your stay, the unit is returned to the landlord in the same condition that you received it, in most cases the damage deposit will be returned to you. If you sign a rental contract, which is common, and you leave before the contract expires, you will often forfeit your damage deposit. In addition, some apartment complexes require you to pay your first and last month's rent, and a damage deposit. Take care that you completely understand your rental contract before you sign it.

Utilities are the public services that are available to you, for a monthly fee. These are things like water, garbage pick-up, telephone, electricity, natural gas (for heating and appliances in some areas), and cable TV. Utility charges vary by area and usage. Most apartment buildings include garbage pick-up in your rent. *Some* include water and cable TV. In almost all cases you will be paying for your monthly telephone service, electricity and natural gas (where applicable). Most utilities also have a hook-up fee which you will pay when first signing up for services.

Most living arrangements will have basic appliances but are otherwise unfurnished. Beds, tables, chairs, cookware, etc, will all need to be acquired. Many of these items can be found relatively inexpensively at local thrift shops or on community websites such as Craigslist.com.

While we hope that your stay here is free of medical difficulties, remember that under the J-1 medical coverage, you pay the first \$500 for **each** occurrence that requires care. We strongly recommend that you have an adequate emergency fund that will cover these costs, should they occur. Even if you have more comprehensive medical coverage, you will still have deductible, copays and co-insurance to manage.

The following calculations are based on *net* income. This means income that is available to you after taxes are deducted. Depending on your income level, you should plan on 15-45 % of your income being withheld for federal and state taxes. In locations where there is not a state income tax, you will pay a higher sales tax on items you purchase.

You should plan for an additional minimum amount of \$200 per month for each dependent that you bring with you. This will cover basic expenses such as food for additional family members. If you are aware of unusual expenses, such as costly prescription drugs needed by your family while you are here, this amount should be increased.

Redmond Area

Total: \$1,950 per month, minimum

- Food (\$300)
- Housing (\$1,200)
- Utilities (\$250+)
- Transportation (\$0 free employee bus pass. Dependent transportation needs are extra.)
- Clothing and Personal Items (\$100)
- Insurance (\$50 to several hundred \$ - medical, personal property, auto-if you drive)
- Entertainment (\$50+)

Boulder Area

Total \$1,610 per month, minimum

- Food (\$300)
- Housing (\$800)
- Utilities (\$250+)
- Transportation (\$60 local/limited bus pass)
- Clothing and Personal Items (\$100)
- Insurance (\$50 to several hundred \$ - medical, personal property, auto-if you drive)
- Entertainment (\$50+)

Climate

Redmond Area

Weather in Redmond is generally mild, although the Seattle area has a reputation for receiving a lot of rain. Although the area gets less rain than many other areas of the country, the sky tends to remain cloudy much of the year, especially from October through February. The summers through September can be warm and sunny. Plan to dress in layers and bring an umbrella or raincoat.

Seattle Averages

MONTH	Average Daily Temperature °F		Average Monthly Precipitation (inches)
	Max	Min	
January	45.8	35.9	5.13
February	49.5	37.2	4.18
March	53.2	39.1	3.75
April	58.2	42.1	2.59
May	64.3	47.2	1.77
June	69.5	51.7	1.49
July	75.2	55.3	0.79
August	75.5	55.7	1.02
September	70.1	51.9	1.63
October	59.7	45.7	3.19
November	50.5	39.9	5.9
December	45.4	35.9	5.62

Source: NOAA - NWS Forecast Office - Seattle WA (1971-2000)

Boulder Area

Boulder's climate is relatively mild most of the year, but can be very unpredictable. Snow can fall as late as May. Plan to dress in layers and be prepared for the winter snow.

Denver Averages

MONTH	Average Daily Temperature °F		Average Monthly Precipitation (inches)	Average Snowfall (inches)
	Max	Min		
January	43	15	0.51	7.7
February	47	19	0.49	6.3
March	54	25	1.28	11.7
April	61	34	1.93	9.1
May	71	44	2.32	1.3
June	82	53	1.56	0
July	88	59	2.16	0
August	86	57	1.82	0
September	77	47	1.14	2.1
October	66	36	0.99	4.1
November	52	24	0.98	10.7
December	44	16	0.63	8.7

Source: NOAA - NWS Forecast Office - Denver CO (1971-2000)

Social Customs in the United States

- **Greetings:** American greetings are generally quite informal. This is not intended to show lack of respect, but rather a manifestation of the American belief that everyone is equal. Although it is expected in business situations, some Americans do not shake hands at social events. Instead, they may greet you with a casual "Hello" or "How are you?" or even just "Hi." Stand while being introduced. Only the elderly, the ill and physically unable persons remain seated while greeting or being introduced. Handshakes are usually brief.
- **Conversation:** It is considered impolite in a social or professional setting, especially when first meeting someone, to ask if they are married or dating, their political or religious affiliations or beliefs, their age, weight, or other personal physical matters. Allow people to reveal such information on their own should they choose. These are highly personal matters which should not be brought up except with people you are very familiar with.
- **Personal Space:** Americans typically like to have about an arm's length of personal space and may be very uncomfortable otherwise. In crowded situations less space is tolerated.
- **Time:** Americans tend to be more time conscious than many other cultures. Whether in a social or business setting, you should plan on being exactly on time, if not five minutes early.

- **Dining Etiquette:** The first thing to do after being seated at a table is to immediately place your napkin in your lap. Never use your napkin as a tissue, but have one close by if you think you'll need to wipe your nose during the meal. If you have to leave the table during the meal, say a soft "excuse me" to the people on either side of you, leave your napkin on your chair (not the table) and push the chair under the table as you leave.

As you look at your place setting, remember that solids are on the left and liquids are on the right. In other words, your bread plate is on the left side above your forks and your drinking glasses are on the right side above the knife and spoons. Use silverware from the outside in. The first fork you will need will probably be your salad fork, the one farthest on the left. The larger fork directly to its right is your dinner fork. On the far right side of your place setting will most likely be a soup spoon, and on its left, a teaspoon followed by the knife. If you see utensils placed horizontally across the top of your place setting, save those for dessert.

If you must remove something from your mouth as you eat, take it out the way it went in. In other words, if it entered your mouth on a fork, remove it with your fork. If it was finger food, use your fingers to remove it. Hold your napkin in front of your mouth to mask the removal, and then place the item on the side of your plate.

At the conclusion of the meal, imagine your dinner plate as a clock and place your utensils in the 4:20 position. It's considered rude to push your plates away, stack them up or hand them to the server. Place your loosely folded napkin on the table just as you stand to leave, not before.

- **Tipping:**
 - **Restaurants with Table Service.** In the USA, most waitstaff and bartenders in restaurants are paid below the minimum wage, because the employees are expected to make up the difference in tips. Tip 15 percent of the bill, based on the quality of service. If you receive exceptional service, up to 25 percent tip is customary. If you receive exceptionally poor service, you can choose to give a smaller tip or no tip at all. It is also acceptable to let a manager know you are unhappy.
 - Unlike many countries, service is usually not included in the bill with the exception of large parties (typically six or more people). If the tip is included, the breakdown of the bill will read "gratuity," which means that a tip is already included.
 - **Buffet Restaurants** with limited table service: a tip of 10-15 percent of the bill is still recommended because the servers work to keep the buffet line stocked and clean.
 - **Counter Service/Fast Food** restaurants often have tip jars out, but you are not required to tip. If the service is exemplary or unusual requests are made, then tips are appropriate.

- **Bartenders:** \$1 - \$2 per drink, or 15-20 percent of the total bill.
- Other optional tipping situations common to travelers include:
- **Hotel Housekeeping/Maid Service:** \$2-3 per night up to \$5, more in high-end hotels. Leave the tip on your pillow or in a similar obvious place with a note that says thank you. Leave the tip each day when you leave the room, rather than at the end of your stay, because your room might get cleaned by different people each day. If you have additional items delivered to your room, such as extra pillows, hangers, luggage racks, you may tip the person who brings them \$1 or \$2.
- **Concierge:** For general advice and restaurant reservations, tipping is not expected. However, for any special, individual, or unusual service, it is appreciated.
- **Bellman/Porter:** \$1-2 per bag.
- **Taxi Driver:** 10-15 percent of fare, based on service.
- **Hotel Limo Driver:** For a free ride from the airport, \$10-20
- **Valet Parkers:** \$2-5 when you pick up car.
- **Hairdresser/Manicurist:** 10-20 percent.
- **Tour Guides:** 15-20 percent or more depending on quality
(<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g191-s606/United-States:Tipping.And.Etiquette.html>)

Driver's License

In most cases, you can drive in the United States at least for a limited time using your driver's license from your home country. You may wish to obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP) before coming to the United States. The IDP "allows an individual to drive their private motor vehicle in another nation only when accompanied by a valid license from their country. The document is approximately the size of a standard passport and is essentially a multiple language translation of one's own existing driver's license, complete with photograph and vital statistics. **It is not a license to operate a motor vehicle** on its own." (source: Wikipedia) The IDP must be obtained from your home country, so you will need to contact the appropriate local agency for instructions.

If you are staying in the United States for an extended period of time, you may also obtain a local US driver's license. You can contact the state department of driver licensing in the location you will be living for information.

In Colorado, contact the Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles at 303-205-5600 or visit their website at http://www.revenue.state.co.us/MV_dir/wrap.asp?incl=dlolist.

