



*Honoring our immigrant past, shaping our immigrant future*

# Exchange Visitor Program Handbook



<https://exchange.americanimmigrationcouncil.org>

# EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

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Congratulations and Welcome to the United States! We wish you an amazing and life changing experience within your BridgeUSA J-1 Cultural Exchange Visitor Program. As your J-1 visa program sponsor, we will remain your advocate throughout the entirety of your program.

We ask that you become familiar with the information contained within this handbook as it will serve as an added resource to help you understand the rules and regulations surrounding your non-immigrant

status. It will also help guide you through important aspects of your cultural exchange training/internship or scholar program.

## ABOUT THE J-1 CULTURAL EXCHANGE VISA CATEGORY

The American Immigration Council, your J-1 visa program sponsor, is designated by the U.S. Dept. of State to sponsor international training programs under the J-1 visa. The purpose of the J-1 Cultural Exchange Visitor Program is to further the foreign policy interests of the United States by increasing mutual understanding between people of other countries and the United States by means of mutual educational and cultural exchanges. A J-1 Exchange Visitor participant is a non-immigrant who seeks to enter the United States for the purpose of enhancing professional skills by participating in a structured training/internship or scholar program conducted by a Third Party, your U.S. Host Organization.

A J-1 Exchange Visitor participant and their accompanying spouse and/or minor children may apply for visas to be admitted into the United States in J-1/J-2 classifications under Immigration and Nationality Act § 101(a)(15)(J) if the Exchange Visitor and their accompanying spouse and/or children each present American Immigration Council-issued SEVIS Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor [J-1] Status) to a U.S. consular official abroad.

## YOUR J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS

As a J-1 Exchange Visitor participant in an American Immigration Council sponsored program, you will enter the United States under a J-1 visa. Your J-1 status gives you certain privileges and responsibilities during your program in the United States. Please be familiar with the following points concerning your J-1 status:

- You have J-1 visa under a Trainee, Intern, or Scholar status.
- Your J-1 status is valid only when accompanied by the DS-2019 form sent to you by the American Immigration Council.
- You may receive training as described in the American Immigration Council-approved Trainee, Intern, or Scholar Placement Plan that accompanied your DS-2019 form.
- You may receive compensation for on-the-job training described in your placement plan.
- You are allowed to participate in guided work-based training at the Host Organization listed on your placement plan.
- Your placement plan is site specific; changes can only be made with written approval from the American Immigration Council.
- You cannot train at any site or Host Organization outside that which is noted on your placement plan.
- Any changes made to your placement plan must be approved before hand by the American Immigration Council. If you engage in any unauthorized training, you place your J-1 status in jeopardy of cancelation or termination.
- Treaties between your government and that of the United States may require you to return to your home country for a period of two years at the conclusion of your J-1 program. You should investigate if this applies to your participation before applying for the J-1 visa.

- You are required to keep the American Immigration Council informed of your progress within your program and your location while in the United States.
- You are responsible for contacting the American Immigration Council should any problems arise during your stay.

## OUR APPLICATION PLATFORM

You and your Host Organization will both have access to our application platform. Throughout your J-1 program to you will need to transmit vital information into the platform. It can be accessed via our webpage: [www.internationalexchangecenter.org](http://www.internationalexchangecenter.org). Your userid will be your email address and you will be able to create a password for your use. You should expect to enter information at a minimum as follows:

- To enter Arrival & Program Dates once your J-1 visa has been issued
- To enter Post-arrival Follow-Up Information once you arrive in the United States
- To complete to 30-Day Survey, 30 days after you begin your J-1 program
- To complete your Mid-Stay Evaluation
- To complete your End-of-Stay Evaluation
- To complete your Alumni Survey

In addition, you will also enter the following as necessary:

- Up-dates to U.S. residential addresses and contact information (i.e., email and phone numbers)
- Up-dates to I-94 arrival records
- Adding J-2 dependents who travel after the J-1 visa was issued
- Up-dates to host organization contact information

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

Before entering the United States in valid J-1 status, you must first obtain a J-1 visa in your passport from an American Embassy or Consulate in your home country. Your visa serves as your “ticket” to enter the United States in J-1 status, the certified documents we provide to you allow you to train in valid J-1 status with your U.S. Host Organization. If you are a Canadian national, you will process your J-1 application at the US/Canadian border.

Specific instructions on how to schedule an interview at the Embassy/Consulate to apply for your J-1 visa in your home country can be found on the U.S. Embassy/Consulate’s website. During your visa interview, you must present the original DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status) that was issued to you by the American Immigration Council. **We recommend that you do not finalize your travel arrangements until you have the visa in your passport.** Your certified Form DS-2019, Form DS-7002 (for J-1 Trainee/Intern program participants), Program Appointment letter (for J-1 Research Scholar participants) and J-1 visa are required to enter the United States. In fact, you will need to present these items to the immigration officers at the port of entry to be allowed entrance into the United States in valid J-1 status.

