

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING TO ATTEND SPECIAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

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International conventions are being planned for 2019 in various parts of the world. The last page of these instructions shows the cities and countries where conventions will be held and Spain has been invited as guest branch.

If after reading these instructions completely, you are interested in applying to be a delegate to one of the international conventions, you should complete the application provided by the congregation secretary and submit it to your Congregation Service Committee **no later than Monday, September 24, 2018.**

**The official website for the 2019 international conventions is [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org).** This site will provide basic information for each convention city and will be used to gather information from delegates to assist with planning activities. Potential applicants are welcome to view the website for helpful information. Later on, selected delegates will use their e-mail address and a password to gain further access to the website, where information on hotel accommodations, delegate activities, transportation, and other subjects can be found.

### APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

All those wishing to apply as delegates for one of the 2019 international conventions should be exemplary publishers in good health who can travel without the physical assistance of others. They should not be dependent on a wheelchair, an auxiliary oxygen supply, or similar health-related devices. They should not have problems standing and walking for long periods of time. All applicants should also meet one of the following requirements:

- (1) 19 years of age or older (as of January 1, 2019) and serve as an elder or a ministerial servant or serve in some form of full-time service. The baptized mates of such ones may also apply.
- (2) Baptized for 20 years or longer (as of January 1, 2019). The baptized mates of such ones may also apply.
- (3) Baptized and unbaptized minor children who are between the ages of 12 (as of January 1, 2019) and 19 years and are still living at home may accompany their baptized parent(s).
- (4) Baptized adult children who still living at home may accompany their baptized parent(s).

Single persons may apply if they either have prearranged a roommate of the same gender or if they agree to pay for a single-occupancy hotel room. The branch offices involved will not be making arrangements for two single delegates to share a room. Individuals who are engaged and will be married before the convention can apply as a group, similar to a married couple. Non-Witnesses should not be invited to travel with or otherwise accompany a delegate to a special or an international convention. If an applicant feels his situation merits an exception, he should discuss this with the local elders. The elders will then contact their branch for direction.

Often the tours and activities arranged by the host branches involve long periods of walking and standing, which has seriously taxed the energy and stamina of some delegates. Depending on the location and time of year, this can be combined with higher temperatures. In the past, applications have been received from individuals with severe obesity or with sight limitations that are not corrected by glasses. Long trips under difficult physical conditions could prove harmful to some people's health and could adversely impact the activities of other delegates. All applicants are encouraged to give serious and prayerful consideration to their health limitations and personal safety

before applying to become a delegate. Deaf publishers may apply if they have a hearing applicant in their group who can communicate with the deaf publisher.

Applicants must be exemplary in every respect, including dress and grooming. (2 Cor. 6:3, 4a; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Particularly when serving as a delegate to a special or an international convention, dress and grooming should reflect the decency and dignity that befit servants of Jehovah God. (*od* pp. 125-126; *km* 3/08 p. 3) We request that no blue jeans, spandex outerwear, or other tight-fitting clothing be worn during the duration of your trip. Because you represent Jehovah and his organization, you are expected to comply with these standards for dress and grooming while traveling, attending the convention, associating with the local brothers, and sightseeing. Please review the article entitled “Special Conventions Honor Jehovah,” in the November 1990 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, pages 7-8, paragraphs 1-5; and the brochure *Dress & Grooming for Visitors Touring Bethel*, available from the congregation secretary.

Please note: If the congregation elders determine that a publisher has lost his exemplary status, that person will no longer qualify to participate as a delegate to a special or an international convention. If this change of status occurs after one has entered into a business agreement with a travel agency or other travel provider, such as an airline or a hotel, the individual is still responsible to pay any and all expenses due (for example, cancellation fees, unused airline tickets, etc.) right up to the time the person is scheduled to depart. The individual will be fully responsible for any financial loss associated with his disqualification as a delegate.

If a special or an international convention will be held in the applicant’s home country, it is expected that the applicant is applying to attend a convention in a country other than his or her own. Before applying, potential applicants must consider the total cost of their trip and plan accordingly. Delegates are required to stay in the convention city for a minimum of seven nights in hotels arranged by the host branch. Hotel accommodations, food for the entire trip, reimbursement to the organization for the cost of branch-planned activities, and other expenses can easily cost over USD \$2,000 for two people, and that does not include airfare or other transportation costs for travel to and from the convention city. A family emergency or another type of unforeseen circumstance has caused delegates to have to cancel their travel at the last minute and incurred a considerable expense. A health emergency in a foreign land can be difficult to manage without adequate insurance. Therefore, consideration should be given to obtaining health and travel insurance.

