

*What should I take care of before I leave the country?*

This resource outlines some of the logistical tasks that you will need to complete before leaving the U.S. Review the information below and use it to develop your own departure timeline.

This resource was created based on the [Before Moving Checklist](#) from the blog *From DACA to Canada!: An Express Entry Journey*.

## Timeline and Preparations

---

### 1 year before leaving:

- Talk to your loved ones about your decision. Throughout the year talk to people about what your decision will mean for all of you. Talk about who in your family will take of certain responsibilities and how you will maintain communication. Please visit [LifeOutsideTheUS.org](http://LifeOutsideTheUS.org) for advice on ways to talk to your relationships about leaving the U.S.
- Plan your finances. Start saving and estimate how much money you are going to need to cover for legal expenses, traveling, establishing yourself in a new place, waiting until you find a job, and other expenses such as tuition if you are attending a university.
- Avoid entering into long-term contracts. Make sure that any contracts and commitments that you currently have (lease agreements, mortgages, car loans, tax payments) match with your timeline to leave the U.S. and will be finalized before you leave. If you already have long-term contracts and commitments that do not work with your timeline, plan to ask family members or friends to help you finalize those commitments and save money to cover those expenses.
- Think about what you want to do before leaving. Brainstorm a list of people you want to spend time with and activities you would like to do in the U.S. before leaving. This will give you the opportunity to spend time with the people you appreciate the most and spend the time you have left in a meaningful way.

### 3 to 4 months before leaving:

- Start paring down your possessions. Begin identifying and separating the clothes, furniture, and items that you don't use very often or the ones

you don't want to take to a new place. Consider donating, gifting, or selling these items and make a plan to do so. Keep in mind that you will likely be leaving with only a couple of suitcases (if lucky).

- Determine how you will move your belongings. Will you take everything that is important in suitcases? Or will you mail things to your destination?
- Establish connections with people in the place you're moving to. It can be lonely to start out in a new place. Ask people around you if they know someone in the area where you are headed, so they can connect you with them. You can also look for online communities that are made up of people who moved from the U.S. to that place or people who live in that area in general.
- Start shopping around for some plane tickets!

### 2 months before leaving:

- If you rent, you need to let your landlord know you will be moving out. Most leases require a 30 or 60-day notice even if your lease is ending. It is a good idea to take a look at your lease and understand what the process is to end your lease.
- Prepare a power of attorney letter and leave it with someone in the U.S. that you trust. A power of attorney letter is a legal document that gives a person (the agent or attorney-in-fact) the power to act for another person. This document will be extremely helpful if you need someone to get documents on your behalf while you are outside of the country.
- Collect your official university transcripts. It is likely that you will need them for future educational and job applications.
- Spend time with people and start saying "see you soon!"

### 1 month before leaving:

- Because you did your homework, by now you should already be contract-free. Now, all you have to do is call all your utility providers to ask them to cancel your services by the end of the month. These include your gym, electric/gas, internet/TV, car insurance, renters insurance, and any other subscriptions you may have.
- Make sure you know how you are going to pay taxes or receive a tax return payment, while outside of the U.S.

- Consolidate bank accounts, preferably to a large national bank. You will be glad you did this when it comes time to move your money.
- Figure out how you will be able to transfer money overseas. TransferWise is a good option, it is available for many currencies, and it offers better rates than banks.
- Give notice at work. This will, of course, be different for everybody, but generally we suggest giving your employer at least one month of notice so that you can leave on the best possible terms. When you are looking for a job in a new country, you will want your former employer to give you an awesome reference.
- Start applying to different jobs in your destination country. It might take 1-2 months before you land a job.
- Gather objects that are of sentimental value to you and identify which ones you want or can take.

### 3 weeks before leaving:

- Book a place to stay for the first couple of weeks. AirBnb is a good option if your destination country has it. We suggest a couple of weeks because a lot of places don't become available until the first of the month.
- Purchase health insurance for the first few months in your destination country. It might take a while for you to get documentation in a new place, and health insurance will cover you in case something happens to you.
- Almost all your furniture should be gone by now.
- Spend time with the people who you want to see before you leave.

### 1 to 2 weeks before leaving:

- Purchase currency from your destination country. You will need to call your bank to find out what branches have an international teller. Usually, large national banks have them, but you need to place an order and it takes a few days before you can get the cash.
- While you are at the bank, ask the teller to give you a letter stating the balance in your account. You might not need it, but it doesn't hurt to have it.
- Buy extra-large suitcases!
- Decide what you are taking with you and make sure

it fits into your suitcases; donate everything else (except cleaning supplies as you will need them to clean the place where you are living).

- Keep a list of the items, especially valuables, that you are taking with you, as you may be required to show this to the immigration officer. You might not need it, but it's better to be prepared.
- Line up some apartment viewings in the country you are moving to, so you can hit the ground running as soon as you land. Research what the popular home/apartment rental websites are in your new destination.
- Confirm check-out procedures with your landlord.
- Figure out how you will get from the airport to the place where you will be staying.
- Take the time to meet or contact people who have supported you and loved you and thank them for the impact they have had on your life.

### 1 day before leaving:

- Clean the place where you are living.
- Confirm all the information and logistics of your travel and arrival.
- Make sure you have all important documents with you.
- Take a moment to appreciate all the people who have supported you, nourish all the moments of joy, and celebrate all your accomplishments.

### Moving Day:

- Make sure you have all the documents you will need for your flight, these include:
  - Passports
  - Landing documents
  - Cash and bank letter
  - List of personal possessions
- Vacate the place you are living and turn in your keys.
- Say "see you soon" to your loved ones.
- Breathe, relax, and look forward to the new stage of your life.
- Get on that plane!

Although each person's situation is different, we hope this resource gives you a better sense of how you can prepare to embark on your journey abroad.

---

This resource is part of the "Life Outside the U.S." project. It was created based on the [Before Moving Checklist](#) from the blog From DACA to Canada!: An Express Entry Journey. Visit [LifeOutsideTheUS.org](http://LifeOutsideTheUS.org) to learn more. Find all the resources created and gathered for this project at [immigrantsrising.org/LifeOutsideTheUS-resources](http://immigrantsrising.org/LifeOutsideTheUS-resources).

---

**Immigrants Rising** helps you make decisions based on your potential, not your perceived limits. Visit our website so you can see what's possible: [www.immigrantsrising.org](http://www.immigrantsrising.org). For inquiries regarding this resource, please contact Katharine Gin, Co-founder and Executive Director, at [kathy@immigrantsrising.org](mailto:kathy@immigrantsrising.org).