

US Work Permits for Musicians Overview

Canadian musicians have to apply for a B1, P1, P2, P3 visa or an O1/O2 visa to perform in the USA. Below are the details on the various options, including cost and timelines.

B1 Visa – Showcases

The B1 is for showcases where there is no fee paid to artists. There is no application for a B1; these are administered by border patrol officers at the point of entry.

How to apply: artists seeking to enter on a B1 are advised to come to the border with a letter from the showcasing event organizer stating the terms of the showcase – remember you can't be paid for a B1. Tell border agent you are showcasing and not earning a fee, and present your letter.

Cost: no fee

Timeline: issued at border

Tips: Use for CMJ/SXSW etc where you are not getting paid, or for showcasing for a label at non ticketed event.

Get your Music Industry Association to also write you a letter to present to US border agents.

P2 Work Permit – Paid shows

The P2 application is most accessible and most frequently applied for by artist seeking work permits for paid engagements. Apply through the Canadian Federation of Musicians to receive a P2.

How to apply: You will need to become a CFM member to apply. You will also need signed contracts for your gigs and a tour itin. If you are signed to a US label you may be able to use your recording contract and a letter of from them as basis for the VISA. Each musician seeking to perform completes individual P2 forms and provides a copy of their passport.

Cost: Aprox \$500 for regular processing. (\$100 +\$ 20 per band member to CFM, \$325 US to Dep Homeland Security)

Timelines: application needs to be in 60 days in advance of entry in to the US.

Tips: The P2 is good for up to a year but you need to have an itin with contracts that lasts that long. You can have 45 day gaps between gigs, trying and secure as many as possible to extend the length of your P2.

You will be able to enter and exit the US as much as you want with this visa.

Crew members will need to be on a separate application and add \$325 to the cost.

If you are late with your app you can get expedited – add \$1225.00 to the costs above.

Contact CFM before you dig in to paper work, they can help you through the process.

P 1, P3 and O1/O2 Work Permit – Paid shows- established artists only

The P1, P3 and O1/O2 are only for established artists who have an international track record and a US petitioner is required. P1 is for a full band. O1 is for solo artists. O2 is for crew and supporting musicians, and is linked to the O1. P3 is for a group that is culturally unique.

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How to apply: The P1, P3, O1/02 applications can be handled by any US entity but are generally only filed by a US lawyer or broker with expertise; these are fee for service companies which gather the required paperwork and submit your application on behalf of a US petitioner (typically a US label, agent, publicist or manager). These require the establishment of artist track record. Track record is proven by press articles, awards received, and letters of support. Like the P2 applications, applicants must provide passport copies and personal info for all musicians. Signed contracts for all performances during window of time applied for must be included or letters of engagement from US petitioners.

Cost:

P1 Cost: \$1825.00 (\$325.00 to the US Gov't, \$250 to the AFM, \$1250.00 broker fees)

O1 Cost: \$1825.00 (\$325.00 to the US Gov't, \$250 to the AFM, \$1250.00 broker fees)**

O2 Cost: \$1825.00 (\$325.00 to the US Gov't, \$250 to the AFM, \$1250.00 broker fees)***

P3 Cost: \$1450.00 (\$325.00 to the US Gov't, \$250 to the AFM, \$875.00 broker fees)

**All if applicants are AFM members, the \$250 fee is waived.

***This is for crew and support musicians who perform, or work with, the solo artist.

Timelines: application needs to be in 60 days in advance of entry in to the US.

Tips: The P1 or P3 is good for up to a year, the O1/02 can be made eligible for up to 3 years.

You will be able to enter and exit the US as much as you want with this visa.

Get quotes from a few brokers, and references from other bands on which company to use.