



Texas A&M University



WELCOME NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

PRE-ARRIVAL WEBINARS



**YOU
BELONG
HERE**

**PRE-ARRIVAL
WEBINARS**

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
AND SCHOLAR SERVICES**



MEET YOUR PRESENTERS



**Matthew
Hilgemeier**
Immigration Specialist



Olivia Miller
Program Coordinator

IN-PERSON ORIENTATION

NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

AUGUST 21ST



2025

9:00AM-3:00PM
MEMORIAL STUDENT CENTER

**9:00-
9:45**

BREAKFAST HOUR

Enjoy breakfast, coffee, and tea while meeting
and mingling with iSSS staff and fellow
students

MORNING SESSIONS

- Maintaining Your Visa Status
- Social Security Cards and Employment
- Aggie Honor System

**9:45-
12:00**

LUNCH

12:00

Choose from a variety of restaurants with your free food
voucher

AFTERNOON EVENTS

- Drop-In Advising with Designated School Officials (DSO)
- HEB Grocery Store Supply Run with Gifts and Giveaways
- Resource Fair
- Ice Cream Social

**12:00-
3:00**



QUESTIONS?

ISSS@TAMU.EDU



HOWDY FUTURE AGGIES!

Overview

- Who/What is ISSS
- Immigration Documents
- Arrival Logistics
- Housing
- Health Insurance
- On-Campus Support Services



WHAT DOES ISSS DO?



SERVE

**LIAISON BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND
SCHOLARS AND UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS AND US
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

REPORT

**REPORT TO DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
(DHS) BY UPDATING STUDENT & EXCHANGE VISITOR
INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEVIS)**

EDUCATE

EDUCATE ABOUT IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

CONNECT

CONNECT YOU WITH RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

ISSS SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

OUR PROMISE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

- Treat you with dignity and respect
- Strive to understand your unique case
- Remember that immigration can be a new, intimidating experience
- Use our time to equitably assist
- Provide Accurate information
- Provide thorough immigration services
- Offer explanations for immigration actions

STUDENTS' AND SCHOLARS' ROLE

- Treat all ISSS staff with dignity and respect
- Research the ISSS website before contacting staff
- Respect ISSS, university, and federal timelines, policies, and procedures
- Submit your requests as far in advance as possible
- Complete your requests fully and accurately
- Be forthcoming about your purpose and plans
- Accept responsibility for your immigration status

WHO WE SERVE

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

All enrolled students who are not US citizens or US Lawful permanent residents

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

Professionals engaged in temporary academic and research activities such as post docs, visiting lecturers/professors/faculty/researchers

DEPENDENTS

Spouse and children of international students and scholars

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS, SYSTEMS AGENCIES, AND RESEARCH CENTERS

Faculty and staff who directly engage with all international groups above

WE DO NOT EXPEDITE REQUESTS



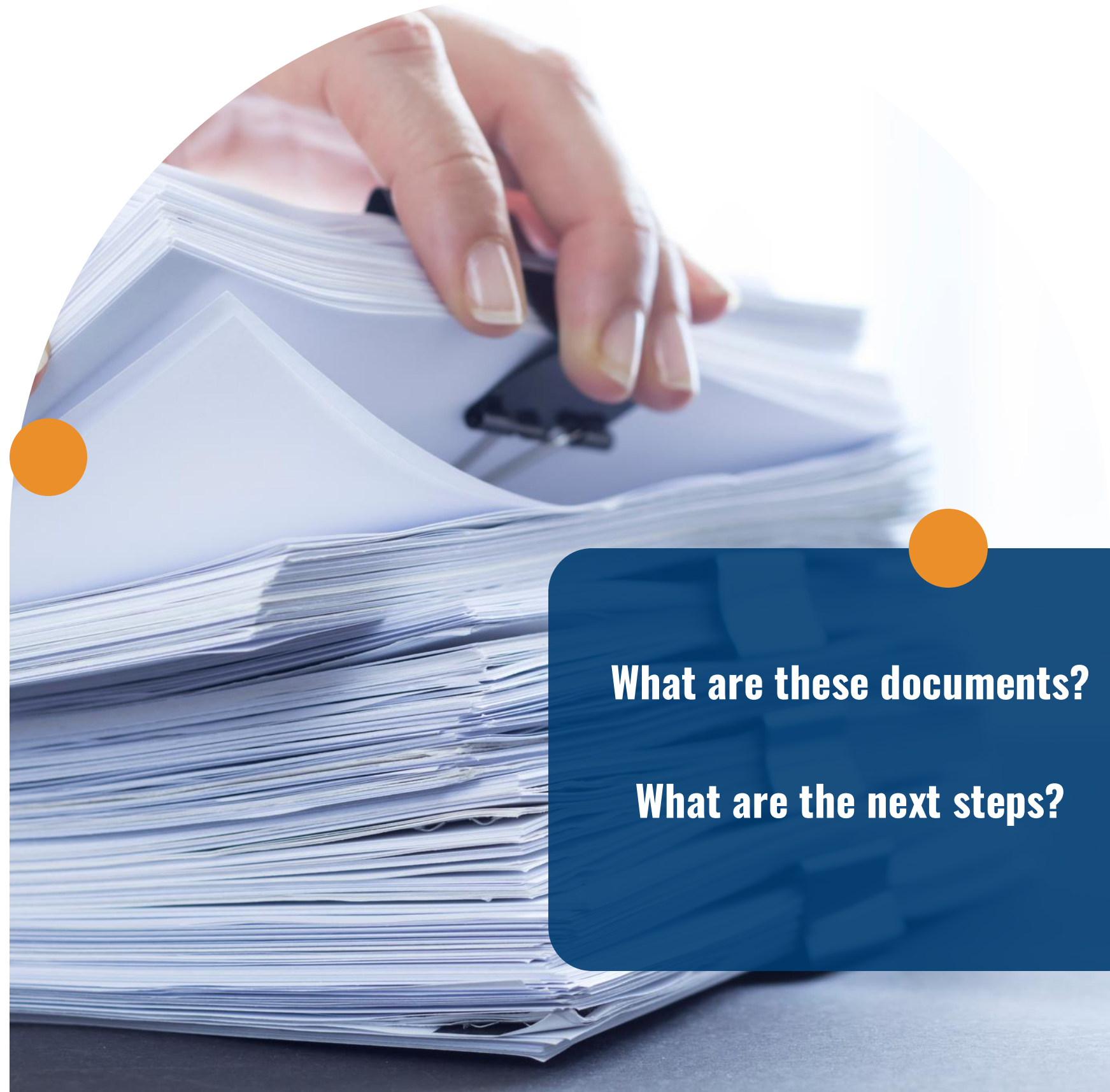
MAKE
(AN ACTION OR PROCESS)
HAPPEN SOONER OR BE
ACCOMPLISHED MORE QUICKLY

- **ISSS only processes on business days (Monday-Friday)**
- **Processing time does not include time necessary for obtaining additional information or documentation from you, your university department, or your employer**
- **Standard ISSS processing time is 15 business days**

