

## *Applying for a Visa in the UK to come to Stagedoor*

Applying for a Visa to the United States has become an extremely complicated process, but with this cheat sheet, you should be able to find all of the information you need...but remember, the process is complicated, so start as early as you can, collect as much information as you can and be organized.

To give you a very brief overview of how Visa's work, We at Stagedoor employ you, but in order to obtain a visa for you, we must apply to have you SPONSORED to come over and work for us. The sponsoring agent we use is the YMCA's ICCP (International Camp Counselor Program). No matter what you are assigned to do at camp, you will be entering the states as a CAMP COUNSELLOR. That is what you need to put on all your forms, and respond when asked by the visa office and by immigration when you enter the US. The Visa you are being sponsored for is a **J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR VISA**.

ICCP will send you a Fed Ex packet containing a DS-2019 form, as well as a letter of recommendation to the visa office, a brochure, travel insurance information and some other information on how to apply for your visa. These documents are **NOT** your visa, just a form that *sponsors* you and allows you to *apply* for a visa from the US department of immigration.

You must now do all the work... here is a brief over view of what needs to happen before you make it to camp.

- The first step is obviously applying for a job at Stagedoor – this you have done. Along with your application to Stagedoor, you should have also had to supply a [police record](#) (contact your local police office if you have not – it will take about a month!) and [Visa Sponsorship Application Form](#). This is what we send to ICCP to get *sponsorship* for you. And Health Form. If you have not yet sent the Police Record or Health Form you will need to do so as soon as you can get them.
- When your FED EX packet returns, this is when the real fun begins!
- You will need to apply to the US Embassy in London for your Visa.
- For all the information you need, you can look at the website for the embassy [www.usembassey.org.uk](http://www.usembassey.org.uk)
- Once you have logged on, click on > **Visas**, then > **Non immigrant Visas**.
- From here you will need to go back and forth to various [Read More...](#) pages. But First click on [Applying for a Visa](#). Remember, you are now applying for a **J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa**, when you see the number of visa's there are, you will understand why I have highlighted this!!! You should eventually come to the following page (I have put a few notes along side the information in green). The hyperlink is listed at the top, so if you want to by pass all the above information, you can go straight here, but you may need to jump back a few spaces if things are not clear, so follow the above links the first time.

## Applying for a Visa

Information for travelers to the United States  
Frequently Asked Questions

All J-1 visa applicants, even children and babies listed in parents' passports are required to:

[Complete the visa application form DS-156.](#) **(Complete this form on line, and then print it out with its barcode, this printed form now becomes your Visa Application Form)**

[Complete a Contact Information and Work History Form DS-158;](#)

**Furnish the DS-2019 - Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status.** [Read more....](#) **(This is document you got from ICCP)**

**Pay a visa application fee: Every visa applicant is required to pay a visa application processing fee of (£60.00 in 2005). Payment must be made at a bank using the Embassy supplied paying-in slip. This is a processing fee not part of the \$500 cost of the visa that Stagedoor pays.** [Read more...](#) **(You can ask for a pay in slip when you phone for an interview)**

**Present a passport or other travel document valid for at least six months beyond the holder's period of stay in the United States with at least one blank page - the six-month requirement does not apply to United Kingdom passports;** [Read more...](#)

**Provide one passport type photograph which meets State Department regulations; (You can't just use a normal passport photo – check with the requirements and who will do it, many photo shops do them now, including Snappy Snapps in the high street)**

**Present evidence of**

- **Sufficient funds to cover all expenses including tuition while in the United States. If the terms of the exchange visitor grant will cover the living expenses and other costs, the fully completed DS-2019 will be sufficient;**
- **and Evidence to show that the applicant has a residence abroad to which he/she intends to return at the end of the stay in the United States. This is generally established by evidence of family, professional, property, employment or other ties and commitments to some country other than the United States sufficient to cause the applicant to return there at the conclusion of his/her stay; (Paperwork – have as much evidence as you can find that you will be returning at the end of the contract, ask an employer to offer you a job on your return – get it in writing on letter head paper, show any rent slips, overdraft, student debt, anything that would necessitate you returning to UK. Also show that you have money in the bank to cover flight and time in the US, show a bank statement)**

J-1 visa applicants with DS-2019 forms issued on or after September 1, 2004 will be required to furnish a receipt showing payment of the SEVIS fee. [Read more.....](#)

**Issuance fees: Nationals of certain countries are required to pay an issuance fee in order for an approved visa to be issued. No fee is charged for the issuance of a J visa to a British citizen passport holder.** [Read more...](#)

