

Welcome to Pasadena!

CISC First 30 Days Checklist for International Spouses & their Families

A practical starting point for settling into life in Pasadena.

Use this as a suggested order, not a deadline. Some steps may take longer or may not apply to you.

Official guidance: Use the [Caltech International Offices website](#) for current requirements and detailed information.

Community support: [CISC](#) offers volunteer peer support, local experience, and help finding where to start.

[CISC](#) does not provide legal, immigration, tax, medical, financial, housing-rights, or employment advice.

Before you arrive

- ☐ Check passport validity requirements for every family member well before travel; renew early if needed. Confirm visa and immigration-document requirements with your International Office. See [Arrival in the United States](#).
- ☐ Bring important family records, including marriage/birth certificates, vaccination records, medical/ dental information, and current prescriptions. See [Essentials - Documents](#).
- ☐ If you intend to work or study, bring translated/certified diplomas, transcripts, professional certificates, and references.
- ☐ Explore [housing options](#) and [Caltech Marketplace](#) and prepare a realistic [family budget](#).
- ☐ Check when your family's U.S. [health insurance](#) begins and whether you need temporary coverage.
- ☐ If you have children, investigate [childcare, schools, and immunization requirements](#) early.
- ☐ Plan your trip from the airport and review [transportation options](#).

Your first days

- ☐ Connect with [CISC](#), join its communication channels, and ask for help whenever you need it.
- ☐ Check your partner's International Office arrival instructions for any steps relevant to your family, and find out which orientation sessions welcome spouses.
- ☐ Get a U.S. phone connection and arrange internet/utilities if needed.
- ☐ Locate a nearby grocery store and pharmacy.
- ☐ Open a U.S. bank account when you have the required documents and start learning about U.S. credit. See [Essentials - Banks and Finance](#).
- ☐ Confirm that [health insurance](#) for you and any children is active.
- ☐ Learn the difference between primary care, urgent care, and an emergency room. See [Healthcare](#).
- ☐ Save emergency numbers and review [local emergency preparedness](#).

During your first few weeks

- ☐ Try a [CISC](#) activity, gathering, or family event when you feel ready.
- ☐ Arrange longer-term housing if your initial accommodation is temporary.
- ☐ Decide how your household will get around: walking, cycling, public transit, ride share, or driving. See [Transportation](#).
- ☐ Arrange or continue securing childcare or school enrollment if applicable. See [Family Resources](#).
- ☐ [Start building your own life in Pasadena](#) - community, friends, interests, volunteering, education, or professional connections.
- ☐ If you want to work, first check what your immigration status permits through [International Offices](#) - [Dependent Employment](#).

By the end of your first month

- ☐ Review housing, healthcare, transportation, childcare/school, and administrative questions; identify next steps and whom to ask.
- ☐ Learn whether you need or are eligible for a [Social Security Number](#).
- ☐ Become aware of future [U.S. tax requirements](#).
- ☐ Keep track of immigration-document expiration dates and requirements for future international travel.
- ☐ Make time for your own integration, not only your spouse's or partner's work transition.

Have questions? CISC can help you find where to start.

[CISC Connect & Support](#) is a volunteer peer-support initiative for international spouses, partners, and families connected to Caltech and JPL.

Email us at connect.cisc@gmail.com with:

- Your question and topic (e.g., housing, children, transportation, healthcare, spouse/partner life, or community).
- Whether you are preparing to arrive or already in Pasadena.
- Your approximate arrival date, if relevant.

Keep these links

Official information: Caltech [International Offices](#) - Relocation

Spouse & family support: [CISC](#) - Relocation & Integration [CISC Connect & Support](#)