

# Destination: Arkansas

## Foreign National Welcome Guide



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

**University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences**

**Immigration Services**

4301 W. Markham St.

Little Rock, AR 72205

Ph: 501-686-8132

Email: [askimmigration@uams.edu](mailto:askimmigration@uams.edu)

[www.hr.uams.edu/Immigration](http://www.hr.uams.edu/Immigration)

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

**Office of Immigration Services**

Barton Research Building

1st Floor, Room 1R23

**Office Hours:**

Monday: 9:00am—12:00pm; 1:30pm—4:00pm

Tuesday: Office Closed (phone and email only)

Wednesday: 9:00am—12:00pm; 1:30pm—4:00pm

Thursday: 9:00am—12:00pm; 1:30pm—4:00pm

Friday: Office Closed (phone and email only)

**[AskImmigration@uams.edu](mailto:AskImmigration@uams.edu)**

**(501) 686-8132**

## Welcome to UAMS!

The Immigration Services Office in Human Resources at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences provides assistance, resources and advice on a variety of immigration related employment issues and topics.

## UAMS Immigration Office: What We Do

- Employment verification letters
- Employment authorization & reverification
- Non-Resident Alien taxation compliance
- Travel packets & travel authorization
- UAMS J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS)
- H-1B visas & Labor Condition Applications
- Assistance with TN, O-1, and E-3 visas
- Assistance with EAD application preparation
- Institutional representation for employer sponsored immigrant and non-immigrant visas

We have provided this guide to help you as you begin your life in Little Rock and to help your transition in your new home.

(Revised 05/01/2019)

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## Lodging in Little Rock

### **Renting**

Apartments and houses may be rented. A list of available properties including the address and the monthly rent can be found in the classified advertisement section of the local newspaper. A Property Management Company can provide assistance in looking for places to rent. These companies may be found by looking in the Yellow Pages of the phone book.

1. Midtown Properties (501) 374-7007
2. Apartment Hunters (501) 219-2787

Below are a few examples of apartments within a 10 mile radius of UAMS:

***Lanai Apartments 5503 B. St., #9, Little Rock, AR (501) 664-2303***

***Westpark Meadows Apartments 1701 Westpark Dr., Little Rock, AR (501) 664-6412***

***TownePlace Suites West 12 Crossings Ct., Little Rock, AR (800) 627-7468***

***Brightwaters Apartments 2420 Riverfront Dr., Little Rock, AR (501) 664-8060***

A rental application may be required. The application may be obtained from the Property Management Company or landlord/owner. The application may ask for a Social Security number and proof that you are working. A deposit may be required with the first month's rent. The deposit may be refundable if the home/apartment is in clean and good condition when vacated. The lease will stipulate the duration for the contract, and the amount of rent and when it is due each month. It may also list the number of people who may live in the home/apartment and if animals are allowed. It is recommended that you purchase renter's insurance, as well.

## **Buying a Home**

Real Estate agents can help find a home to purchase. The agents may be found in the phone book under Yellow Pages or on the Internet. Agents may also be found in the “Classifieds” section of the newspaper under “Homes for Sale”.

A home loan may be required to purchase a home. A loan may be obtained from a bank or credit union. A home loan specialist will be able to assist in this process. For example:

1. Bank of America 1-800-432-1000 or [www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com)
2. Regions Bank 1-800-734-4667 or [www.regions.com](http://www.regions.com)
3. UARK Federal Credit Union (501) 686-6419 or [www.uarkfcu.com](http://www.uarkfcu.com)

Homeowner’s insurance will be required to help pay for any possible unforeseen damage to your home. Property taxes must also be paid on the value of your home. A real estate agent can help with this process.

## **Setting Up Utilities for Your Home**

### **Electricity**

Electricity can be turned on by contacting Entergy Arkansas at [www.Entergy-arkansas.com](http://www.Entergy-arkansas.com) or by phone at 1-800-368-3749.

A deposit fee may be required to turn on the electricity and some cases may be billed with the first bill. When calling, be prepared to give the home/apartment address and meter number (located on the meter attached to the home/apartment). A social security number or passport number will be needed for identification.