PROCESS FOR ADMITTED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



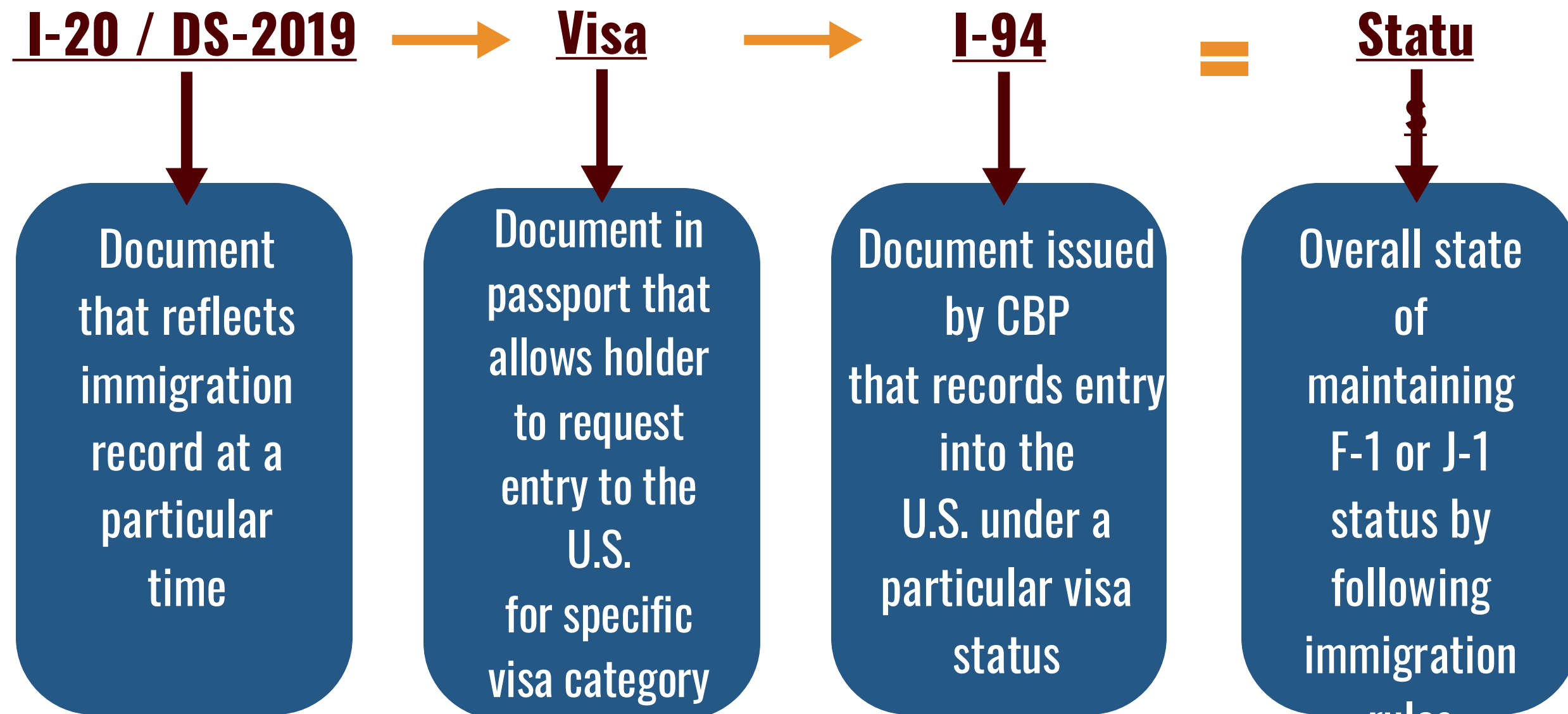
SPEAKING OF IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS...



What are these documents?

What are the next steps?

SPEAKING IMMIGRATION



IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

PASSPORT

- Issued by Student's country of Citizenship
- Should remain valid for six months into the future at all times

I-20 OR DS-2019

- I-20 Form issued by ISSS to F-1 students after a student is admitted and shows evidence of sufficient funding
 - Issued for most international students
 - Required to obtain an F-1 Visa
- DS-2019 issued to J-1 students or exchange visitors by ISSS or Department of State Sponsor
 - Required to obtain a J-1 Visa
- Regardless of what document you have it **MUST** remain up-to-date throughout a student's academic program

IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

VISA

Visa ≠ Status

- Issued by a U.S. Consulate or Embassy Abroad

*Cannot be issued or renewed from inside the U.S.

- Primarily a travel document that is only needed for entry into U.S.
- Can be expired while visa holder remains in the U.S.
- May not match an individual's status if they change status after arriving in the U.S.

I-94

I-94 + SEVIS Record + STATUS

- Electronic record issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) upon entry to the U.S. or by U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) when someone changes status within the U.S.
 - This is the official indicator of an individual's immigration status and how long they can remain in the U.S.
 - Make sure you enter on the correct status and correct name
 - F-1 & J-1 Students are not issued a date-specific I-94 record
 - They can remain for "Duration of Status" or D/S as long as their F-1 or J-1 SEVIS record is active
 - **ISSS recommends you keep a printed copy of your I-94 record with you at all times while in the U.S.**

AFTER YOU ARE ISSUED YOUR I-20 OR DS-2019

Complete the DS-160 visa application form
(<https://ceac.state.gov/ceac/>) and schedule
your U.S. embassy interview



COMPLETE DS-160 FORM

- What you need
 - Passport
 - I-20
 - School SEVIS ID is on there
 - Your SEVIS ID is on there (N00123456789101)
 - U.S. Contact information
 - Academic Program Coordinator
 - DSO who signed your I-20/DS2019
 - Travel Plans (if you already have them)
 - Photo
 - Education history
 - Pay the Visa Application Fee = \$US160

Tips!