**Additional processing requirements and information for:**

- [males aged 16 to 45](#) **(All males must fill out this form as well)**
- nationals of North Korea, Cuba, Iran, Libya, Syria & Sudan
- nationals of China, Northern Cyprus, Russia, Somalia & Vietnam
- **applicants who have a criminal conviction, are HIV positive, have a medical ineligibility, have been denied entry into or deported from the United States**
- temporary residents of the United Kingdom **(If you are on a different passport and living in UK – double the amount of paper work you supply, beg borrow and steal anything that will tie you to UK)**

**Do you have a valid J-1 visa? If you have a valid J-1 visa you may continue to use it provided you are going to participate in the same exchange visitor program for which your visa was originally issued, you will arrive in the United States before the expiration date shown on your visa and you will carry with you a valid IAP-66 or DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status, showing the same exchange visitor program number as the one shown on the visa. If all three conditions are not met, you will require a new J-1 visa. (DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU)**

**What do I do next? I**

**Applicants aged 14 to 79 are required to schedule an appointment for an interview. [Read more....](#) (the number is 09055 444 546 – it will take anything from 2-6 weeks to get an interview, so call early)**

**Applicants under the age of 14 and those 80 and over may be eligible to apply for a visa by mail. [Read more....](#)**

**If you reside in Northern Ireland, please [follow this link](#) for the website of the U.S. Consulate General, Belfast.**

**Important Notice: Visa processing has changed since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which means that visa applications, in some instances, take longer to process to conclusion than has been customary. We recommend that individuals apply for visas well in advance of their proposed date of travel and do not make final travel plans until the visa has been issued and they are in receipt of their passport and visa. [Read more...](#)**

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Confused yet? All I can say is that you need to be organized. Take time to go through the website and read all of the additions, some of it does not make sense, sometimes it contradicts itself, but it is better to be over prepared when you finally turn up for your – Visa Interview.

So paperwork all done, and you have called the number to arrange an interview – 09055 444 546. This call costs about 1.30 a minute, so get all the information you need from the website first.

\*\*\* Turn up a few minutes early for the interview time to get in line – they schedule about 100-200 every half an hour, so you will wait! You will be searched twice and go through a metal detector on your way in, treat it like getting on a plane, no sharp objects in your bag etc etc.

At the front counter, you will sign up for a courier service to return your passport (which you should have brought with you). You must pay cash for this service, bring it with you or they will turn you away. Last year it was GBP 10.00, but check the website before you go to the embassy. This will need

to be signed for during the day, so they may ask you for a place of work – if your workplace does not know you are applying for a visa send it somewhere that someone can sign for it.

Once inside, you will queue for a number, then wait until you are called to a window. Bring a book!

At the window, the visa officer will ask you a number of question. This process can take as little as 30 seconds or up to 30 minutes in a separate room. What ever happens, be honest, answer every question without going into too much detail, and relax, they are just doing their job. Remember, you are going out as a camp counselor regardless of your specific job area. *We are a summer camp for children...yes we do theatre and very well; we hire theatre professionals to mount our shows, but as we state in the interviews and contract, all Stagedoor employees must have as their number one priority the safety, security and well being of every camper. That is the primary function of a camp counselor in the USA, so no matter what level of daily contact you may have with the campers we list all program staff (artistic, production, etc) as camp counselors and require you to attend a comprehensive orientation at the beginning of the summer.*

About a week or so later, your passport will be returned to you and you are ready to fly –

Is this the end of it???? 

\*\*\* Afraid not, you have one final step, **Customs and Immigration** when you arrive in the US. They have final say on letting you in or not, and the reason I am going into so much detail on this form, is that we have had people turned back at the airport before. A seven hour flight to the US, followed by any number of hours in a small concrete room and a then another flight back to UK is not fun.

\*\*\* So when you get to immigration, have **all of the forms** you have been given, from both the **ICCP** and the **Embassy**, and the **White Non-Immigrant Visa Landing Card** and the **Customs Declaration** you were given on the plane (make sure you have your passport, a pen and the Stagedoor address handy on the plane, you need to fill out the above forms before you land – when filling out these forms, your country of origin is UK or United Kingdom). You will have your index fingerprints scanned and a camera attached to a computer will take your photo.

You are in the US to be ... **A Camp Counselor at Stagedoor Manor...unless working in the kitchen or maintenance and have provided a valid Student ID.**

Your address will be:                   Stagedoor Manor  
  116 Karmel Rd  
  Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759  
Contact number:                       1 845 434 4290

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**i** If you have any questions, worries, need for advice, feel free to contact Chris via the Stagedoor website, or for more local information...

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Jamie lives in UK.