In Washington, contact the Washington State Department of Licensing at 360-902-3900 or go to their website at www.dol.wa.gov.

Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

NWRA is a moderate sized company, with about 35 employees in each of the Redmond, WA and Boulder, CO offices. Because of this, there is a close association with all members of the office team. Below are several opportunities to enjoy the “cultural and educational” part of your stay in the U.S.

Monthly Company-Wide Lunch Meetings. We have monthly company-wide business meetings with lunch provided. The small office atmosphere provides a natural opportunity to interact with other American and foreign national employees and learn how our Principal Investigator owned and operated business functions.

Community Organizations for International Visitors. In both the Redmond/Seattle and Boulder areas there are community organizations that exist to serve the international community. NWRA will pay for membership to one organization for each visiting scholar or specialist staying for six months or longer.

Redmond Area

- **Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS).** FIUTS is a community non-profit organization which was established on the University of Washington campus in 1948 for international students and scholars. The founders wanted to create an environment where ideas, issues, and the spirit of internationalism could be fostered. Today FIUTS continues this tradition through programs that stimulate discussion and participation among the community, members, and volunteers. There are many activities that our NWRA Exchange Visitors are eligible to participate in. Membership is \$25 per person, per year (September through August). See www.fiuts.washington.edu for more information.
- **World Affairs Council.** The World Affairs Council is a membership-based organization that creates forums for discussion of critical global issues and provides activities that promote international understanding among its members. It is a member of the National Council for International Visitors. Some of its programs include the Energy and Environment Series, Culture through Cuisine, the monthly Transnational Trivia Night, the Young Professionals International Network and the International Visitor Program. An individual membership is \$60 per year. See www.world-affairs.org to learn more.

Boulder Area

- **Boulder Council for International Visitors (BCIV).** BCIV is a member of the National Council for International Visitors and has been hosting visitors in Boulder since 1962. BCIV is an entirely volunteer organization. The members are part of an international network engaged in the important work of promoting mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and those of other countries. The long term visitor program involves making contact with international visitors who come to Boulder for an extended stay. BCIV plans a monthly potluck and program which has included activities such as jazz music, square dancing, Native American costumes, Ukrainian egg dying, among others. Individual membership is \$15 and the website is www.bciv.org.
- **University of Colorado at Boulder International Coffee Hour.** The University of Colorado hosts an international coffee hour on Fridays from 4 – 5:30 at the University Memorial Center (UMC). For a campus map go to www.colorado.edu/campusmap .

Sports/Arts/Attractions. Both the Boulder and Redmond areas have plenty of options for sports and cultural activities, including several large community festivals throughout the year. The following is a list of resources that might interest you.

Redmond Area

Professional Sports

- Seattle Mariners Baseball- seattle.mariners.mlb.com
- Seattle Seahawks Football - www.seahawks.com
- Seattle Storm Womens basketball - www.wnba.com/storm
- Seattle Thunderbirds Hockey - www.seattlet Thunderbirds.com
- Seattle Sounders Soccer - www.seattlesounders.net

Music/Dance/Arts

- Seattle Symphony - www.seattlesymphony.org/symphony
- Seattle Opera - www.seattleopera.org
- Pacific Northwest Ballet – www.pnb.org

Museums

- Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture - www.washington.edu/burkemuseum
- Henry Art Gallery - www.henryart.org
- Experience Music Project (EMP)/Science Fiction Museum (SFM) - www.empsfm.org
- The Children’s Museum – www.thechildrensmuseum.org
- Seattle Art Museum - www.seattleartmuseum.org
- Seattle Asian Art Museum – www.seattleartmuseum.org/visit/visitSAAM.asp
- Olympic Sculpture Park - www.seattleartmuseum.org/visit/OSP
- The Wing Luke Asian Museum - www.wingluke.org
- Bellevue Arts Museum - www.bellevuearts.org

Attractions

- Woodland Park Zoo - www.zoo.org
- Cougar Mountain Zoological Park - www.cougarmountainzoo.org
- Washington Park Arboretum - depts.washington.edu/wpa
- Center for Urban Horticulture - depts.washington.edu/urbhort
- Seattle Aquarium - www.seattleaquarium.org
- Seattle Center - www.seattlecenter.com
- Pacific Science Center – www.pacsci.org
- Boeing IMAX Theater - www.pacsci.org/imax
- Pike Place Market - www.pikeplacemarket.org
- Waterfront – www.portseattle.org/seaport/waterfront
- Pioneer Square – www.pioneersquare.org
- International District – www.chinatownconnection.com,
www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/seattle/s32.htm
- Wineries - www.winesnw.com/puget2.html
- Breweries/Brewpubs - www.realbeer.com/destinations/seattle/breweries.php