- Save the DS-160 confirmation page
 - print it for your interview.
- Save the Application ID so you can return later if you need to.





PAY THE SEVIS FEE ONLINE

- Before the interview, pay the SEVIS fee at:
 - fmjfee.com
- Different fee amounts for F-1 and J-1s
- J-1s will find SEVIS ID on their DS-2019, F-1s will find the SEVIS ID on their I-20
- J-1s will need TAMU's program code, not school code

Bring the payment confirmation to your interview.

VISA INTERVIEW

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- DS-160 confirmation
- Visa Application Fee Receipt
- SEVIS I-901 Receipt
- Passport
- I-20 or DS2019
- Visa Appointment Letter
- Photo
- Proof of Financial Support
- TAMU Acceptance Letter -
- Proof of ties to home country
(optional but helps show intent to return)



**Schedule Interview at
the U.S. Embassy or
Consulate in your
country**



COMMON VISA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Not Legal Advice

- Why do you want to study in the U.S.?
 - Why this particular university?
 - What are your career plans after graduation?
 - Who is funding your education?
 - What ties do you have to your home country?
- 💡 **Be honest, brief, and confident**



AFTER THE VISA INTERVIEW

If Approved:

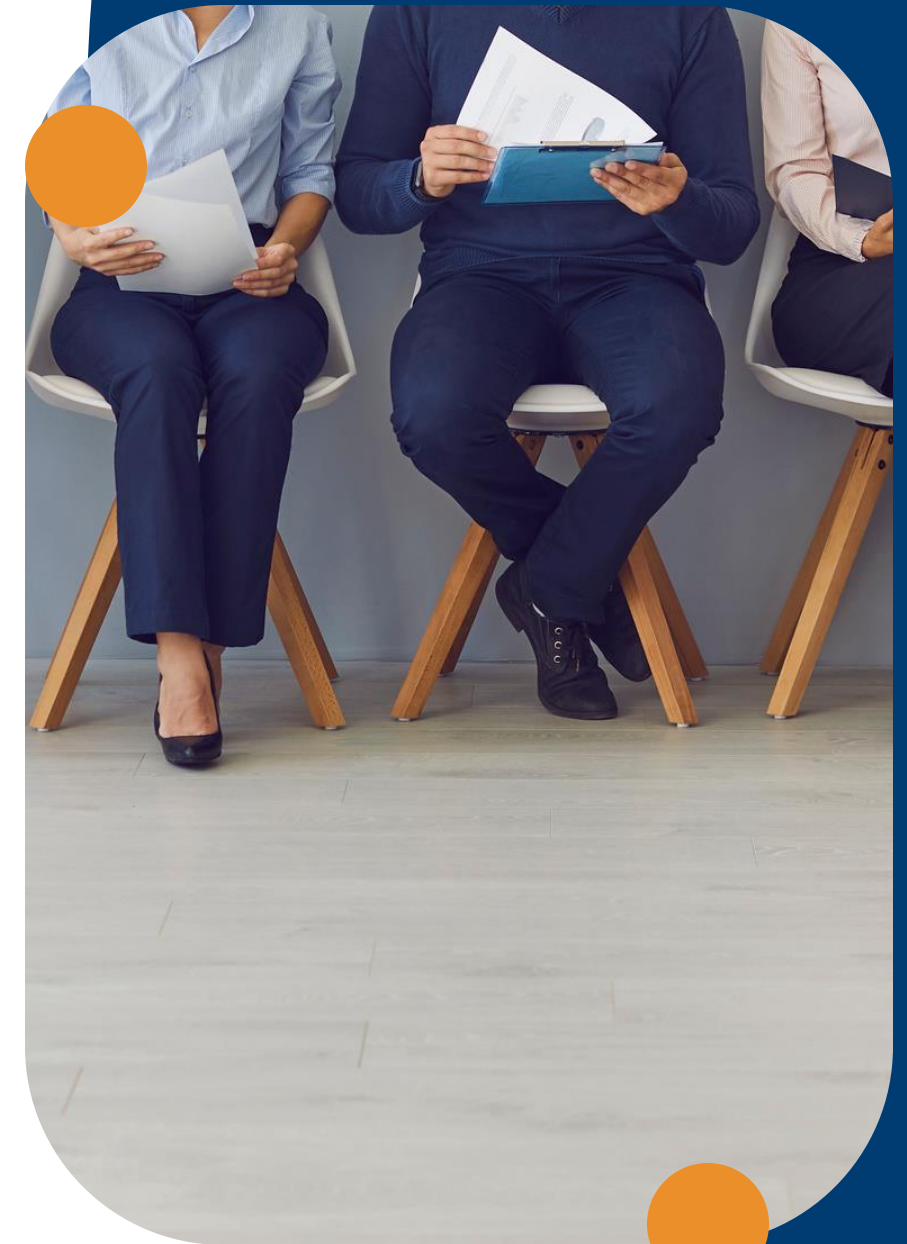
- Your passport will be kept for visa stamping and returned within 3–10 business days.

If Denied:

- You'll be told why and provided a document with the reason why you were denied.
- *May have an option to correct any inaccuracies or omissions or provide additional documents.*

Administrative Processing

- You will just have to wait.....





MY VISA WAS APPROVED!!!

