

Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy (MMLA)

Visa Status Information

Non-U.S. Citizens/non-U.S. Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders) coming from outside the United States will need to enter the U.S. in tourist status to participate in our program. If you are already in the U.S. in a valid visa status (other than tourist), please contact us so we can verify your eligibility to participate in the program. From outside the U.S., participants will enter the U.S. either through the Visa Waiver Program or they will need to obtain a B-2 visa at a U.S. Embassy before traveling to the U.S.

1. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

The VWP enables nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for tourism for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. Not all countries participate in the VWP, and not all travelers from VWP countries are eligible to use the program. To check if MMLA participants are eligible for the visa waiver program, see http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/vwp.xml.

Effective January 12, 2009, citizens or nationals from all VWP countries will be required to obtain an approved travel authorization via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) via <http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel>. This must be done *before they travel* to the United States under the VWP. If an individual comes to the U.S. through the Visa Waiver Program, s/he will be given **WT (waiver-tourist) status** upon entry to the U.S.

There are two restrictions on visa waiver status that potential users should be aware of:

- 1.) The 90-day stay in the U.S. cannot be extended in *any* circumstance.
- 2.) It is never possible to change from the visa waiver status to any other nonimmigrant status without departing from the U.S.

2. B-2 “Visitor for Tourism” Visa

If MMLA participants are not eligible for the Visa Waiver Program, they can apply for a B-2 tourist visa (See http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1262.html) at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate closest to home (<http://www.usembassy.gov/>). Be prepared to provide information about the visit (what, when, and where). Visa applicants will also need to establish that they have sufficient funds to support themselves during their temporary period of stay and that they intend to return to their permanent residence abroad after completing their visit.

Because B-2 Visitors cannot "enroll in a course of study," it is important to be clear about the participant's intent when crossing the border. While the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy (MMLA) is affiliated with two well-known educational institutions, the MMLA program is a summer program that combines language learning with recreational activities. When answering questions from embassy/consular officials or officers at the U.S. border about your visit to the United States, you can confirm that MMLA is a summer language immersion program and not "a course of study." If the MMLA participant enters the U.S. with a B-2 visa, s/he will be given **B-2 (visitor) status** upon entry.

3) For individuals already in the United States in a valid visa status other than “tourist”, please be aware that it is important to adhere to the regulations for maintaining your current status and/or if necessary, to make appropriate changes to a new status to maintain legal status in the United States. If you have any questions about whether your current status allows you to participate in the MMLA program, please contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at Middlebury College, to clarify. The office can be reached at 802-443-5858 or by email at iss@middlebury.edu.