## **Setting Up Utilities for Your Home**

### **Water**

The Central Arkansas Water department can be reached at (501) 372-5161 and can activate water service via the telephone. There is a deposit and an activation fee that will be added to the first month's bill which will be sent by mail. Daily operation is Monday-Friday from 7:30am to 5:00pm. The company location is 221 E. Capital Ave, Little Rock, AR 72202

### **Telephone**

Home phone service can be obtained by calling AT&T at 1-800-464-7928. Proof of employment, complete address, and social security number or passport/visa information will be required. In some cases, a deposit will be required.

Cellular/mobile phones are also available. Requirements vary from provider to provider. Cell/mobile phone providers can be found in the phone book or online. Many cell/mobile phone service providers have retail stores that can handle service needs. For example:

1. AT&T 1-866-249-4852 or [www.wireless.att.com](http://www.wireless.att.com)
2. Verizon Wireless 1-800-922-0204 [www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com)

### **Cable Television (TV)**

Cable TV may be acquired by contacting your local cable provider. Many cable companies also provide Internet services.

## **Establishing a Bank Account**

### **Opening a Bank Account (Checking and/or Savings)**

The bank will ask for proof of your identity. This can be done by using a current driver's license or passport if you do not have a Social Security card. A cash deposit may be required to open the new account. Most banks have a minimum deposit and the amount will vary from bank to bank.

### **Using Your Account**

- Debit Cards—The bank may issue a debit card to use with a checking account. Debit cards allow payment for something without writing a check by having a bank send money from the checking account directly to the account of the business where the purchase is made.
- ATM Cards—The bank may offer an ATM card. It can be used at an ATM machine to withdraw or deposit money in the account. There may be fees associated with deposits and withdrawals if these are done at another bank. (This fee can range from \$1.00—\$3.00 per transaction)
- Personal Checks—A supply of personal checks will be issued when opening the checking account. These checks can be used to purchase items or services. Keep these in a safe place.

### **Getting a Credit Card**

Many banks and financial institutions will offer credit cards and can provide an application. Credit cards will ask confidential information (such as a Social Security number) so be very careful in this process. Although credit card companies send credit card applications in the mail, it is recommended to go through a bank or credit union.



## **Getting a Social Security Number**

### **Where to Apply**

The Social Security office closest to you may be found by calling 1-800-772-1213 or on the Internet at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Information on the Little Rock Social Security Administration office is listed below:

#### **Little Rock Social Security Office**

RM 1201 Federal Building  
700 W Capitol Street, Ste 2405  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Phone: 1-866-593-0933

#### **Office Hours:**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
9:00 am—4:00 pm  
Wednesday  
9:00 am—12:00 pm

### **Documents Needed to Apply**

For Social Security application you will need a job offer letter, your passport, I-94 document, and a document showing immigration status including permission to work in the U.S., such as an employment authorization document, DS-2019, or I-20. If you are in H-1B status, you will need only your job offer letter, passport and I-94. The social security card will be sent in the mail and typically takes 2-3 weeks to arrive. However, if you return to the Social Security Administration Office several days after you apply, they can often provide you with the social security number which has been assigned to you.

### **Spouse and Children**

Only spouses who have received work authorization approval are eligible to receive a social security card. It is not mandatory that spouses and children obtain a Social Security number.

## Getting a Driver's License or State ID

### **Non-Driver ID**

You may apply for either a state-issued non-driver I.D., or a driver's license. Please note that a driver's license can be used for identification in the United States. The documents needed to apply for a non-driver ID are:

1. Passport, 2. I-94 print-out, 3. Visa, and 4. Supporting Immigration Documents, such as I-20, DS-2019, or EAD

You may apply for a non-driver State ID at any Department of Revenue offices, listed here: [www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices](http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices)

### **Driver's License**

It is against the law to drive without a driver's license or without proper car insurance. You must take and pass a written and driving exam before receiving a license. These exams are given at the Arkansas State Police office, #3 State Police Plaza Drive, Little Rock, AR 72209 (SW Little Rock Area)

Details and study guides can be found at the [Arkansas State Police website](http://www.arkansasstatepolice.com).