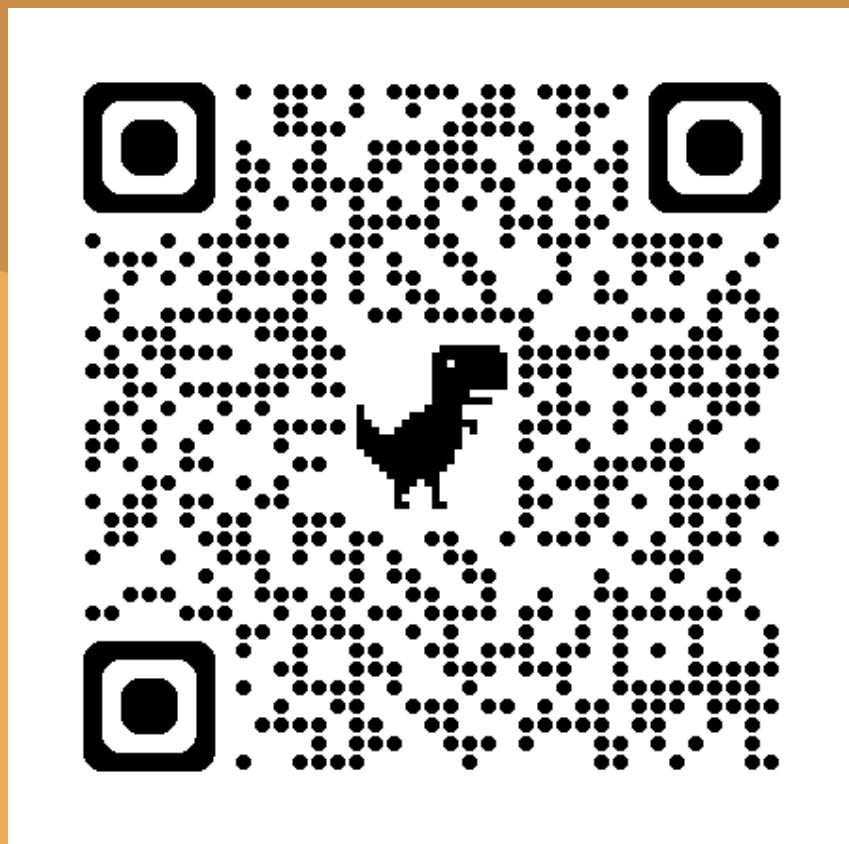
NOW WHAT?!



- Where am I going to live?
- How am I going to get to Texas A&M?
- What do I do once I arrive in the U.S.
- What about Health Insurance

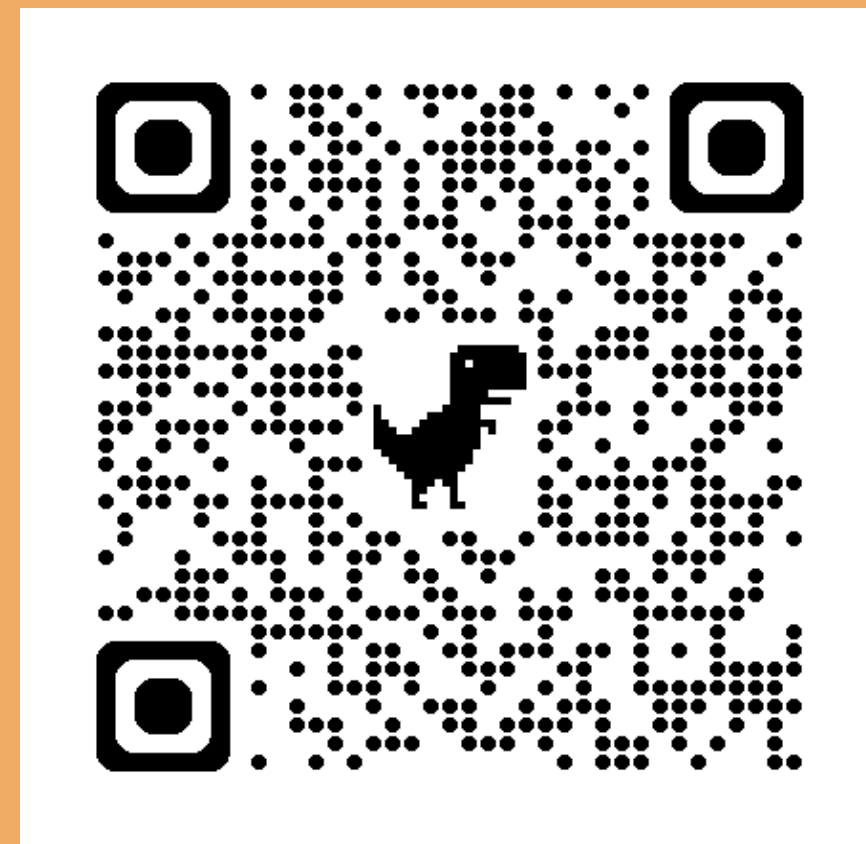
WHERE AM I GOING TO LIVE?