Major Festivals and Events

- Bumbershoot – www.bumbershoot.org
- Northwest Flower and Garden Show – www.gardenshow.com/seattle/
- Northwest Folklife Festival – www.nwfolklife.org
- Seattle Home Show – www.seattlehomeshow.com
- Seattle International Children’s Festival - www.seattleinternational.org
- Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF) – www.seattlefilm.org
- SEAFAIR – www.seafair.com
- Bellevue Arts Museum ArtsFair – www.bellevuearts.org/fair/index.htm
- Bite of Seattle – www.biteofseattle.com/home/default.aspx
- Family Fourth at Lake Union – www.wamufamily4th.org
- FESTAL at Seattle Center – www.seattlecenter.com/events/festivals/festal
- Fremont Fair – www.fremontfair.com
- University District Street Fair - www.udistrictstreetfair.org

Boulder Area

Professional Sports

- Denver Broncos Football - www.denverbroncos.com
- Colorado Rockies Baseball - colorado.rockies.mlb.com
- Denver Nuggets Basketball - www.nba.com/nuggets
- Colorado Avalanche Hockey - avalanche.nhl.com
- Colorado Rapids Soccer - www.coloradorapids.com

Music/Dance/Arts

- Boulder’s Dinner Theatre - theatreinboulder.com
- Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra – www.boulderphil.org

- Boulder Ballet - www.boulderballet.org
- Colorado Ballet (Denver) - www.coloradoballet.org
- Opera Colorado - www.operacolorado.org
- Colorado Symphony Orchestra – www.coloradosymphony.org
- Denver Center for the Performing Arts - www.denvercenter.org
- Rocky Mountain Theater for Kids - theaterforkids.net

Museums

- Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art - www.bmoca.org
- Boulder History Museum – www.boulderhistorymuseum.org
- Leanin’ Tree Museum and Sculpture Garden of Western Art - www.leanintreemuseum.com
- University of Colorado Museum of Natural History - cumuseum.colorado.edu
- Denver Art Museum – www.denverartmuseum.org
- Denver Museum of Nature and Science – www.dmns.org/main
- Museum of Contemporary Art | Denver - www.mcartdenver.org
- Forney Museum of Transportation (Denver) – forneymuseum.org
- Colorado History Museum- www.coloradohistory.org
- Children’s Museum of Denver - www.cmdenver.org

Attractions

- Boulder Falls - www.bouldercolorado.gov
- Boulder County Farmers Market - boulderfarmers.org
- Chautauqua Park & Auditorium - www.chautauqua.com
- Fiske Planetarium and Science Center - fiske.colorado.edu
- U.S. Mint - www.usmint.gov
- Denver Botanic Gardens – www.botanicgardens.org
- Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum – www.wingsmuseum.org
- Colorado Sports Hall of Fame (Denver) – www.coloradosports.org
- The Denver Zoo – www.denverzoo.org
- Downtown Aquarium – www.aquariumrestaurants.com/downtownaquariumdenver
- Mile High Gliding – www.milehighgliding.com
- Colorado State Capitol (Denver) - www.milehighcity.com/capitol
- Colorado Wineries - www.coloradolinks.net/Colorado_Wineries.htm
- Breweries - beerexpedition.com/co/b_boulder.shtml

Major Festivals and Events

- Bolder Boulder – www.bolderboulder.com
- Colorado Shakespeare Festival – www.coloradoshakes.org
- Boulder Bach Festival - www.boulderbachfest.org
- Colorado Music Festival at Chautauqua in Boulder - www.coloradomusicfest.org
- Boulder International Fringe Festival - www.boulderfringe.com
- National Western Stock Show – www.nationalwestern.com/nwss/home/index.asp
- Colorado Garden and Home Show – www.gardeningcolorado.com

- Denver March Powwow – www.denvermarchpowwow.org
- Downtown Denver Arts Festival – www.downtowndenverartsfestival.com

Tax Obligations

Taxation in the U.S.

There are various kinds of taxes in the U.S. and some apply to the federal level, some to the state level and some to the local level.

- **Income tax.** This is a tax on your U.S. income. This is applied to actual wages and it can be applied to other types of income such interest income, scholarships, food or lodging in exchange for services, etc. Everyone is taxed at the federal income level. Some states have income taxes, and some do not.
- **Social Security tax, often called “FICA tax”.** This federal tax provides for living expenses and medical benefits for retired workers. This tax is usually not assessed to J-1 visitors.
- **Sales tax.** Most states will have a sales tax and the percentage of the tax varies from state to state. This tax is added on to the purchase of everything you buy, with some exceptions, such as unprepared food. The sales tax is *not included* in the advertised price of the merchandise.
- **Personal property.** A tax on valuable property such as vehicles.