If you are interested in driving lessons, you can find driving instruction companies online or in the phone book, or visit [www.thompsondriving.com](http://www.thompsondriving.com).

If you already have a valid license from another state, you may not be required to take these exams. The state office that issues driver's licenses is the Department of Finance and Administration Office of Driver Services.

We recommend visiting this office to apply for your drivers license:

1900 W. 7th St., (7th and Battery St) 2nd Floor

Little Rock, AR 72201

501-682-1631

[www.dfa.arkansas.gov](http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov)

## **Getting a Driver's License**

All applicants for an Arkansas Driver's license are required to provide proof of legal presence in the United States and proof of identity. To prove legal presence in the U.S., one of the following documents must be shown:

- Valid Foreign Passport with U.S. Visa, and supporting documents such as I-94, I-20, or DS-2019; or
- Employment Authorization Card

For a complete list of acceptable documents, visit the FAQs at [www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/driverServices/](http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/driverServices/)

## **Buying a Car**

### **Financing**

In order to buy a car, a loan from a bank may be needed or it may be financed. Many car dealers may provide financing, with approved credit, through their own in-house finance company. You may also pay for the car with cash or check. The car dealer or bank will need personal information and proof of employment and proof of auto insurance.

### **Insurance**

Auto insurance is required by law. Proof of insurance for the vehicle must be in the car at all times. Automobile insurance and agents may be found by looking on the website listed here: [www.autoinsurance.com](http://www.autoinsurance.com)

### **Vehicle Registration**

The vehicle will need to be registered with the state Office of Motor Vehicles, located in any Department of Revenue location. Once registered with the state a license plate will be issued that will attach to the back of the vehicle. Sales tax on the vehicle will be paid to the state at this time.

## **Employment**

### **Spouse/Children**

Dependents (spouse and children) of visa holders are not allowed to work without proper documentation or authorization by USCIS. All visa category employment questions will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Please contact our office at 501-686-8132 or [askimmigration@uams.edu](mailto:askimmigration@uams.edu), regarding employment so that we may assist you with any questions you might have regarding your visa status and any possible work opportunities.

### **Employee Benefits**

Please be advised that employee benefits will be addressed during orientation. If you have any additional questions regarding employee benefits, please contact the Human Resources department at 501-686-5650.

## **Taxes**

### **Income Tax**

Income tax is paid to federal, most state, and some local governments. “Taxable Income” is money that is earned from wages and the sale of property. Most people pay income taxes by having money withheld from their paycheck. The amount of the income tax that is paid is determined by how much is earned. Anyone who earns income and resides in the United States, and meets certain requirements must file a tax return and pay any taxes that may be owed.

### **Social Security and Medicare**

These are federal taxes withheld from a paycheck. These taxes together are referred to as FICA taxes. Depending on your visa status and history in the U.S., you may be eligible for an exemption of FICA taxes for a limited time. Contact the Immigration Services office if you have questions about your tax status and liability.

## **Taxes**

### **Sales Tax**

Sales tax are state and local taxes that are added to the cost of buying certain things. Sales tax is based on the cost of the item and is paid at the time of purchase.

### **Property Taxes**

Property taxes are state and local taxes that are paid on houses, land, and vehicles, and only apply if you are the owner. Property taxes are paid annually through the County Treasurer's Office. Notification will be sent in the mail stating the amount due and payment options. Property taxes may be paid at the Pulaski County Treasurer's Offices located at: 201 South Broadway, Little Rock, AR 72201. The office can be reached by phone at (501) 340-6040.

If you own or are financing a vehicle, you will be responsible for paying personal property taxes based on the assessed value of the vehicle. This can be done through any local Revenue Office. A complete listing of Arkansas Revenue Offices can be found at [www.state.ar.us/dfa/motor\\_vehicle/mv\\_revenue.php](http://www.state.ar.us/dfa/motor_vehicle/mv_revenue.php).