The situations listed above highlight the wisdom of Jesus’ advice to “calculate the expense.” (Luke 14:28) Delegates should not expect local Witnesses to sponsor their visit; nor should delegates make unreasonable demands on their brothers in other countries. If a potential applicant cannot fully care for the expense of his travel and arrangements, he should not apply.

If a potential applicant does not speak English or the primary language of the host branch, the convention program and activities for the delegates may not be presented in a language he understands. At least one person in his group should be fluent enough to interpret for him from English or the primary language of the host branch.

## **SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**

If more than one member of a family is applying, a separate application is needed for each person in the family. Once your application has been completed, please submit it to the Congregation Service Committee for review. Upon approval, the secretary will use your information as a basis for completing an electronic application on [jw.org](http://jw.org). Once the application has been electronically entered, an automated e-mail message will be sent to the applicant for him to verify the submitted e-mail address. If your e-mail address changes at any time, inform the secretary so that he can update it on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

**Application Due Date:** Please submit the hard-copy application to the Congregation Service Committee **as soon as possible, but no later than September 24, 2018.**

**Travel Groups:** Effort will be made to accommodate the requests of those who wish to attend the same convention with family members or friends. However, the size of the group will be limited to no more than **eight** persons. One member of the group should be designated to serve as the group contact before applications are submitted. Generally, a brother will serve as the contact. However, if a group is made up of sisters only, one of them may act as the group contact. To be linked together, every applicant must use the same travel group identification (ID).

To obtain a group ID, the group contact must provide his e-mail address to the secretary, who will obtain a unique group ID from [jw.org](http://jw.org) and provide it to the group contact. The group contact must provide the group ID to the other members in his group so that they can include it on their respective applications. Using the same group ID is the only way to link applicants wishing to travel together, including friends and family members (even a marriage mate and others in the same household). All members in a group must stay in the same hotel and have the same preferences for activities.

You may invite someone to join your travel group if he is from another congregation and he meets the requirements mentioned under “Applicant Requirements.” However, the person you invite must be from your country or your branch territory.

## **DELEGATE SELECTION**

It is not necessary to contact the branch office to determine if a person has been selected. If the secretary can see that the “Status Summary” on [jw.org](http://jw.org) indicates “Applied,” the person has not yet been selected. Selected delegates will be notified, and more information relative to the specific convention for which the person has been approved will be provided, including the specific dates. Contact information will also be sent to the host branch office at the time of selection.

Once a selected delegate has confirmed his plans by reserving hotel accommodations, purchasing airline tickets, or paying a deposit to a travel agency, he should immediately update the “My Trip” page on the [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org) website with this information. He should also inform the secretary who will update his delegate status as “Confirmed” on the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website. Delegates who have confirmed their travel plans should submit their preferences for sharing in activities with the local brothers on the [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org) website. The earlier the delegate confirms his plans, the more likely it will be that the host branch can arrange the various activities according to the delegate’s preferences.

If you find that you are no longer in a position to attend the convention, please immediately update the “My Trip” page on the [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org) website and inform the secretary that you are canceling so that he may update your official status on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

## **ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO YOUR DEPARTURE**

**Paperwork and Documentation:** In addition to a passport, some countries require that you have a visa or other documentation in order to enter the country. The delegate is responsible to determine what legal documentation is needed and to obtain it personally. To avoid immigration problems, the delegate or a traveling companion must know the travel requirements regarding the entire trip.

**Air Travel:** After being selected, a delegate can choose one of the following options: (1) Contact a travel agency we have prearranged for the possibility of reasonably priced tickets on a first-come, first-serve limited basis. (See heading “Use of a Travel Agency for Auxiliary Tours.”)

(2) Contact a travel agency of his choice to acquire airline tickets. (3) Make his own flight arrangements into and out of the convention city.

**Hotel Accommodations:** No travel agency will be involved in securing hotel rooms in the convention city for the days immediately before, during, or after the convention dates. The selected delegate will be required to make his own reservations directly with one of the hotels listed on the [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org) website. This will be for the number of days he is able to stay in the convention city and in accordance with his airline reservations. All delegates are required to use only those hotels on the approved list provided by the host branch, even if a delegate feels that he can find a less expensive room or a private-home accommodation on his own. This is for logistical reasons related to getting delegates to and from the convention facility each day and for branch-planned activities the days before or after the convention. The hotels contracted by the host branch are of good quality, and the negotiated room rates are based on a specific number of rooms being filled in these hotels. Since most of the convention cities are tourist destinations and the hotels have high occupancies, the pricing of some hotels may be higher than at regional conventions in your home country.

**Special Rooming:** The purpose of special rooming is to provide more affordable accommodations for delegates (1) who have been in special full-time service for many years or (2) who are long-time faithful Witnesses who desire to attend a special or an international convention but are not in a financial position to cover all the costs. Special rooming accommodations are arranged in the private homes of local brothers and are available for a maximum of seven nights in the convention city.

