



A Message from ICA leadership regarding ICA25 in Denver

Dear ICA members and attendees,

The 75th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (#ICA25), set for 12-16 June in Denver Colorado, USA, is shaping up to be ICA's largest conference yet, tracking with Toronto and Paris in terms of preregistration numbers. At the same time, we are closely monitoring the evolving situation in the United States which has raised concerns for some members of the ICA community intending to participate. We recognize your concerns regarding the uncertain environment and appreciate your feedback and perspectives.

We affirm ICA's dedication to a global exchange of knowledge and perspectives and protecting the free exchange of ideas among our members and attendees. Current rhetoric and actions in some US communities run counter to ICA's commitment to ensuring the full and equal participation of all members of our global academic community and conflict directly with ICA's [IDEA principles](#).

Visa Difficulties

No executive orders have addressed US B-1 visas from specific countries with the directness we saw in 2017. There are potential issues we are tracking regarding their effect on ICA attendees ([click here for more details](#)), but it is essential to note that **none** of the policy changes we are seeing so far affect B-1 visas, the US visa category for those attending conferences in the United States. The B-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows short-term business travel and is not the same as the H-1B visa that has been affected. It is also worth noting that most Executive Orders are being challenged in court, which effectively freezes their implementation.

Comfort Level

Visa specifics aside, some members of the ICA community have expressed concerns about their comfort level with traveling to Colorado. Denver is a liberal city with a vibrant Black community, a prominent LGBTQ community, and a focus on diversity, physical health, and environmental sustainability. The Denver airport is the largest airport in the US and the second-largest in the world, with [direct flights from multiple international destinations each day](#). Denver does not have a politically charged environment and regularly hosts large conventions of attendees from all over the world without incident, including last week's *International Conference on Sociology, Islam, Modernization and Globalization (ICSIMG)*; January's *Jewish Colorado* conference; this week's *42nd Annual Black World Conference*; the annual *Colorado Black Arts Festival*; the annual *Denver PRIDEFest*; and the *LGBTQ+ Victory Institute Public Leadership Summit*. We do not anticipate any safety issues regarding attendance at ICA25 in Denver.



Next Steps

Our immediate plan includes the following interventions, which aim to preserve your right as scholars to freely present your work and collaborate with your peers:

- As always, we have made standard invitation letters for visa purposes available via the submission website: you can find your letter attached to your profile in ScholarOne (the submission system). **As of 19 February, we have done a new run of all letters without the title of the paper(s) mentioned; papers are identified by submission ID number so that your research topics are not mentioned.** You may find these new letters in your profile as well.
- If you have an exceptional circumstance and need us to add your visa application number or unique wording in your letter, please send an email with your name and the titles of your accepted papers to invitationletter@icahdq.org.

If you have one or more presentations on the program and have been denied a visa (or you were given an 'earliest-possible' visa interview date *after May 15th*), please gather the information below and then [click here to fill out a web form—preferably prior to 27 February](#)—that includes the following information you should gather before filling out the form:

- your name
- the email address you used in the ICA ScholarOne submission system
- the titles of all your accepted paper(s) and the session(s) they are in (you will be able to see this when the program goes live on 21 February)
- a description of what specific difficulty you have encountered related to your visa
- a PDF or screenshot of your visa rejection, visa interview date notice, or other hard evidence regarding your potential inability to attend in person.

Alternatively, if you have some other difficulty not related to visas, please state that in your form.

Having this information will help us assess how many people we may need to accommodate in other ways, which will help leadership determine the best solution. Please submit the information above as soon as possible. **The Executive Committee is currently examining several options for alternative presentation formats to accommodate those few whose visas are denied. We will announce the plan by 28 February, before the housing block opens.**

The ICA25 conference features numerous panels specifically related to academic freedoms worldwide and topics such as Scholars Under Fire, recognizing that rigorous and open dialogue is essential at this moment. Many of these sessions are available to remote attendees, and we invite both in-person and remote attendees to engage in the kind of open dialogue that has always been one of the strengths of the ICA conference.



International Communication Association

Global Headquarters
1500 21st Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036 USA
(01) 202.955.1444

www.icahdq.org/

As we wrote in 2017, when the so-called "Muslim ban" was put in place shortly before our San Diego conference, "We reaffirm our belief that scholarship is expanded and enhanced by our differences. Indeed, we cherish the ideals of inclusion and diversity, and we celebrate difference; we do not tolerate speech or behavior that threatens the safety of—or discriminates in any way against—any person or group. Our leadership and our staff are committed to preserving these ideals. We are committed to ensuring that ICA as a whole, and our...annual conference in particular, are physically safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments for the exchange of knowledge and for the enhancement of scholarship and community."

We have faced difficulties together as a community, from the 2016 Fukuoka earthquake to 2017's travel ban, to two years of online pandemic conferences during which we delivered on our promise, "We will meet you where you are." The current situation is no different. We will release a statement regarding conference format adaptations, if any, no later than 28 February 2025.

Thank you for your patience and for being a member of the ICA #CommUnity.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee of the International Communication Association