**Inviting Family and Friends to Visit You in the United States**

Because the purpose of a tourist visa does not directly involve Murray State University visa sponsorship, the letter you need does not come from IIS. You need to provide your family and friends with a Letter of Invitation written *by you*. **With your invitation letter you should also supply the Applicant with an Enrollment Verification Letter from the MSU Registrar’s Office and/or a copy of your transcripts. You will need to request the Enrollment Verification Letter through myGate under the Academics tab.**

Family, relatives, and friends that plan to visit you in the U.S. will most likely need to apply for a tourist visa (B1/B2 visa). There are no specific visa documents, e.g. Form I-20 or DS-2019, with which to apply for a B1/B2 visa. However, there are some guidelines on what a consular official expects of applicants.

**Applicants should be prepared to explain the following points and provide related documents:**

1. The visit to the United States will be temporary. Your invitation letter should list the purpose of the visit, i.e. to attend your Commencement, visit family, etc. Please note that the invitation is from you and it is not from the International Students & Scholars Office. U.S. Consular Officials will only acknowledge invitation letters from the actual non-immigrant who is inviting a family member or friend to visit them in the U.S.

2. There are adequate funds to cover the cost of transportation and cost of living in the United States. The Applicant may need to provide evidence of sufficient funds to support themselves while in the United States in the form of a bank statement. Alternatively, you may provide your current bank statement as evidence of adequate financial support to cover their temporary stay in the United States.

3. The visitors have residences outside the United States to which they intend to return. The Applicant will need to prove the intent to return home. This may need to be documented by evidence of a job, immediate family members who will be left behind, property, business ownership or other strong ties to their home country. Applicants should be prepared to answer questions about their intent to return.

**Applying for The visa**

For many individuals a B1/B2 visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate outside the United States is needed to enter the United States. Guidance on the non-immigrant visa application process is available on the web site of the U.S. Department of State.

Please note that Canadian citizens and citizens of Visa Waiver countries do not need to obtain visas for this purpose. Visa Waiver applicants, do however, need pre-clearance authorization called ESTA prior to traveling. They must present evidence of ESTA approval at the port of entry to the United States. (It is important to print out the approval when applying for ESTA as it may need to be presented at the Port of Entry.)

**Sample Invitation Letter for Inviting Relatives and Friends**

(Date)

Chief Consular Officer

The United States of America Consulate General

(City), (Country)

Dear Consul,

My name is (your name), and I am a (F1 or J1) (student or scholar) at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, pursuing a (bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral) degree in (field of study).

A transcript, enrollment verification letter and a copy of my (I-20 or DS-2019) are attached as proof of my enrollment at Murray State University.

 I wish to invite the following individual(s) to visit me for my (example: graduate ceremony at Murray State University, summer vacation, etc.):

First Name, LAST NAME (as it appears in passport)

Date of Birth, Relationship to you

My guest(s) will be visiting me from (month day, year) until (month day, year) and will stay at (my residence or other location) during the duration of their visit. The costs of their visit will be covered by (family bank statement). Please see the attached financial documentation for more details.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the attached visa application.

Sincerely,

(Your name)