OFF CAMPUS HOUSING



• <https://aggiesearch.tamu.edu/>

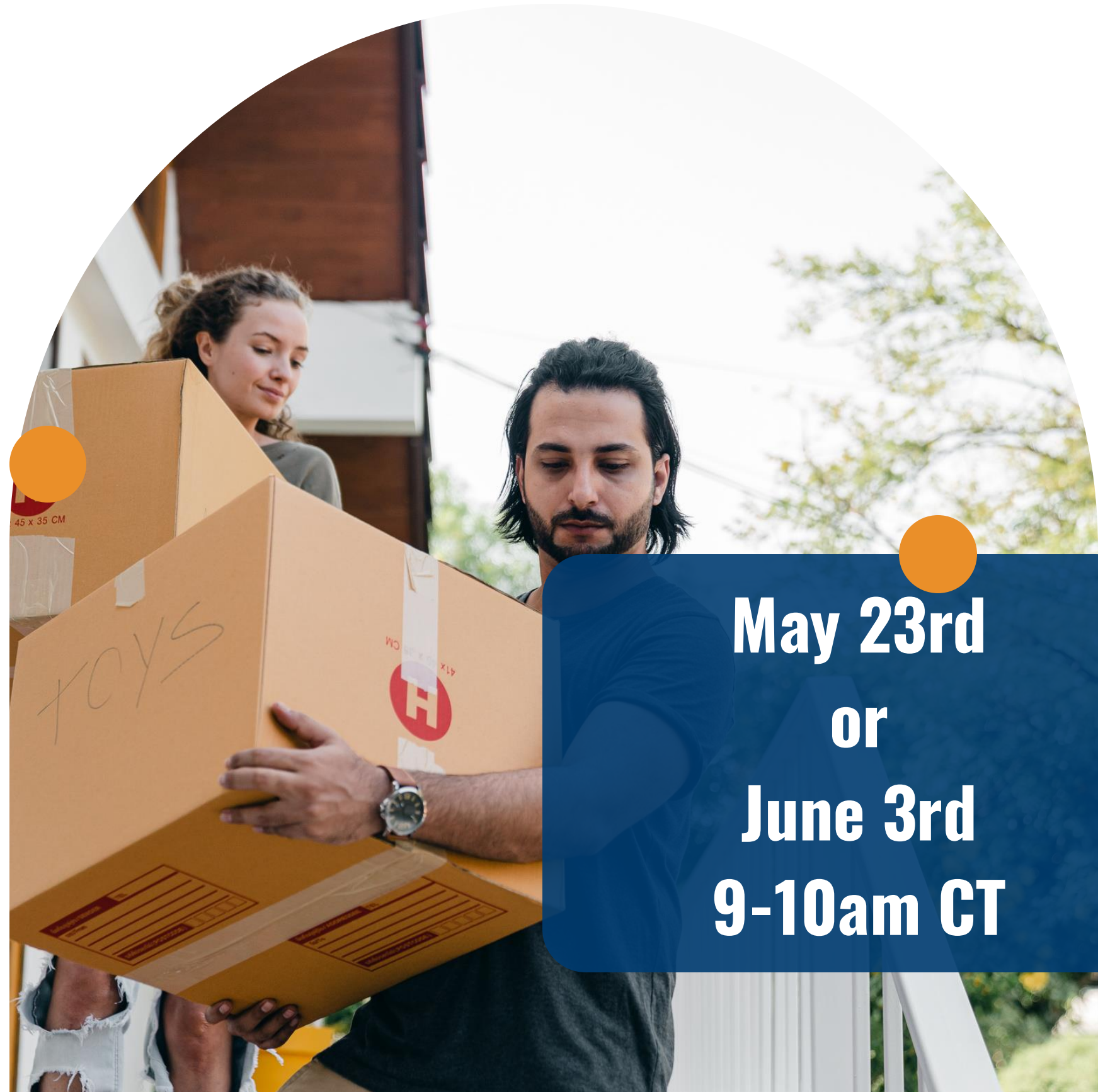
ON CAMPUS HOUSING



<https://reslife.tamu.edu/>

OFF CAMPUS HOUSING WEBINARS

- Housing Options
- Campus Accessibility
- Lease Agreements
- Utilities & Expenses
- Tenant Expectations
- Frequently Asked Questions

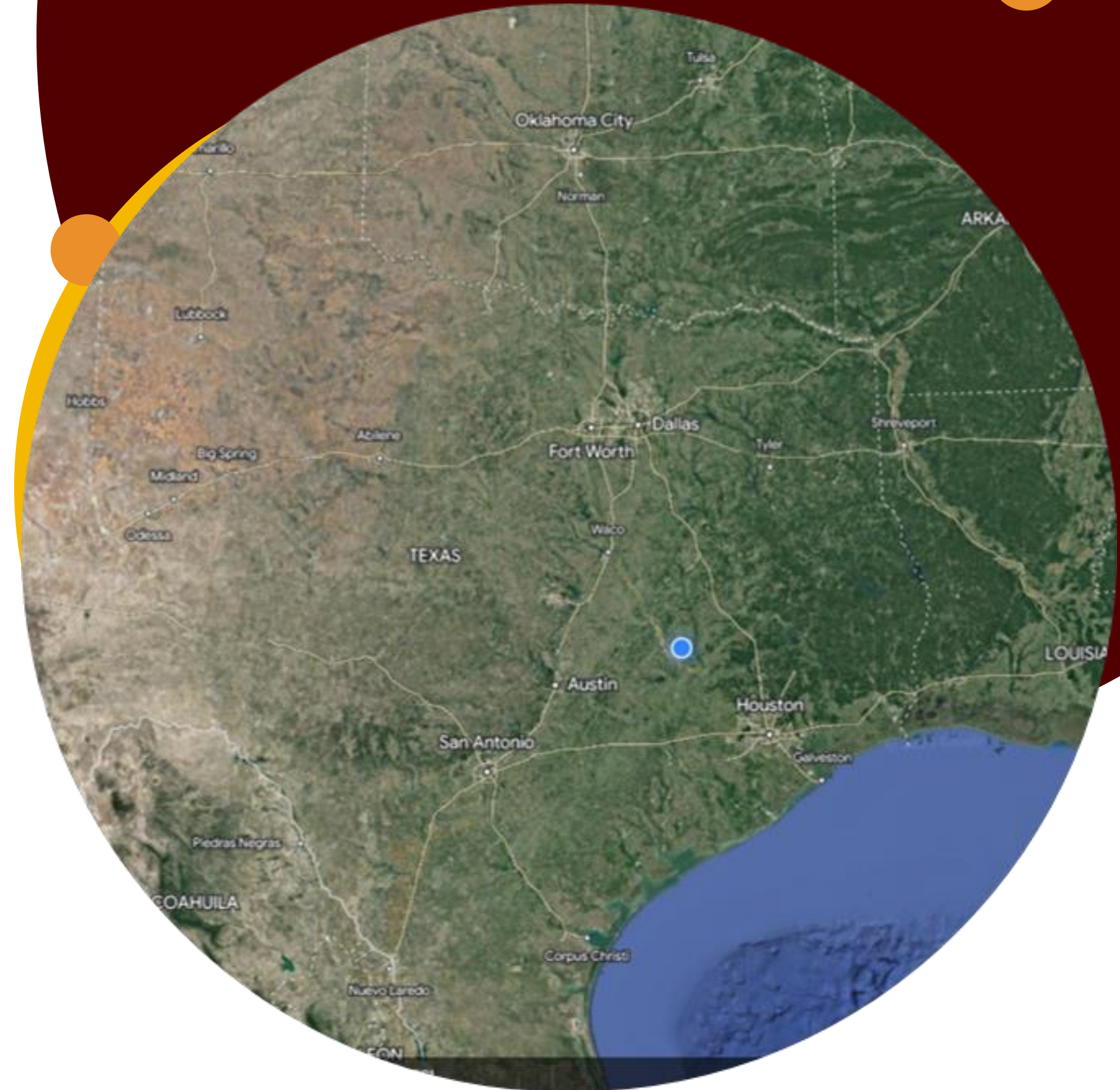


**May 23rd
or
June 3rd
9-10am CT**

TRAVELING TO COLLEGE STATION

It might be further than you think

F-1 and J-1 students are
allowed to arrive **no earlier
than 30-days** before the
program start date



AIRPORTS DISTANCE FROM

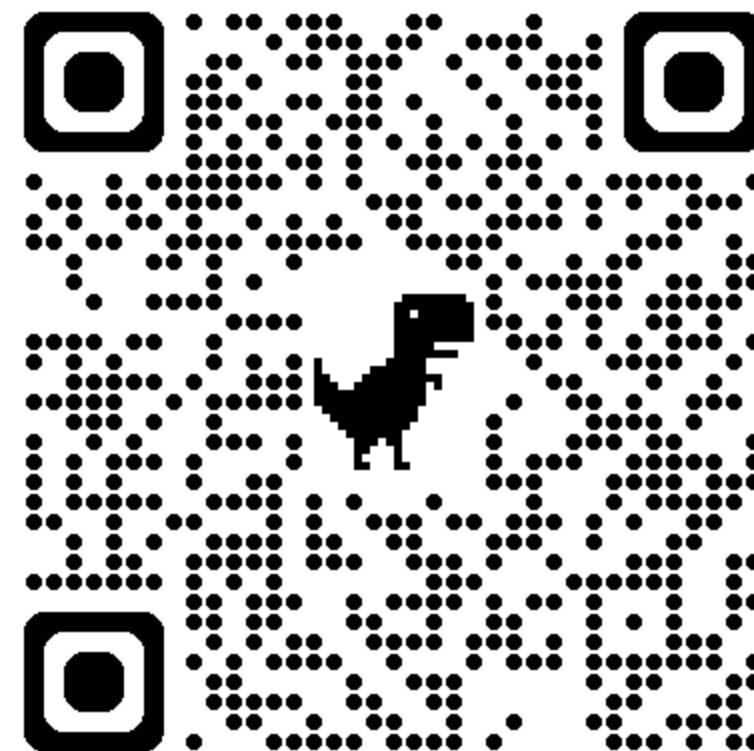
COLLEGE STATION & BRYAN

- **Houston (IAH):** 91 miles (146 km)
- **Austin (AUS):** 103 miles (165 km)
- **Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW):** 200 miles (321 km)



NO DIRECT FLIGHTS TO COLLEGE STATION

- Best option is to fly to Houston's George Bush Airport (IAH)
- Take ground transportation with a service called Ground Shuttle.
- ***\$55 USD one way - Shuttle runs from 9:15 AM to 9:15 PM***
- ***Shuttle leave every 1.5 hours***
- <https://www.groundshuttle.com/>



WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN THE US

Prepare the following documents in your carry-on (not checked luggage):

- **Passport**

(valid for at least 6 months beyond your intended stay)

- **F-1 visa**

(in your passport)

- **Form I-20** ***Make sure you sign your I-20**

signed by your school official

- **SEVIS fee** payment receipt

- **Evidence of financial support**

- (bank statements, scholarships, sponsor letters, etc.)

- **School admission letter** (optional but helpful)

- Copy of your U.S. address and/or U.S. phone number if you have it already



WHAT THE CUSTOM BORDER PATROL OFFICER MAY ASK...

- *“What school will you attend?”*
- *“What are you studying?”*
- *“How long will your program last?”*
- Verify your documents against SEVIS.
- Possibly refer you to **secondary inspection** for further questioning.
This is routine and not necessarily a problem.
- If everything is in order, the officer will:
- *Admit you in **F-1 or J-1 status***
- *Create an electronic **Form I-94** (your arrival/departure record)*



ELECTRONIC DEVICES



- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has the authority to search electronic devices including:
 - phones, laptops, tablets and other electronic devicesof anyone entering the U.S., including both U.S. citizens and non-citizens.
- CBP may access personal, confidential and sensitive data.
- If you refuse to provide access, your device may be seized.
- Visa holders may be denied entry to the U.S. if they refuse to provide access.

SOCIAL MEDIA & PUBLIC POSTS



- **Be cautious** of what you post online
- Information you share via social media can be viewed by federal immigration officers any time
- Information obtained from social media activity and public posts may be considered by federal agents when adjudicating and processing immigration matters, including visa issuance and entry to the U.S.
- **Be cautious** what advice you seek from online sources
- **Check with ISSS or an experienced immigration attorney** before taking any action related to your immigration status.

ONCE YOU HAVE ARRIVED

- Complete New Student Check-In in the ISSS Portal within **10-days of arriving** in U.S.
- Update the following in the Howdy Portal:
 - ***Student Local Address***
 - ***Student Physical Address***
 - ***Student US Phone #***
 - **Download a copy of your I-94**
- Your status will not be active until you submit your check-in to ISSS and ISSS processes the request.



**Complete
Your Check In**

HEALTH INSURANCE

- All F-1 or J-1 students are required by TAMU System policy to always maintain health insurance while maintaining status.
- This obligation is enforced through a fee at the beginning of each semester.
 - 2 fees on Fall Semester tuition
 - August
 - Fall Semester
- Automatically enrolled into System Student Health Insurance Plan (SSHIP) to ensure that students do not violate their visa status or TAMU system
- Graduate students who will be Graduate Student Employees are eligible for the Grad Plan
- Can be paid for through payroll deduction
- Eligible for a waiver to the SSHIP Plan



Webinar
May 20th or
June 10th
9-10am CT

ON CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

- As an international student you are only allowed to work *On-campus ONLY*
- *NO OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT ALLOWED*
- *Max. 20 hours per week*
- Jobs for Aggies:
<https://employees.tamu.edu/jobsforaggies/>



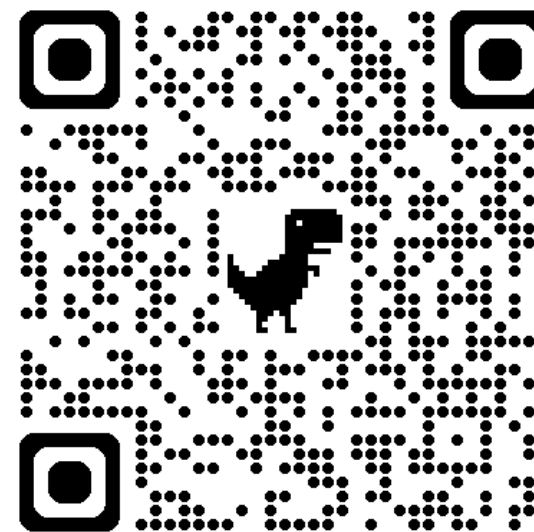
● TRANSPORTATION

- **TAMU Buses**

- Buses around Texas A&M University campus and throughout Bryan/College Station.
- For maps and schedules, go to <https://transport.tamu.edu/transit.aspx>.
- TAMU ID or bus pass is required to ride the off-campus Aggie buses
- Your dependents need to buy a bus pass (\$35) at the Brazos District Transit office to ride TAMU & BTD buses.

