

The ABC's Of Immigration – NEXUS

by
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NEXUS is a joint customs and immigration program for frequent travelers that both the Canadian and American governments have implemented. The program allows pre-screened, low-risk individuals to travel across the border between the two countries with little or no delay by United States and Canadian border officials. Using a photo-identification/proximity card, participants cross the border in a dedicated lane, allowing them to use a simplified entry process into either of the two countries.

New points of entry will begin to utilize the NEXUS program in October and November 2003.

Who can use the NEXUS program?

Permanent citizens or permanent residents of the United States or Canada, or non-permanent residents who can demonstrate a need to use the NEXUS lanes, may apply for the NEXUS program.

How does an individual sign up for the program?

Application forms are available on the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) website: <http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca>. Individuals can also get an application at a local customs or immigration office. The form should be completed and mailed with the fee processing payment and photocopies of the applicant's original travel documents, such as a birth certificate or passport, to the address of the Canada Customs Processing Center (CPC) shown on the form.

Only a single application form is required even though the program is a cooperative effort by several different agencies. However, an individual's application must be approved by both the United States and Canada.

Can an individual apply online?

While an individual cannot currently apply online, he or she may complete the application form online, print it, sign it, and mail or fax it to the CPC with payment information and photocopies of travel documents.

How much does it cost to sign up for NEXUS?

The non-refundable processing fee for a five-year membership in NEXUS is \$50 U.S. dollars or \$80 Canadian dollars. Applicants who pay with U.S. credit cards may pay more or less than \$50, depending on the exchange rate. U.S. dollar payments may also be sent by international money order. Payment must be made at the time of the application.

How long will it take to process an application?

The CCRA processes applications on a first-come, first-serve basis at all sites. It takes approximately six weeks to process each application. However, in sites where heavier volumes of applications are being received, it may take longer.

Before an application is approved, the applicant will be subject to security checks by the Canadian and American customs and immigration agencies.

What does an individual gain by using the NEXUS program?

The identification card provided to individuals in the program allows them to:

- Use NEXUS-dedicated lanes in the United States and Canada; and
- Cross the border without routine customs and immigration questioning.

What happens if an individual is approved for the program?

Once approved, the applicant will be invited for an interview at the enrollment center.

During this final stage of processing, the CCRA will:

- Review the information provided on the application form to ensure it is still valid;
- Review ORIGINAL documents such as proof of citizenship, residency, employment authorizations, and/or visas;
- Take a fingerprint biometric;
- Take the applicant's photo and give the applicant a NEXUS identification card;
- Explain client roles and responsibilities in the NEXUS program.

Who can't use the NEXUS program?

If an individual does not meet the requirements of the program, their application will be denied. In addition, certain individuals will not be allowed to utilize the program.

These individuals are those who:

- Are inadmissible to the United States or Canada under applicable immigration laws;
- Provide false or incomplete information on their application;
- Have been convicted of a criminal offense in any country for which they have not received a pardon;
- Have been found in violation of customs or immigration law; or
- Fail to meet other requirements of the NEXUS program.

Who organizes the NEXUS program?

The U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) work together to make this program run smoothly. The program allows these agencies to focus their efforts on potentially higher-risk travelers and goods.

Where is NEXUS currently operational?

Blaine, Washington, Pacific Highway
Blaine, Washington, Peace Arch Crossing
Blaine, Washington, Point Roberts
Buffalo, New York, Peace Bridge
Buffalo, New York, Rainbow Bridge
Detroit, Michigan, Ambassador Bridge
Detroit, Michigan, Windsor Tunnel
Port Huron, Michigan, Blue Water Bridge

Two additional sites will be open by the end of October 2003.

- Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York, Whirlpool Bridge
- Buffalo/Niagara Falls, New York, Lewiston Bridge

In November 2003, new NEXUS sites will open at:

- Highgate Springs, Vermont

- Champlain, New York
- Sweetgrass, Montana

Planned expansion in 2004 will include a site in North Dakota and one or more sites on the Maine/New Brunswick and New York/Quebec borders.

Is there legislation regulating NEXUS membership?

Canadian legislation, the Cross-Border Currency Reporting Legislation, requires NEXUS members to report in person to a Canadian Customs Officer, via the regular lane, when importing or exporting currency and monetary instruments of a value equal to or greater than \$10,000 Canadian dollars. For more information on this new requirement, see the Cross Border Currency Reporting web site at www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/customs/general/cmr/menu-e.html.

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