Things You Should Know About Your Federal Income Tax Return

U.S. tax law is incredibly complex. The information below is intended to be only a guide. We strongly suggest you hire a competent tax professional with experience in alien tax law when it is time to file your U.S. taxes.

- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the government agency that governs federal tax obligations in the U.S.
- The terms “resident” and “non-resident” are defined differently by USCIS and by the IRS. A resident vs. a non-resident under tax code have distinct rules. This can extremely confusing for Exchange Visitors. You may start out as a non-resident and become a resident, *for tax purposes*, while you are here on a J visa.
- The tax rules are different for U.S. citizens and non U.S. citizens. You can’t necessarily file the same tax forms that your U.S. colleagues do.
- All J visitors and their dependents must file an income tax form/s each year. If you received U.S. source income you are required to file Form 1040NR or Form 1040NR-EZ. The deadline for filing your income tax return for the previous year is April 15th. Complete and include Form 8843.
- J-2 dependents, regardless of age, are expected to file Form 8843 each year, even if they have no U.S. source income.
- Be sure to check IRS Publication 901 “US Tax Treaties” for any tax treaties that exist between the U.S. and your country.
- Non-resident aliens are generally exempt from taxation on interest income from banks. (See IRS Publication 519.) If you open an account with a U.S. bank, submit Form W-

8BEN rather than a W-9. This will put them on notice that you are a non-resident alien and your interest income is not reportable to the IRS.

- J-1 non-resident aliens are exempt from U.S. Social Security and Medicare taxes, if they are performing work related to their visa program. This tax exemption does not apply to J-2 dependents who are authorized to work in the U.S.

Some IRS Tax Documents You May Find Helpful

(see <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>)

- Publication 519: U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens
- Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties
- Form 8843 Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition. This form must be completed and returned with the 1040 NR or 1040NR EZ.
- Form 1040NR: U.S. Non Resident Alien Income Tax Return
- Form 1040NR Instructions
- Form 1040 NR EZ: U.S Income Tax Return for Certain Nonresident Aliens with No Dependents
- Form 1040NR EZ Instructions

Call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 for general tax information.

Rules for Maintaining Your J-1 Status

Your Responsibility

It is your responsibility to understand the regulations of the J Visa program and to comply with them. Below are some points to review that will help you maintain your visa status. If you have any questions, contact your RO right away.

Arriving in the U.S.

You and your dependents must arrive in the U.S. within the 30-day period preceding your program start date on your DS-2019.

Check in with Your Responsible Officer

As soon as possible after arriving in the United States, you must check in with your Responsible Officer. Please check in within 3 days of arriving in the States. We are required to verify your status within the first 30 days. Failure to do so will cause your J visa program to be canceled.

Maintain Your Medical Insurance

The U.S. Government requires you to keep your medical insurance, as outlined by the J Visa Program, in place at all times while you are under J status. Failure to do so is grounds for termination of your J status.

Change of Address and Phone Number

You must report the address of your residence in the U.S., and your local phone number to your RO. If your address or phone number changes you must report it to the RO within 10 days. Failure to do so is a violation of J Program regulations and may jeopardize your status as a J visitor.

DS-2019

This document must remain current during your entire stay. If you think you will be staying in the U.S. on a J visa beyond the current expiration date of your DS-2019, you must request an extension from your RO, preferably several months in advance. Keep all of your DS-2019's permanently.

Passports

Your passport and your dependents' passports must remain current at all times. If your passport is going to expire while you are in the U.S., or if it is lost and needs to be replaced, contact your country's consulate in the U.S. for instructions.

Visas

You need a valid visa to enter the U.S. Your visa may expire while you are in the U.S. if it is not stamped "duration of stay." This is not a problem unless you plan to leave and re-enter the U.S. while under J status. If you leave and your visa is expired, you will have to receive a new visa from a U.S. consulate before returning. Re-entry is not guaranteed. If you are making a short visit (less than 30 days) to Canada, Mexico, and some Caribbean islands, you may qualify for an automatic extension of visa validity, which means you do not have to apply at the consulate. Foreign nationals from some countries are not eligible for an automatic extension. See the Department of State website for more information (<http://travel.state.gov/>).

Travel Outside the U.S.

If you plan to travel outside the U.S. during your J visa stay, your DS-2019 must be endorsed for travel by your RO. If you are leaving for more than just a few days, your dependents should travel with you; their eligibility to be in the U.S. is tied to you residing here under J-1 status. Always carry all your documents with you when you travel as they will likely be required upon re-entry. This includes your passport, all your DS-2019's, your I-94, visa stamp, documentation

showing your funding, and marriage and birth certificates for your dependents if they are accompanying you. Also refer to the section above on Visas.