### **Filing Annual Tax Returns**

If you earned U.S. income during the year, you are required to file a federal and state income tax return. The tax return covers U.S. earnings from January to December of the previous year. The tax return must be filed by April 15th. If help is needed in filing a tax return, contact a tax preparation service by looking going to the website [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). or visit our website [hr.uams.edu/immigration](http://hr.uams.edu/immigration) for Tax Preparation Resources.

## **Education and Childcare**

### **Children's Education: Public Schools**

All children in the US regardless of immigration status are entitled to free public education. School attendance is mandatory for all children ages 5-17 in the state of Arkansas. Children must turn 5 years old on or before August 1st of that year to be eligible to enroll. The Little Rock School District Student Registration Office is located at 501 Sherman Street, Little Rock, AR 72201 and may be contacted at 501-447-2950 to determine, based on location of residence, what school the children will attend.

Little Rock School District main number—(501) 447-1000 or visit their website at [www.lrsd.org](http://www.lrsd.org).

### **Private Schools**

Private schools are listed in the phone book. Please be aware that monthly tuition fees are required for private schools.

### **Documents Needed to Register a Child**

- Immunization records are required to register a child in the Arkansas public school system
- Social Security Number (SSN) or ITIN number, if available
  - If the child does not have an SSN or ITIN, the School District office will provide a registration number for them. This number will only serve for school registration purposes as it has no “legal validity”.
- Birth Certificate or passport with visa document having both child and parent's name on it
- Proof of residence such as a lease agreement or utility bill

## **Education and Childcare**

### **Transportation**

Public schools generally offer free transportation to and from school each day. The school district will provide a bus schedule with bus stop locations. If the child is living within 2 miles of the assigned school, no transportation will be provided. If the child is attending a private school, free transportation is generally not provided.

### **Higher Education**

Depending on the visa category studying at a higher education institution may be possible. Information regarding visa type and study eligibility can be found here: [www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/Nonimmigrant%20Class%20Who%20Can%20Study.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/Nonimmigrant%20Class%20Who%20Can%20Study.pdf)

## **Recreation and Entertainment**

There are many cinemas, theaters, clubs, concert halls, and museums in Little Rock. The Arkansas Democrat Gazette and the Arkansas Times newspapers list weekly events and cost. Many restaurants are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book that includes both alphabetical listing, as well as type of cuisine. These companies may be found by intranet, google, and twitter.

There are several parks within the city limits, as well as many lakes and rivers within an hour's drive of Little Rock. Fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, hiking, and camping are some of Arkansan's favorite outdoor activities. The following website will give you additional information about the many activities, parks and recreation available in Arkansas.

[www.arkansas.com](http://www.arkansas.com)

## **Safety**

### **Safety On and Off-Campus**

Your safety on and off-campus depends on you. You must do your part to protect yourself against crime. You must be responsible with your belongings. Never leave your personal belongings unattended.

Use common sense to protect yourself. If you are walking at night, always walk with someone else and stay close to lights. Stay away from isolated areas and avoid shortcuts through alleys and parking lots. Don't carry a purse or book bag hanging from your shoulder, so that it can be grabbed and pulled off your shoulder. Don't carry excessive amounts of money, and don't count your money in front of other people. Put your wallet in your front pocket or in a buttoned back pocket.

Keep the doors and windows of your home locked at all times, especially if you are alone at night. If someone comes to your door, look out of a window or "peep hole" BEFORE you open the door. Don't open the door if you don't recognize the person. Keep the doors of your car locked while you are driving. It is very dangerous to hitchhike or give a stranger a ride in your car. Park your car in well lit areas and check the back seat of your car before you get in, especially at night.

If you have trouble while you are on campus, call the UAMS police at 686-7777 or pick up the phone under one of the blue flashing lights that are located in many areas around campus. Any one of these phones will connect you directly to UAMS police. Other number to remember:

Call Center-526-0000

Report a Fire-686-5333

Medical Emergency-686-7333



## **Safety**

### **Reporting Emergencies: 911 for Medical, & 311 for Police & Fire Departments**

Emergency Help: 911 (686-7333 on UAMS campus)

- ◆ 911 is the phone number for all emergency help such as fire, police and/or ambulance response.
- ◆ 911 should only be called to report a fire, a crime in progress, medical help or to report suspicious activities such as screams, calls for help or gunshots.
- ◆ 911 should NOT be called to report situations that are not emergencies.