If an applicant meets one of these two qualifications for special rooming, he should inform the elders that a private-home accommodation with the local brothers would make the difference for him and his mate, if married. (Other members of his travel group must qualify on their own merit to receive special rooming. Otherwise, the group may need to be split.)

Delegates accepting special rooming are responsible for their own transportation to and from their private-home accommodations and the convention and to and from any branch-arranged activities associated with the convention. If the convention provides bus or other transportation during the seven nights in the convention city, delegates accepting special rooming are responsible for the transportation to and from their private-home accommodations and the bus pick-up and drop-off locations. (Pick-up and drop-off locations are usually hotels where the majority of convention delegates are staying.)

There is no guarantee that special rooming will be available. Each guest branch is allotted a specific number of special rooming accommodations that they can assign, so special rooming accommodations are limited. The delegate's branch will notify him if he has been selected for special rooming. When the available private-home accommodations are filled, no further special rooming accommodations will be available and delegates will need either to (1) reserve and pay for a hotel room from the approved list or (2) cancel as a delegate. The delegate should not contact the host branch to request accommodation or special treatment.

Delegates should not make personal accommodation arrangements with local brothers without first discussing their plans with the host branch. Personal arrangements have cut into the available private-home accommodations, making it harder for the Hospitality Committee to arrange special rooming accommodations. If a delegate declines private-home accommodations and decides to use one of the approved hotels in the convention city, he should inform the branch office immediately, using [asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org](mailto:asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org) so that the special rooming provision can be made available to others.

## ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CONVENTION CITY

The emphasis is for the delegates not only to benefit from the spiritual association during the three-day convention but also to spend three additional days with the local brothers before or after the convention. This is so that there may be “an interchange of encouragement by one another’s faith.” (Rom. 1:12) Arrangements for the days you are in the convention city before or after the convention should not be made by a travel agency. Instead, the host branch office will create an itinerary for the delegate after receiving his activity preferences on the jw2019.org website (for example, going in field service, attending gatherings with the local brothers, and visiting places of local interest together). This will require spending a minimum of seven nights in the convention city.

**Ground Transportation:** Although in some cases the host branch will arrange transportation from the airport to the delegates’ hotels, the delegate is primarily responsible for transportation from the airport to his hotel. Usually there will be brothers at the airport to provide some direction. Regarding transportation to the convention site, if the hotel is not within walking distance, the host branch office will arrange for transportation to and from the facility during the three days of the convention only. They will also arrange for coach transportation for the branch-planned activities before or after the convention dates. The jw2019.org website will show suggested contributions so that delegates can defray these expenses by using any contribution box at the convention.

**Food Arrangements:** In most cases the hotels will include a breakfast each day as part of the room rate. Under normal circumstances the host branch will make arrangements with a vendor to provide delegates with a box lunch for the three days of the convention. In such cases, delegates can defray the expenses by using any contribution box at the convention. For the remainder of the time in the convention city, delegates will need to be prepared to make their own food arrangements.

**Association With Local Brothers:** In addition to the three convention days, the delegates are being encouraged to spend some time in association with the local brothers. As mentioned earlier, the association with local brothers might include sharing in the ministry, associating with them at gatherings, or visiting local places of interest together.

**Use of a Travel Agency for Auxiliary Tours:** The use of a travel agency is optional. However, a selected delegate may wish to use a travel agency to arrange a sightseeing tour before or after the seven days spent in connection with the convention. If a delegate would like auxiliary tours but prefers to make his own air arrangements, he should inform the travel agency that he would like to purchase a “land-only” tour package.

A travel agency can be helpful in determining what additional travel documentation is necessary, such as a visa, a passport, or other paperwork. However, it remains the delegate’s responsibility to obtain all necessary paperwork and travel documentation. As a reminder, no plans should be made with a travel agency until the delegate has been selected and has received his “Convention Selection Summary” page from the congregation secretary.

## 2019 International Convention Locations where Spain has been invited as Guest Branch

Convention City	Convention Dates	Host Branch	Program Language(s)
Buenos Aires, Argentina	December 13-15 **	Argentina	Spanish (simultaneous interpretation into English)
Guayaquil, Ecuador	June 14-16	Ecuador	Spanish and English
Monterrey, Mexico	June 7-9 **	Central America	Spanish (simultaneous interpretation into English)
Lisbon, Portugal	June 28-30	Portugal	Portuguese (simultaneous interpretation into English and Spanish)
Houston, United States	August 23-25	United States	Spanish only
Miami, United States	May 24-26	United States	Spanish only
Miami, United States	July 5-7	United States	English and Mandarin Chinese

\*\* Dates are tentative