Employment

J-1 Employment

A J-1 Visitor will receive compensation for the employment shown on the DS-2019 form. *Other employment is not allowed.* A Research Scholar may give an occasional lecture or presentation relative to their work under the J visa, for which they receive an honorarium or other form of payment, however, *advance approval from the RO is required.* Failure to receive approval and an amended DS-2019 before accepting an honorarium or other type of payment is an infraction of Program regulations. If you have accepted a payment for services without approval, speak to your RO right away; often a corrected DS-2019 may be issued and the situation resolved. All services performed for payment must be related to the objectives of your program, be incidental to your primary program objectives, and not delay the completion date of your program. These types of compensation are authorized on a case by case basis by your RO. Any payment you receive for incidental work must be paid to you as an independent contractor.

An exchange visitor who engages in unauthorized employment shall be deemed to be in violation of his or her program status and is subject to termination as a participant in an exchange visitor program.

J-2 Employment

J-2 dependents may apply for work status from USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services), on Form I-765. Authorization can take 90 days or longer to process. Once qualified, J-2's can work in any employment, either full-time or part-time, but their work status is only valid for as long as the J-1 maintains status. J-2 dependents will not be approved for work status if their income is required to support the J-1.

Transferring to Another Sponsor

The transfer of a participant from one program (sponsor) to another may be allowed at the discretion of the RO and must be within the same J category. The RO of the program to which the participant seeks to transfer is required to verify the participant's visa status and eligibility, issue an amended Form DS-2019 reflecting the transfer, obtain the release of the participant from the current RO, who indicates approval of the transfer by completing and signing block 8 of the new DS-2019. A transfer does not extend the maximum duration of the program.

Program Extension

The responsible officer has the discretion to extend a participant's program to its maximum regulatory duration (five years for the Research Scholar, one year for the Specialist and six months for the Short Term Scholar). The duration of your stay in the United States (and hence the duration of time listed on your DS-2019) will be determined based on NWRA's consultation

with the PI requesting the exchange and assessment of the funding available to the contract or project on which you will be working.

A program may be extended up to the maximum duration if additional research funding has been received and the EV's expertise is desired by the Principal Investigator on the contract. An extension would only occur if the original duration of the EV's stay was less than the maximum allowed.

If the program is extended, an amended Form DS-2019 will be issued to the participant to reflect the extension. Extensions beyond the maximum program duration are not permitted for the Specialist, Short-term Scholar and the Research Scholar J Visa categories.

Change of Category

Any change of category must be clearly consistent with and closely related to the participant's original exchange objective, and necessary due to unusual or exceptional circumstances. A change of category is *very difficult* to obtain. Participants should address all inquiries regarding change of category to the Responsible Officer of their programs. The Responsible Officer submits a written request with supporting justification for the change to the Department of State on behalf of the participant. A nonrefundable fee is payable to the US Department of State to process the change.

If the Department grants the request, the Responsible Officer issues a new Form DS-2019 that reflects the change. If the request is denied, the participant is expected to return home no later than 30 days from the date of the Department's notice or the program's end date indicated on the Form DS-2019, whichever is later.

Termination

Participants are subject to the Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program regulations, and to the rules specified by their sponsors. Participants found to be in violation of program regulations and/or sponsors' rules may be terminated from the program.

Other grounds for termination include, but are not limited to 1) failure to pursue the exchange activities for which the participant was admitted to the United States; 2) inability to continue the program; 3) willful failure to maintain insurance coverage as required under 22 CFR 62.14; and 4) unauthorized employment.

Participants who withdraw or are terminated from their exchange programs are expected to leave the United States immediately.

30-Day Grace Period

The J-1 and dependents have 30 days after the end of their program to leave the United States. You may not work for compensation during this 30 day grace period.

U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program

If you wish to contact the Exchange Visitor Program you may reach them at jvisas@state.gov or

Office of Exchange Coordination & Designation
Exchange Visitor Program, Department of State
ECA/EC/AG-SA-44, Room 732
301 4th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20547
Telephone: 202-203-5096
Fax: 202-203-5087

Disclaimer

Although we attempt to make sure this information is accurate and up-to-date we cannot guarantee its completeness or accuracy. Immigration laws are constantly changing. The information in this packet is not intended to create an attorney/client relationship nor should it be construed as legal advice. U.S. immigration laws are extremely complex. If you have specific questions about your situation contact the Responsible Officer or an immigration attorney.

Appendix A: Foreign Workers And Social Security Numbers

Excerpts from SSA Publication No. 05-10107

Are you temporarily in the United States to work? If you are, your employer will ask for your Social Security number. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security numbers can be assigned to foreign workers who are authorized to work in the United States.

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What do I have to do to work in the United States?

How do I apply for a Social Security number and card?

Immigration status

Work eligibility

Age

Identity

How long will it take to get a Social Security number?

Do I need to have my number before I start working?

Contacting Social Security

What do I have to do to work in the United States?