Police and Fire Departments :311 (686-5333 on UAMS campus)

- ◆ 311 is the NON-Emergency number to call to report situations to the authorities such as barking dogs, traffic problems, and road hazards.

## **Tornado Safety**

### **What is a tornado?**

A tornado is a rotating column of air ranging in width from a few yards to more than a mile and whirling at destructively high speeds, usually accompanied by a funnel-shaped cloud.

### **What causes tornadoes?**

Thunderstorms develop in warm, moist air in advance of eastward-moving cold fronts. These thunderstorms may produce large hail, strong winds, and tornadoes.

### **Environmental signs that may indicate tornadic activity:**

A dark, greenish sky, wall clouds, large hail and a loud roar; similar to a freight train.

## **Tornado Safety**

### **How do I know if a tornado is in my area?**

Stay tuned to a radio or television station for local weather updates, Tornado Watches, and Tornado Warnings. If a siren sounds, it means to stay inside and find immediate shelter.

### **What is the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning?**

Tornado Watch: Advises people of an area in which a tornado **may** occur due to an impending storm or unstable weather conditions.

Tornado Warning: A tornado **has been seen** and persons in that area should seek immediate shelter.

Please be aware that tornadoes can occur rapidly thus making it impossible for the Weather Bureau to issue warnings for any and all tornadoes.

### **What safety precautions should I take?**

If you are in an automobile during a tornado, leave the vehicle for a more sturdy structure. If one is not available, seek shelter in an empty ditch, and lie down with your hands covering the back of your head and neck. If you are at home, it is best to go to the basement or cellar. If one is not available, find a small room in the middle of your home, such as a bathroom or closet. The more walls between you and the outside prove to be the safest. If at work please follow the tornado safety procedures in your department.

### **How do I prepare for future tornados?**

Conduct drills with your family in the home; make sure each member knows the correct procedures if they are at work, school, or outdoors when a tornado hits. Put together an emergency storm kit including a transistor radio, flashlight, batteries, and simple first aid items.

## **Traveling Within and Outside the United States**

### **Public Transportation/Taxis**

Buses, trolleys, and taxis are available for a fee. A taxi is most expensive, while buses and trolleys are the least expensive. Information and bus scheduling can be found at the River Cities Travel Center Bus Station at 310 East Capitol Avenue (501-375-1163), or on the web at <https://rrmetro.org/>.

Uber and Lyft are a ride-sharing apps that can provide transportation around Little Rock for typically cheaper than a taxi. For more information, visit [www.uber.com](http://www.uber.com) or [www.lyft.com](http://www.lyft.com).

Greyhound Bus Line is one of the intercity bus common carriers, serving over 3,800 destinations across North America. For more information, visit [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com).

Megabus.com is the first, low-cost, express bus service to offer fares as low as \$1. Travel to and from more than 100 North American cities. For more information, visit [www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com).

### **Traveling Within and Outside of the State**

Travel is allowed anytime, anywhere, within the United States, with the proper identification.

If you plan to travel outside of the United States, you must have the proper documents to allow you to reenter the country. The required documents may vary based on your visa type. If you have questions about traveling out of the country, contact the Immigration Services office at (501) 686-8132 or [AskImmigration@uams.edu](mailto:AskImmigration@uams.edu).

## Shopping in Little Rock

There are several different types of stores in Little Rock that you can visit during your stay here to find items you need.

**SPECIALTY FOOD STORE:** a store specializing in international, natural/organic foods or fresh foods/produce.

Local specialty food stores include **The Fresh Market, The River Market, Whole Foods, Vietnam Market, Asian Groceries, Indian Grocers, Mr. Chen's Asian Supermarket**

**SUPERMARKET or GROCERY STORE:** a large self-service store selling groceries, food items, and fresh produce.

Local stores include: **Kroger, Edwards Food Giant, and Wal-Mart**

**DRUGGIST/PHARMACIES:** a store that contains a pharmacy selling prescription medicine and also sells over-the-counter (nonprescription) medicine and other misc. items.

