

Dear International Invitee,

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is sharing the following information for international invitees seeking entry into Canada to attend an event registered with IRCC.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the information below before submitting an application to IRCC.

Application Types

Most foreign nationals need a temporary resident visa (TRV) or an Electronic Travel Authorization to travel to Canada. To find out if you need a TRV or eTA to travel to Canada, see: [Find out if you need a visa to travel to Canada](#).

Submit an Application

For more information about the TRV and eTA application processes, see: [Visit Canada](#).

Submit a TRV Application

If you need a visa, apply online through the IRCC Secure Network.

IRCC Secure Network
<p>You are invited to apply through the IRCC Secure Network because you meet at least one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The organizer of your event is located outside Canada without a Canadian address.<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are attending an event hosted by the Government of Canada and therefore qualify for fee exemptions.
How to Apply
<p>1. Apply for your visitor visa (IMM 5257) through your IRCC secure account.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: If you are attending an event hosted by the Government of Canada and qualify for fee exemptions, select 'No, I am exempt from paying fees for this application' when asked if you are fee exempt.</p> <p>You will be prompted to upload proof of how you meet this exemption at the document upload page. The 'proof' you must upload is the letter of invitation and, if applicable, the accreditation pass or visa assistance letter received from your event organizer containing the special event code. You must still demonstrate you meet the requirements to obtain a visa and provide biometrics (if applicable), but you will not be charged any fees.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: Tag your visa application (Form IMM 5257) with the special event code. In the 'Details of Visit to Canada' section, select: 'Other.' For question '1a) Purpose of my visit,' enter the special event code into the free text box in '1b) Other'.</p> <p>2. Give your fingerprints and photo (biometrics).</p> <p>3. Send your passport to IRCC through a Visa Application Centre (VAC) (if your application is approved). This may be done in person or through mail or courier. Note that postal delivery may increase the time it takes to retrieve your passport.</p>

Need Help?

Refer to the [guide](#) for information on how to complete your application (IMM 5257).

For further assistance, see the [Help Centre](#) or complete the [web form](#).

Paper Application (IMM 5257)

You are invited to submit a paper application **only** if you meet one of the following criteria:

- ☒ You cannot apply online because of a disability.
- ☒ You are travelling with an identity or travel document that was issued to a refugee, a stateless person, or a non-citizen.

How to Apply

1. Read the [instruction guide](#) for details on how to apply by paper.
2. Select your country/territory from the [drop down menu](#) for instructions on how to prepare and submit your application to your local visa office.

Submit an eTA Application

If you need an eTA, apply on the official [Government of Canada website](#).

How to Apply

1. Use the [online form](#) to apply for your eTA.
2. Pay the appropriate fee.
3. Receive an email from IRCC about your eTA application.
4. If there are any issues with your application, you will receive an email from IRCC requesting additional information.

Need Help?

Refer to the guides in the '[Help with the form or other eTA questions](#)' drop down for information on how to complete your eTA application.

For further assistance, use the [eTA Help Guide](#), or see the [Help Centre](#).

Special Event Codes

Events registered with IRCC are issued a unique special event code to help track and monitor visa processing. Applicants **should** tag their applications with the event's special event code, which can be found in the letter of invitation provided by the event organizer.

TRV applications are considered on a case-by-case basis based on the information presented by the applicant. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate they meet the requirements for a TRV. While a special event code has been assigned to the event, it **does not offer** any advantage to the applicant in terms of a positive visa outcome. The applicant must meet all eligibility criteria to receive a visa.

Visa Processing Times

[Processing times for visa applications](#) vary depending on the visa office and the time of the year. Participants are encouraged to check [processing times](#) to find out how long it takes to process **most** applications. Each application is different and takes a different amount of time to process. We can give an estimate, based on the application **type**.

Once an individual has applied, they can check their application status by visiting: [Check your application status – Immigration and citizenship - Canada.ca](#)

Participants are encouraged to apply **as early as possible** ahead of their departure date to ensure they receive the visa in time for the start of the event.

Biometrics

Individuals applying for a visitor visa, study or work permit (except U.S. nationals), or permanent residence may need to give biometrics (fingerprints and a photo). If you need to provide biometrics, submit them as soon as possible once you receive your Biometrics Invitation Letter (BIL). **You must give your biometrics before IRCC can start to process your application.**

For information on whether or not you must provide biometrics, please refer to our [fast facts about Biometrics](#).

It is important that international invitees are familiar with the TRV and eTA application processes. Understanding the different processes will contribute to ensuring that invitees to events in Canada have a smooth application experience. Thank you for reading the abovementioned messages.

Sincerely,

Special Events Unit
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada