

# Executive Summary

DC in 2021 understands that some concerns have been expressed regarding potential challenges Worldcon members may have in traveling to Washington, DC for a Worldcon. To ameliorate these concerns, we analyzed the attending membership and day pass data for the three most recent World Science Fiction Conventions (Worldcons) (2017, 2018 and 2019). Our key conclusions are:

1. Thirty-eight (38) countries participate in a Visa Waiver Program with the United States. As 77% to 90% of Worldcon members are from one of these 38 countries they would not need a visa to attend Worldcon in the United States.
2. Of the remaining Worldcon members who need to apply for a visa, our analysis indicates that at least 85% of the applications will be approved. Since the visa approval data that is available is based on all applications under this visa class for each year and not specific to Worldcon membership, we anticipate this rate to be significantly higher.

DC in 2021 is committed to supporting our members in this area by:

- Having a form for DC in 2021 members to request a visa support letter available beginning January 1, 2020.
- Refunding memberships upon request for those DC in 2021 members who seek a visa support letter from us and are denied a visa.

Our complete conclusions and data analysis are in the rest of this document along with links to the relevant publicly-available information on this topic.

# Introduction

The DC in 2021 Worldcon bid has analyzed the attending membership and day pass data for the most recent World Science Fiction Conventions (Worldcons) in an effort to demonstrate the overall ease that potential attendees will experience traveling to Washington for a DC in 2021 Worldcon. For our analysis, we assumed the country that the attendee noted as their country of residence is the country of issuance of their passport.

Our dataset included the following:

- [Worldcon 75](#) - 2017 - Helsinki, Finland
- Worldcon 76 in San José - 2018 - San José, California, USA (see Appendix A)
- [Dublin 2019: An Irish Worldcon](#) – 2019 - Dublin, Ireland (data as of July 9, 2019)

# Visa Waiver Program

The [Visa Waiver Program \(VWP\)](#) allows citizens or nationals of the following countries to travel to the United States without a visa for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less:

Andorra	Hungary	Norway
Australia	Iceland	Portugal
Austria	Ireland	San Marino
Belgium	Italy	Singapore
Brunei	Japan	Slovakia
Chile	Latvia	Slovenia
Czech Republic	Liechtenstein	South Korea
Denmark	Lithuania	Spain
Estonia	Luxembourg	Sweden
Finland	Malta	Switzerland
France	Monaco	Taiwan*
Germany	Netherlands	United Kingdom**
Greece	New Zealand	

\* With respect to all references to “country” or “countries” on this page, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that “[w]henver the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan.” 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1). Accordingly, all references to “country” or “countries” in the Visa Waiver Program authorizing legislation, Section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1187, are read to include Taiwan. This is consistent with the United States’ one-China policy, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979

\*\*To be eligible to travel under the VWP, British citizens must have the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

Worldcon attendees who are citizens or nationals of these countries need to file for an [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) approval. This application can be filed from when your travel plans are finalized to no later than 72 hours before your travel begins. The information that is needed to make an ESTA application is: (1) valid passport from a Visa Waiver Program country; (2) valid credit card (MasterCard, VISA, American Express, and

Discover (JCB, Diners Club)) or PayPal to pay the US \$14 per application; (c) applicant's contact information; and (d) applicant's most recent employment information, if applicable. An ESTA approval is valid for two years.

Analyzing the attendance records from the sample Worldcons, the chart below shows the number of attendees from VWP-eligible countries:

Worldcon Attendees from VWP-eligible Countries			
	<b>Worldcon 75</b>	<b>Worldcon 76</b>	<b>Dublin 2019</b>
Andorra	0	0	0
Australia	99	27	142
Austria	12	0	10
Belgium	23	1	31
Bermuda+	0	1	0
Brunei	0	0	0
Canada+	98	142	236
Chile	0	0	0
Czech Republic	11	0	5
Denmark	38	1	33
Estonia	37	0	10
Finland	2866	16	357
France	62	4	77
Germany	169	14	198
Greece	4	0	1
Hungary	5	1	2
Iceland	9	0	4
Ireland	50	8	438
Italy	23	1	30
Japan	38	18	43
Latvia	15	0	1
Liechtenstein	0	0	0
Lithuania	4	0	0
Luxembourg	12	0	13
Malta	3	0	4
Monaco	0	0	0
Netherlands	54	3	0
New Zealand	11	16	27
Norway	66	2	62
Portugal	3	0	8
San Marino	0	0	0
Singapore	8	5	7

Worldcon Attendees from VWP-eligible Countries			
	Worldcon 75	Worldcon 76	Dublin 2019
Slovakia	1	0	0
Slovenia	3	3	2
South Korea	3	5	2
Spain	11	0	39
Sweden	241	14	147
Switzerland	21	5	33
Taiwan	2	2	4
United Kingdom	714	63	1492
Total convention attendance	7,146	6,091	5,381
Total US attendance	1,029	5,658	1,571
Total non-US attendance	6,117	433	3,810
Total from VWP-eligible countries	4,716	352	3,458
<b>Worldcon attendees able to travel to the US under ESTA</b>	<b>77.10%</b>	<b>81.29%</b>	<b>90.76%</b>

+ Canada and Bermuda are included in this chart because travelers to the US from these countries do not generally need [nonimmigrant visas](#).

An [FAQ](#) about the VWP program is available. Under law passed in 2015, there are now exceptions to the VWP for nationals of VWP countries who have traveled to or been present in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, or Yemen after March 1, 2011 or who are also nationals of Iraq, Syria, Iran, or Sudan. Details are available within the [FAQ](#).