First, you must have documents from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing your U.S. immigration status and eligibility to work while in the United States. Then, you should apply for a Social Security number and card from the Social Security Administration.

How do I apply for a Social Security number and card?

Applying for a Social Security number and card is free. To apply for a Social Security number:

- Complete an [Application For A Social Security Card](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.pdf) (Form SS-5) at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>; and
- Show us original documents proving your:
 - Immigration status;
 - Work eligibility;
 - Age; and
 - Identity.
- Take your completed application and original documents to your local Social Security office.

Immigration status

To prove your U.S. immigration status, you must show us the current U.S. immigration document, I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record*, issued to you when you arrived in the United States. If you are an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show us your I-20, *Certificate of Eligibility for*

Nonimmigrant Student Status. If you are a J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor, you must show us your DS-2019, *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status.*

Work eligibility

For most foreign workers, we only need to see your I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record.* Some foreign workers also must show their work permits from DHS (I-766 or I-688B). International students must present further documentation. For more information, see *International Students and Social Security Numbers* (Publication No. 05-10181).

Age

You must present your birth certificate if you have it or can easily obtain it. If not, we can consider other documents, such as your passport or a document issued by DHS, to prove your age.

Identity

Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable immigration documents include your:

- Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- Work permit card from DHS (I-766 or I-688B).

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We also cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, we may use your DHS work permit as proof of both work eligibility and identity. ***However, you must provide at least two separate documents.***

How long will it take to get a Social Security number?

We must verify your documents with DHS before we assign a Social Security number to you. We will issue your Social Security number and mail your card after receiving the verification from DHS. Most of the time, we can verify your documents quickly with DHS online. If your documents cannot be verified online, it may take DHS several weeks to respond to our request. We are working closely with DHS to reduce these delays.

Do I need to have my number before I start working?

We do not require you to have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service requires employers to report wages using a Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from us stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the U. S.

Employers can find more information at www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm

Contacting Social Security

Our website is a valuable resource for information about all of Social Security's programs. There are a number of things you can do online.

In addition to using our website, you can call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213**. We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. (You can use our automated response system to tell us a new address or request a replacement Medicare card.) If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.

Local Social Security Offices

These numbers and hours are common for all SSN offices.

Toll-Free 1-800-772-1213

TTY 1-800-325-0778

M-F 9 am – 4 pm

Boulder Social Security Office

Suite 101

4949 Pearl East Circle

Boulder, CO 80301

Bellevue Social Security Office:

Suite 301 Park Plaza

505 106th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

Appendix B: Delays in Issuing SSNs to Aliens by the Social Security Administration

Sometimes aliens experience significant delays in obtaining social security numbers. The consequences of these delays are discussed below.

There is no federal law administered by any federal agency which prohibits the hiring of a person based solely on the fact that the person does not have a Social Security Number (SSN). Similarly, there is no federal law which prohibits the making of a payment to a person based solely on the fact that the person does not have an SSN.

However, there are federal laws and regulations which require the reporting of a payee's TIN (Taxpayer Identification Number--SSN or ITIN) on federal information returns and payee statements such as forms W-2, 1099, 1042-S, etc. In addition, federal regulations require (with a few exceptions) that all tax treaty claims made on Forms 8233, W-8BEN, or W-9 be accompanied by the beneficial owner's TIN.

The IRS is quite aware of the Social Security Administration's procedures effective since 09-30-2002 about not issuing an SSN to any alien for whom it cannot confirm his identity and immigration status from the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services—formerly the INS). In addition, the IRS is quite aware of the potential delays in securing an SSN which these procedures may cause some aliens. Furthermore, in the situation in which an alien is work-authorized under the immigration law and has met the Social Security Administration's evidence requirements for an SSN, but who is experiencing delays in securing an SSN caused by the SSA's procedures, the IRS will not generally issue an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) to such an alien.

With respect to IRS penalties related to the payer's failure to furnish a payee TIN on an information return and on a payee statement, the fact that the payer does not have a payee TIN to report solely because the SSA is delaying an issuance of an SSN, or cannot issue an SSN, to a work-authorized alien because of its procedures, will cause the IRS to be quite favorable toward considering this situation one in which "reasonable cause" exists for not asserting such penalties. The payer should keep documentation to show that his failure to supply a payee TIN is caused solely by the SSA's procedures for issuing SSN's to aliens.

Any withholding agent (with certain exceptions) who receives a Form 8233, W-8BEN, or W-9 without a payee TIN for the purpose of claiming a tax treaty benefit is not allowed to grant such tax treaty benefit until he receives a proper Form 8233, W-8BEN, or W-9 which does report the payee's TIN. However, a form 8233 or W-8BEN without a payee TIN is still valid for the purpose of declaring that the payee is a foreign person, subject to the withholding and reporting rules which apply to payments made to foreign persons.