Local stores include: **Drug Emporium, Walgreen's, USA Drug, Wal-Mart, Kroger, and CVS Pharmacy**

**RETAIL STORE:** a store selling a wide variety of merchandise including but not limited to clothing, groceries, personal care products, bedding, over-the-counter medications, jewelry, etc.

Local stores include: **Target, Dollar General, Sam's Club, and Wal-Mart**

**DEPARTMENT STORE:** a store selling mostly clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and jewelry

Local stores include: **Dillards, Belk, JC Penney, Sears NLR, and Kohls**

## **Postal Service**

UAMS sells domestic postage stamps in the Mail Room. If you want to send mail overseas, you will have to purchase stamps at a Post Office. The closest Post Office branch, outside of UAMS, is located at 2803 Kavanaugh Blvd. Be sure when you address your envelope that you use the complete address, including the correct zip code.

Packages and Documents can be sent through the mail safely. However, be sure to send important items by registered or certified mail with a return receipt. If wanting to ship packages, you have several options to do so. Companies like Fed Ex, UPS, and DHL will send packages both domestically and internationally. Below are websites where you can research the best company for your shipping needs:

US Postal Service - [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

UPS - [www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com)

FedEx - [www.fedex.com/us/](http://www.fedex.com/us/)

DHL - [www.dhl-usa.com/](http://www.dhl-usa.com/)

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Stresses of Moving**

Moving can be quite a distressing event in the lives of you and/or your family. Although a move is for the best, it disrupts routine, familiarity, and security, thereby causing stress and anxiety. We at UAMS understand not just the everyday stress this causes —moving to a new place—but also the cultural changes that occur when transitioning to a new place to live and work. We strive to do all we can to make your transition a little smoother. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns, or needs.

## Miscellaneous

### **International Friendship Outreach**

International Friendship Outreach (IFO) is a local organization offering opportunities for social and cultural interaction between Americans and internationals who study, work, or live in the central Arkansas area. They sponsor a number of special events and outings during the year to make your time in Little Rock more enjoyable and memorable.

Interested in getting connected with this group during your time here?  
Please find the contact information as follows:

Kenneth and Anisha Hoekman

Email: [Kenishaifo@gmail.com](mailto:Kenishaifo@gmail.com)

Website: <http://ifoarkansas.org/>

### **Arkansas Chinese American Association (ACAA)**

**ACAA** is an organization that support, celebrate and empower its members by fostering a community that provides opportunities for interaction, networking and collaborations among its members and between members and their communities-both personal and profession.

If you are interested in getting connected with this group during your time in Arkansas, the contact information is as follows:

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/Arkcaalr>

Website link: <https://www.arkcaa.org>

## **Miscellaneous**

### **The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (Arkansas)**

AAPI (Arkansas) is an organization of the Indian medical community at large in the Natural State. Since its inception in 2008, AAPI-AR has grown from about 25 members to about 150 members, including those in private practice, faculty in academics, residents, fellows and medical students. Physicians in almost all specialties are members of this organization. AAPI is also open to physicians of non-Indian origin.

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to bring all the Indian physicians in Arkansas together and utilize the collective resource for the betterment of the individual members, their families, the community that we serve, and our own home country.

If you are interested in getting connected with this group during your time here, the contact information is as follows:

Website: <http://aapiarkansas.org>

Email: [aapiarkansas@gmail.com](mailto:aapiarkansas@gmail.com)

### **The Employee Assistant Program**

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) consultation service provides assessment, short-term counseling, information and referral (if indicated) for employees (including their spouses and dependents) who experience some form of personal distress. Services are confidential. Please find contact information as follows:

5800 West 10th Street, Suite 601, Little Rock, AR 72204-1761

Voice: 501.686.2588 Fax: 501.686.2576 Toll Free: 800.542.6021

Website link: <https://eap.uams.edu>