## B1/B2 Visas

If a Worldcon attendee needs to apply for a visa to travel to the United States, it can be either the [B1 or B2 visa](#), which covers visits of 180 days or less for either business or vacation/holiday. If selected, DC in 2021 Worldcon will have a system for issuing visa invitation letters to registered members in place no later than January 1, 2020. While use of this letter does not guarantee the issuance of a visa, DC in 2021 will support needed visa applications in this way. DC in 2021 will refund memberships upon request for those DC in 2021 members who seek a visa support letter from us and are denied a visa.

To apply for a US visa, go to [this link](#).

DC in 2021 analyzed the visa approval rates for the countries where Worldcon attendees from our data sample have traveled from that will require a visa application. A chart showing the acceptance rates of those B1/B2 visas, as well as the average number of affected attendees, is below:

Country	Avg. Annual Attendees	<a href="#">2018</a>	<a href="#">2017</a>	<a href="#">2016</a>	<a href="#">2015</a>
Bahamas	1	87.49%	90.68%	90.65%	92.60%
Brazil	3	87.27%	87.66%	83.30%	94.64%
Bulgaria	4	88.68%	85.03%	83.14%	82.74%
China	54	83.00%	85.43%	87.65%	89.97%
Croatia	9	94.08%	94.90%	93.24%	94.71%
Georgia	3	36.65%	38.91%	37.18%	49.42%
Hong Kong	2	95.75%	96.55%	95.39%	95.64%
India	1	73.93%	76.71%	73.98%	76.22%
Iraq	1	43.05%	39.29%	48.29%	47.18%
Israel	34	94.90%	95.12%	95.91%	96.15%
Malaysia	2	95.06%	96.07%	96.35%	96.66%
Mexico	5	75.07%	77.50%	76.51%	79.83%
Peru	1	71.47%	74.03%	71.39%	85.54%
Poland	40	96.01%	94.08%	94.63%	93.63%
Romania	5	89.56%	88.24%	88.57%	88.84%
Russia	17	85.11%	88.39%	90.71%	89.76%
Saudi Arabia	3	92.53%	94.74%	95.96%	96.76%
South Africa	1	92.69%	93.56%	93.14%	94.92%
Trinidad/Tobago	1	80.72%	77.54%	77.30%	74.84%
Turkey	1	82.51%	82.14%	86.38%	86.12%
Ukraine	5	59.03%	65.46%	59.17%	65.97%
Uruguay	1	95.89%	96.81%	96.86%	97.30%
Vatican City	1	100.00%	63.64%	100.00%	75.00%

The header of each column is a link to U.S. Department of State public statistics on visa issuances and refusals. A full explanation of how these approval rates are calculated is located [here](#).

An FAQ regarding the recent addition to the B1/B2 visa application regarding the collection of social media identifiers is [here](#).

## Executive Order 13780

On June 26, 2018, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision regarding Presidential Proclamation 9645, ruling that the Proclamation was a lawful exercise of the President’s authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act. Consistent with the Court’s decision, the Department of State will continue processing visa applications in accordance with the

Presidential Proclamation for subject nationals of the seven affected countries. Since December 8, 2017, the Department has fully implemented [Presidential Proclamation 9645](#).

As demonstrated by the analysis in this document, we saw no Worldcon attendees within our dataset that are impacted by this Presidential Proclamation due to being citizens or nationals of any of the seven (7) listed countries: Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela (for officials from certain government agencies only) and Yemen.

## National Distribution of Worldcon 76 Memberships

All Memberships		Attending Memberships**		Supporting	
	total	7901	** includes comps, day memberships, kids in tow		
			total	6091	total
					1810
Country	Count	Country	Count	Country	Count
United States	6994	Australia	27	United States	1337
Canada	237	Bahamas	1	United Kingdom	118
United Kingdom	180	Belgium	1	Canada	95
Australia	100	Bermuda	1	Australia	73
Finland	57	Bulgaria	1	Finland	41
China	54	Canada	142	Germany	29
Germany	43	China	50	Sweden	17
Sweden	31	Denmark	1	New Zealand	10
New Zealand	26	Finland	16	Ireland	9
Japan	21	France	4	Netherlands	8
Ireland	17	Georgia	1	Denmark	7
Mexico	15	Germany	14	France	7
Netherlands	11	Hong Kong	2	Switzerland	7
Switzerland	12	Hungary	1	Belgium	6
France	11	India	2	Israel	5
Israel	9	Ireland	8	Brazil	4
Denmark	8	Israel	4	China	4
Singapore	8	Italy	1	Poland	4
Belgium	7	Japan	18	Italy	3
Korea, Republic of	5	Jersey	1	Japan	3
Saudi Arabia	5	Korea, Republic of	5	Singapore	3
Brazil	4	Mexico	14	India	2
India	4	Netherlands	3	Norway	2
Italy	4	New Zealand	16	Spain	2
Norway	4	Norway	2	Ukraine	2
Poland	4	Russian Federation	1	Argentina	1
Slovenia	3	Saudi Arabia	5	Austria	1
Hong Kong	2	Singapore	5	Croatia	1
Russian Federation	2	Slovenia	3	Estonia	1
Spain	2	Sweden	14	Latvia	1
Taiwan	2	Switzerland	5	Mexico	1
Ukraine	2	Taiwan	2	Portugal	1
Argentina	1	United Kingdom	62	Qatar	1
Austria	1	United States	5657	Romania	1
Bahamas	1	United States Minor Outlying Islands	1	Russian Federation	1
Bermuda	1			South Africa	1
Bulgaria	1			Trinidad and Tobago	1
Croatia	1				
Estonia	1				
Georgia	1				
Hungary	1				
Jersey	1				
Latvia	1				
Portugal	1				
Qatar	1				
Romania	1				
South Africa	1				
Trinidad and Tobago	1				
United States Minor Outlying Islands	1				