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Global Entry: What It Is & How It Works



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International travel is a thrilling adventure, but long lines at customs when returning stateside can be a deterrent. That's why people who regularly travel outside of the US often join the Global Entry program. Let's take a closer look at what Global Entry is and how it works so you can decide if it makes sense for you.

What is Global Entry?

Global Entry is one of several **Trusted Traveler Programs (TTP)** offered by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The program allows pre-approved travelers to enjoy expedited entry to the US at select airports. Because members go through both an extensive background check and an in-person interview, they get to avoid the lines at customs when entering the US.

Who is Eligible for Global Entry?

Any US citizen who is at least 18 years old can enroll in Global Entry, as well as Mexican nationals and citizens from the following countries:

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Bahrain
- The Dominican Republic
- India
- Colombia
- The United Kingdom
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Panama
- Singapore
- Switzerland
- Taiwan

People under the age of 18 must have their parent's or legal guardian's consent.

How to Apply for Global Entry

Travelers who want to join Global Entry must complete the following steps:

- **Create a TTP account.** Everyone who wants Global Entry must have a **TTP account**, regardless of age.
- **Fill out an application.** You'll need to provide information about your employment, past travel, and criminal record, if applicable, going back about five years, and pay a non-refundable \$100 application fee. After your information has been reviewed, you'll get an email that states your application has either been conditionally approved or denied.
- **Schedule and complete an interview.** You have 730 days from the date you get your conditional approval to schedule an interview at **Global Entry Enrollment Centers**. Be sure you bring your passport and another form of identification to your interview as well as a print out of your conditional approval and proof of residency, like a utility bill.

Once you're enrolled, you'll receive a nine-digit PASS ID. This number also allows you to use TSA Precheck to get through security faster.

Applying for Global Entry can take some time – anywhere from six months to a year – so you want to plan ahead. If you can't get your interview scheduled before your next trip, you can try Enrollment on Arrival. This allows you to complete the application process as you arrive in the US. However, you should note that not every airport offers walk-in appointments.

How Does Global Entry Work?

When you enter in the US, you'll typically follow signs to Global Entry kiosks where you'll have to do one of the following:

- Scan your passport or other ID.
- Enter your Global Entry or Trusted Traveler number.
- Have your picture taken for facial recognition software.

Next, the kiosk will give you directions for finding a customs agent, if you have something to declare, or for exiting the customs area.

What is a Global Entry Card?

Global Entry members also get a physical Global Entry card. This card helps members get through land and sea border crossings faster because it lets the member access to two additional TTPs:

- **Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI):** People with Global entry cards get to use dedicated lanes when crossing into the US at the southern border.
- **Nexus:** This program lets members use dedicated lanes or Nexus kiosks when entering Canada by air or Global Entry kiosks when entering the US through select Canadian airports.

Global Entry cards cannot be used at Global Entry kiosks. For that, you'll still need your passport or permanent resident card.

What Is DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program?

You should know that being a Global Entry member does not give you carte blanche. According to the CBPs

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site, you may still be selected for examination when entering the US. Plus violating the program's terms and conditions will result in the appropriate enforcement action and the termination of your privileges.

That said, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) manages a program to help travelers who've experienced difficulty going through security when entering or exiting the US. Called the [Department of Homeland Security Traveler Redress Inquiry Program](#) (DHS TRIP), the program helps travelers address issues, such as:

- Being denied or delayed aircraft boarding
- Being repeatedly selected for additional screening.
- Being denied or delayed entry to the US at an airport, seaport, or border crossing.
- Being told by a ticket agent that you're not authorized for travel.
- Being told by border police that your fingerprints need to be corrected.

If you experience problems like these, you can apply online for redress through DHS TRIP

What is a redress number?

When you apply for redress through DHS Trip, you'll receive a redress number that matches the case number on your file with the agency. Having a redress number helps you get the results of your application, but you only need one if you've opened a case with DHS.

Should you file for redress, you'll find your redress number under the Redress Control Number section of your DHS TRIP profile – and then, only after DHS has determined your case. It does not appear on your Global Entry card.

Pros & Cons of Global Entry for Travelers

Global Entry does provide a lot of benefits for international travelers, especially those who set out at least four times per year. Some of the biggest pluses are:

- **Speed:** Getting through customs quickly is the number one reason for getting Global Entry.
- **Cost:** Paying \$100 for a five-year membership seems like a pretty good deal for someone who travels overseas often. Even better? Several credit cards reimburse the cost when you use them for the application fee.
- **TSA Precheck eligibility:** Global Entry makes you eligible for TSA Precheck, which means no more worrying about the [3-1-1 rule](#).

But there are some cons to consider, namely:

- **Effort:** The application process can be long and requires more effort than other TTPs, so you want to be sure the benefits work for you before applying.
- **Privacy:** The government is going to run a background check on you. If you are not comfortable with this, then Global Entry may not be for you.
- **Group and family travel:** If you travel with people who don't have Global Entry, then you may end up waiting for them to get through customs anyway. Parents, in particular, should note that children need their own memberships to enjoy the benefits upon returning to the States.

Ultimately, deciding if Global Entry is worth it depends on your travel habits and budget. If you regularly [travel abroad](#), it may be worth the application fee to join.

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