

US Government: Advice

Foreword: Homeland Security Immigration officials are looking to send home a 'quota' of victims who have the least 'credentials'. This is a number of people with the LEAST evidence to remain in the USA. If immigration does NOT fulfil their quota, they are at risk of losing their jobs. Here are the traps they use ...

Do you own property in your home country?

Never say you are just a lodger, a renter or a traveller. These are weak qualifiers. If you admit that you rent property, then you will have to strengthen your application by other factors.

What is your job?

Being unemployed, on disability or some other State income will severely discriminate against you. Being employed or running a business with premises in your own country will be very helpful to your application.

Do you have any family in the USA?

Be careful with this one. If you have family in the USA and weak links to your home country, immigration will assume you have come to live with them permanently.

Where will you be living in the USA?

You only have to give your first address. If you have a single address for your hotel (such as in a package holiday) this is helpful. Otherwise, you only have to volunteer your first address. But, if you only spend your first night in a hotel, then this will influence other factors.

Do you have an intention of remaining or living in the USA?

Say NO. Doesn't matter if you have a desire to return to live there one day. If you admit as much you will automatically be assumed as having an intention of not returning to your home country.

Do you have sufficient funds for your visit?

Having money in the bank is no use if you cannot provide a bank statement to prove as much - even if you arrive 1st class! If you leave your funds in your bank for security and rely upon a debit or credit card to pay your way in the USA, be SURE to provide an up-to-date bank statement to prove as much. Otherwise, you will be in trouble.

Do you have any other links to your home country?

Think carefully about your links to your home country. The more you can prove you have to return, the more likely you will avoid the 'Send Back Quota' ("SBQ").

How long will you be staying in the USA?

This is a tricky one. If you are only coming for a weekend, then it will have to be through a weekend shopping trip (for example) or business. Nobody goes for just a few days holiday and this will raise suspicions.

Also avoid long periods of time as immigration will suspect you are in the country to make money to support your trip. This brings me onto the next trap ...

Do you have an intention of working in the USA?

Obviously, if you come as a tourist, then the answer is NO. But if you arrive for a lengthy period of stay, then this will be treated with suspicion. Similar reasons apply if you are a young person and a student in your home country. No young person is going to survive a lengthy spell in the USA without having to resort to casual labour.

Your immigration declaration ...

Before arriving in the USA, you will be handed two cards. One is a customs form and the other is for your Visa or Visa Waiver entry. Be careful how you complete these. So ...

Have you ever been arrested or convicted of an offence of 'moral turpitude'?

This is a very vague expression but more or less covers everything. You have 2 choices. if you have ever been arrested, etc., you can tick the 'No' box. I don't think anybody checks if you have committed a crime or not. It certainly hasn't stopped numerous criminals from entering the USA. If you are honest and say 'Yes', then expect a grilling on the nature of your offence. Also accept it will drop you closer to the the SBQ (see note 7).

Visa Waiver programme?

If you arrive on the Visa Waiver programme, then be careful how you answer the last question on your application form. It will ask if you have ever been refused a Visa to enter the USA. If you have previously been refused a Visa and have been advised to travel on the Visa Waiver Programme by the US Embassy in your country, this will not work for you. The US Embassy has no influence or control over Homeland Security. I have already specified they are a law unto themselves and this will be seen to be true if you have previously been denied a Visa. I emphasise AGAIN, whatever the US Embassy may tell you will carry no weight in the USA.

Conclusion

NEVER, EVER volunteer information. Don't talk yourself into a difficult situation. If you have to lie about your background or intentions, then don't compromise. And while I cannot condone this advice, it may be necessary just for personal survival. You may have honest, lawful and genuine intentions for being in the USA, but your honesty could be used to discriminate against you.

Remember that you have NOT entered the USA until you have cleared all immigration officials. Also remember you have NO human rights, no liberty and no entitlement to any representation while at the mercy of immigration.

Good luck (you may well need it!) and take care.