- **Brazos Transit District Buses (BTD)**

- <http://www.btd.org>
- Green and gray buses around town
- Has fixed routes, but no fixed stops, you just wave it down
- **ALL TAMU STUDENTS CAN RIDE THE BTD BUSES FREE WITH STUDENT ID!**



● OTHER TRANSPORTATION

- [VEORIDE, Bike Share Program](#)
- Parking on campus.
 - To park your car on campus, you must purchase a TAMU [parking permit](#).
- Scooter (buy or rent) Aggieland Scoots
 - <https://aggielandscoots.com/>
- Car Share: rent a car
- Uber and Lyft
- Hitch for longer rides - www.hitch.com

HOW DO I OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT?

WHERE?

- Many Banks in Bryan and College Station
- Some have branches and ATMs on campus or very close to campus.
- Wells Fargo, Aggieland Credit Union, Chase, Trust, Bank of America, First NBank

YOU WILL NEED:

- US home address
- University ID
- Your offer letter
- Passport
- I-20/DS-2019
- Social security number or Driver's License (if you have it)

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ACCOUNTS

CHECKING

- Standard account
- Direct Deposit
- Deposit or Withdraw from ATM
- Issued a Debit Card

SAVING

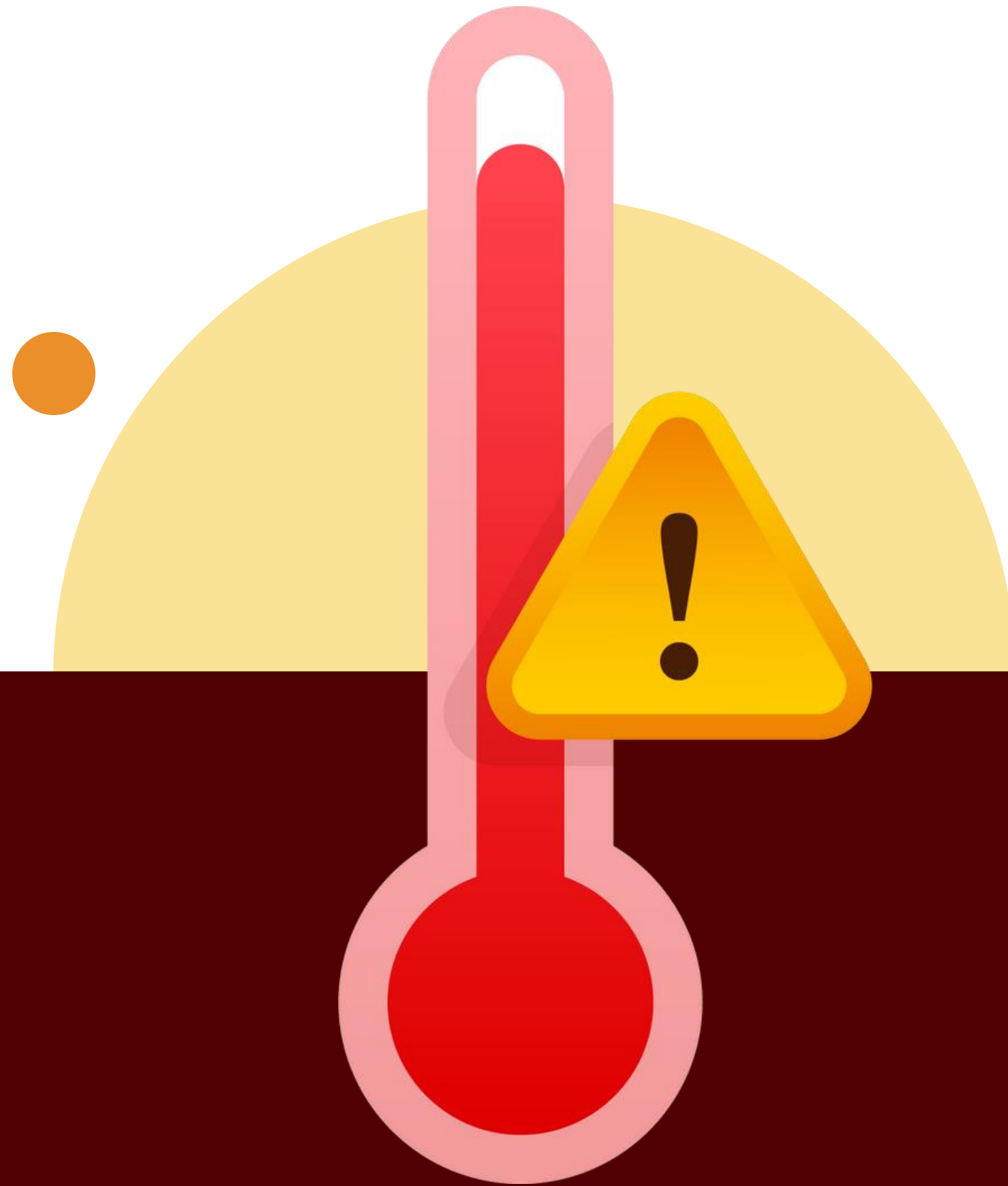
- Put Money Away
- Low Interest Rates

BOTH

- Overdraft Fees
- Minimum Balance Requirement and Penalties
- Deposit Checks



ITS TEXAS
Y'ALL



TEXAS IS HOT

- From May through October-ish
- Highs from 90 ° F (32 ° C) to 112 ° F (44 ° C)
- Very little rain, but very humid also - Hurricanes
- The Aggie Dome affect



TEXAS IS BIG

- 852 miles (1371 km) from Louisiana/Texas boarder to El Paso, Texas
- From Brownsville, TX to the top of the Panhandle (Texoma, TX) 100 miles from being half-way to Canada.
- No subways in Texas!