The IRS cannot speak to the issue of potential penalties which could be imposed by other federal, state, or local agencies for the failure of an employer or payer to report a payee's TIN on any required documents, except to note that the filing of the immigration Form I-9 without an

SSN does not constitute grounds, in and of itself, to reject the validity of the Form I-9. If an alien employee can prove his work-eligibility with documents listed on Form I-9 other than a U.S. social security card, then the alien's Form I-9, even though submitted without an SSN, is valid under the immigration law.

Appendix C: New Rules for Getting a Social Security Number and Card

From the Social Security website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10120.html>
SSA Publication No. 05-10120, November 2008

Recent provisions in law have changed the rules for assigning a Social Security number and issuing a Social Security card. This fact sheet gives the most up-to-date information available on the documents needed to apply for a Social Security number and card.

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents.

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Proof of citizenship and identity
Documents for a name change
Verification of birth records
Limits to replacement cards
Contacting Social Security

Proof of citizenship and identity

To get a Social Security number or a replacement card, you must complete an application and prove your U.S. citizenship or immigration status, age and identity. For a replacement card, proof of your U.S. citizenship and age are not required if they are already in our records. Under the new law, only certain documents can be accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include your U.S. birth certificate, a U.S. passport, a Certificate of Naturalization or a Certificate of Citizenship. If you are not a U.S. citizen, different rules apply for proving your immigration status, and those rules have not changed.

Also under the new law, only certain documents can be accepted as proof of identity. An acceptable document must show your name, identifying information about you and preferably a recent photograph.

If you are a U.S. citizen, Social Security must see your:

- * U.S. driver's license;
- * State-issued nondriver identity card; or
- * U.S. passport.

If you do not have these specific documents or cannot get a replacement for them within 10 days, we will ask to see other documents, including:

- * Employee ID card;
- * School ID card;
- * Health insurance card (not a Medicare card); or
- * U.S. military ID card.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, Social Security must see your current U.S. immigration documents.

Acceptable documents from the Department of Homeland Security include your:

- * Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- * I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- * Work permit card (I-766 or I-688B).

Documents for a name change

If you legally change your name because of marriage, divorce, court order or any other reason, you need to tell Social Security so that you can get a corrected card. If you are working, also tell your employer. If you do not tell us when your name changes, it may:

- * Delay your tax refund; and
- * Prevent your wages from being posted correctly to your Social Security record, which may lower the amount of your future Social Security benefits.

If you need to change your name on your Social Security card, you must show us a recently issued document as proof of your legal name change. Documents Social Security may accept to prove a legal name change include:

- * Marriage document;
- * Divorce decree;
- * Certificate of Naturalization showing a new name; or
- * Court order for a name change.

If the document you provide as evidence of a legal name change does not give us enough information to identify you in our records or if you legally changed your name more than two years ago, you must provide Social Security with additional documentation.

Marriage, divorce or annulment: In addition to showing us a legal document proving your marriage, divorce or annulment, you must provide an identity document. That document must show your old name, as well as other identifying information or a recent photograph. (We can accept an expired document as evidence of your old name.)

Adoption, naturalization or other name change: In addition to showing us a legal document citing your new name, such as a court order, adoption decree or Certificate of Naturalization, you must provide us with two identity documents, including:

- * One identity document in your old name (which can be expired); and
- * One identity document in your new legal name, which must be current (unexpired).

Both of these documents must show identifying information or a recent photograph.

Citizenship: Also, if you are a U.S. citizen born outside the United States and our records do not show you are a citizen, you will need to provide proof of your U.S. citizenship. If you are not a U.S. citizen, Social Security will ask to see your current immigration documents.

Your new card will have the same number as your previous card, but will show your new name.

Verification of birth records

Social Security must verify a birth record for all U.S.-born applicants of any age who apply for an original Social Security number. An exception is made when a parent applies for a baby's Social Security number at the hospital when the baby is born.

Social Security must also verify a birth record for U.S.-born individuals who ask to correct the date of birth on our records. To verify a birth record, Social Security will contact the office that issued it.

NOTE: For Social Security purposes, "U.S.-born" means a person born in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Limits to replacement cards

You can replace your Social Security card for free if it is lost or stolen. However, you may not need to get a replacement card. Knowing your Social Security number is what is important. You are limited to three replacement cards in a year and 10 during your lifetime. Legal name changes and changes in noncitizen status that require card updates may not count toward these limits. Also, you may not be affected by these limits if you can prove you need the card to prevent a significant hardship.

Contacting Social Security

Our website is a valuable resource for information about all of Social Security's programs. There are a number of things you can do online.

In addition to using our website, you can call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. (You can use our automated response system to tell us a new address or request a replacement Medicare card.) If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.