TEXAS IS SWEET

- Sugar is in everything in the US.
- Iced Tea vs Sweet Tea



TEXAS HAS TAXES

- **Sales Tax – no state income tax**
- Texas has a 6.25% sales tax – Bryan & College adds 2% = 8.25%
- The price shown is not the price you pay. Typically, no price negotiations

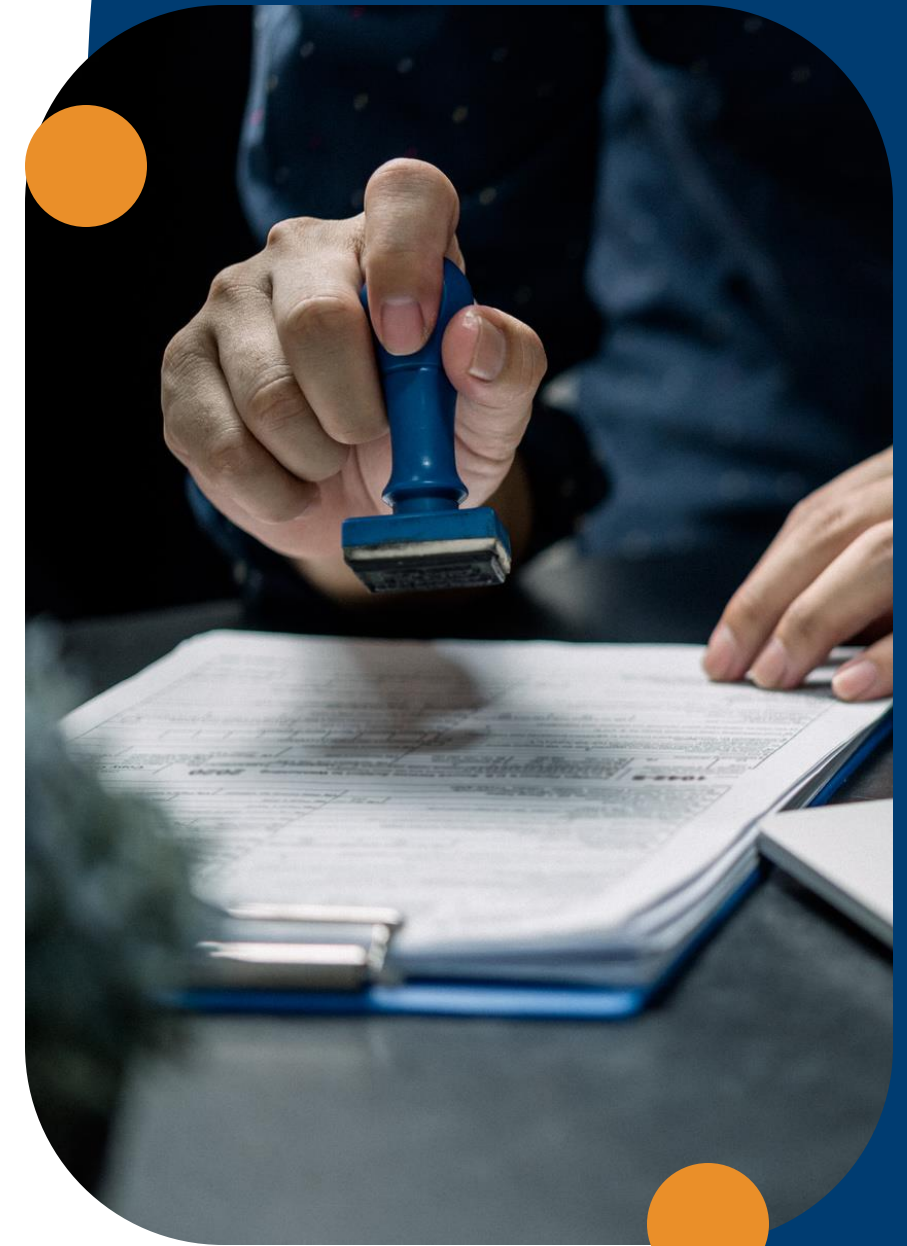


PACKING FOR TEXAS

- Rain Coat, Boots, and Umbrella
- Winter Coat, Hat, Scarf, and Mittens
- Pack for **ALL** seasons
- Water Bottle
- Good Walking Shoes
- Sunglasses
- Swim Gear-Some Apartments have pools

IMMIGRATION POLICY UPDATES AND SAFETY RECCOMMENDATIONS

- Review the new **Immigration Policy Updates** webpage
- Describes recent federal and state policy changes
- Includes document and personal safety recommendations
- Links to many other resources, including know-your-rights guides & what to do if you are arrested or detained
- Accessible from ISSS homepage: <https://global.tamu.edu/iss>



IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING YOUR STATUS

- Many of the changing federal immigration policies require stricter enforcement of existing immigration laws and impose more serious penalties for status violations.
- Be proactive, keep your information up to date, and stay informed about changing federal and state immigration policies.
- Though ISSS is here to assist and provide support, you are ultimately responsible for your own immigration status.



STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER

Counseling & Mental Health Care

- Individual & Group Counseling
- Single Session Counseling
- Couple/Relationship Counseling
- Mental Health Workshops
- Limited ADHD/ADD Screenings
- Quick Checks (30 Minutes)
- Crisis/Walk-In Appointments
- Anxiety Intervention Appointments
- TELUS App

Student Services Building (SSB – 4th Floor)



UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

<https://uhs.tamu.edu/index.html>

- Doctor & Nurse Consultations
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory
- Vaccine Clinic
- Nutrition Services
- Physical Therapy
- X-Rays & Ultrasounds
- EMS
- Dial-A-Nurse

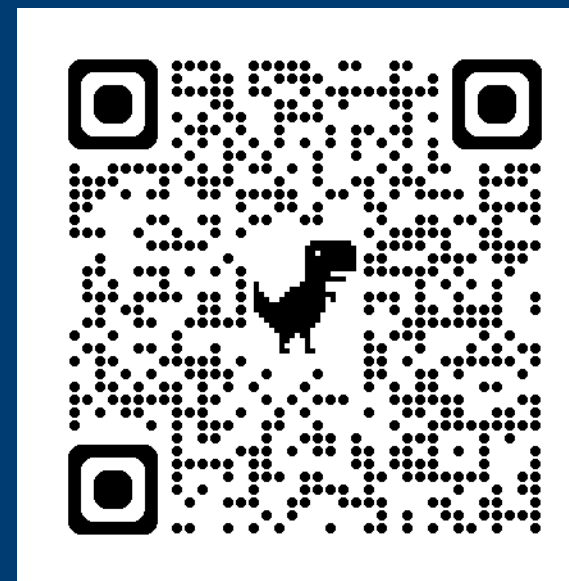


Webinar
May 16th or
May 27th
9-10am CT



PRACTICE ENGLISH

Texas A&M Center for Teaching Excellence



<https://cte.tamu.edu/prepare-future-faculty/english-language-proficiency-program>



1-979-845-1824



@tamuiss



iss@tamu.edu



<https://global.tamu.edu/iss>

CONTACT DETAILS
FOR INFORMATION



**THANKS &
GIG'EM**