When you go to the Embassy/Consulate in your home country, please make sure to bring the following documents to ensure quick processing of your application:

- Form DS-2019. Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. This Form will be issued to you by the American Immigration Council.
- A copy of your fully signed Form DS-7002, Trainee/Intern Placement Plan. (Intern/Trainee category).
- Program Appointment Letter. (Scholar Category).
- Form I-901. SEVIS Fee Receipt. This Form will be issued to you by the American Immigration Council.
- Your Passport. Your passport should be valid 6 months beyond your intended period of stay in the United States.
- Form DS-160, Online Non-immigrant Visa Application. This Form is submitted electronically via Embassy/Consulate's website.
- Passport picture. Please confirm the photo specifications on your Embassy/Consulate's website.
- Required Consulate/Embassy application fees

Be sure to review your Form DS-7002, Training/Internship Placement Plan, before your visa interview. You may be asked questions about the information contained within. Also, be sure you have reviewed the Exchange Visitor, Host Company, and American Immigration Council Declarations that were signed during the program application process so that you are able to answer any questions about the role of each in your J-1 program. If you do not have copies, the text can be found in the application system which you can access through the link at: <https://exchange.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/>

In addition, you may be required to show that you have sufficient ties to your home country to compel you to return after the completion of your J-1 exchange visitor program. The following documents will help demonstrate your home ties:

- Evidence that you own a house or apartment. Evidence that you are not giving up the lease on a house or apartment.
- Evidence that you have a job or school waiting on your return.
- Evidence of dependents who will not be leaving the home country.
- Evidence of a spouse who will not be leaving the home country.
- Evidence of financial ties: bonds, bank accounts, property ownership, business investment.
- Evidence of leadership in community organizations.
- Evidence of other commitments that would compel you to return to your home country.

This is only a short list of what is required; please check the website of the specific Embassy/Consulate you will be visiting for up-to-date information.

Please note that all J-1 visa applicants are required to appear in person at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a brief interview. You will be asked for the reason why you are planning to travel to the U.S. (receive training to in your chosen career field & to return to your home country to share the skills gained), and to provide a biometric identifier, currently an inkless fingerprint. The applicant's field of study, prior travel to certain countries, and other factors may trigger "administrative processing" procedures. The additional procedures mean the visa application, in some instances, takes longer to process. Individuals should apply

for visas well in advance of their proposed training program start date to ensure entry into the United States in a timely manner. **Do not make final travel plans until the visa has been issued and you are in receipt of your passport and J-1 visa.** Please contact the American Immigration Council at [J1Program@ImmCouncil.org](mailto:J1Program@ImmCouncil.org) if you have any problems applying for your visa.

It is a good idea to make copies of all important documents pertaining to your training or internship before you leave for the U.S. Keep one photocopy of your DS-2019 form and J-1 visa stamp separate from your passport. You may need these copies if you lose your DS-2019 form or passport during your exchange program. Should you lose any of these documents during your stay contact the American Immigration Council immediately.

Also, please complete the Arrival and Program Dates form in our application system as soon as you have your visa and know your travel itinerary. As long as you have sickness & accident insurance and the J-1 visa, you will be able to enter the United States up to 30 days before the start date on the DS-2019 form. The information you enter in the Arrival and Program Dates form will be used to activate IMG group insurance if you have elected to be enrolled and to amend your program dates in SEVIS.

## TRAVELING WITH J-2 FAMILY MEMBERS

Each J-2 applicant will need to be issued a Form DS-2019 to apply for a J-2 visa outside the United States at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Eligible family members considered for the J-2 visa are spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21. Dependents are eligible to apply for work authorization during their stay in the United States. Work-age dependents should apply for employment verification through a USCIS regional service center after arrival. For more information and to access appropriate forms, please visit the USCIS website (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>).

## WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Upon entering the United States, you will need to present the following documents and information to immigration officials at your point of entry. Be sure to travel with these documents in hand:

- Your DS-2019 form
- Your Passport (with J-1 visa stamp inside)
- U.S. Customs document
- SEVIS I-901

Once you have entered the United States your hand will be scanned to confirm that you are the same person who was issued the J-1 visa. Your visa will also be scanned, and your non-immigrant status will be entered into the I-94 Entry Control system. This system notes your J-1 status, the number of entries into the United States you are allowed while in J status, and the date until which you may be in the United States. In most cases, the date will be entered as “D/S” which stands for “duration of status.”

The Immigration Officer will also inspect your DS-2019 form. Make sure you present the original copy of this document and remember to take it with you when you leave the Immigration checkpoint. You cannot



begin your exchange program without the stamped, original copy of your DS-2019 and your I-94 status. Be sure to secure all documents with your passport before you leave the Immigration checkpoint. After you go through Immigration you will pass through Customs. Please make sure all prescription drugs are clearly marked and remember that you cannot bring perishable food and articles made from protected species. If you are carrying more than \$10,000 you must report this to Custom Officials.

Don't forget to also reach out to your J-1 case manager with the American Immigration Council to inform them of your entry into the United States. You will also need to complete your Post-Arrival Follow-Up Information form into the J-1 application platform. Once you have informed us of your arrival and complete the Post-Arrival Follow-Up Information form, we will activate your J-1 status in SEVIS. **Without SEVIS activation you are not authorized to begin your J-1 program.**

## SEVIS

SEVIS (the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is the tracking system used by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to monitor the location and visa status of individuals who hold F, J, and M non-immigrant status. The American Immigration Council, as your J-1 visa program sponsor, is under obligation to the U.S. government to maintain the integrity of your files in SEVIS. For this reason, you must notify us of your U.S. arrival in a timely manner as well, any changes to your U.S. residential addresses, travel plans, or any changes to your program in or to avoid placing your J-1 status in jeopardy.

## HOUSING

Prior to coming to the United States to begin your J-1 training program, you should research housing options so that you are prepared before your arrival. Your best resource to identify safe and affordable options is the human resources department within your Host Organization. They may have a list of affordable apartments or Airbnb's within the area. When searching housing options be sure to keep in mind the distance of housing to your Host Organization's location, transportation options, the safety of the area, and costs. Please note that it is ultimately your responsibility to find housing. If you require our assistance with your search, please email us at [j1program@immcouncil.org](mailto:j1program@immcouncil.org).

## SICKNESS & ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Please note that the United States does not provide government-provided health insurance. Per U.S. Dept of State's J-1 rules and regulations, J-1 and J-2 participants must obtain insurance coverage which meets its program requirements during the entirety of your stay in the United States. Coverage must be at least \$100,000 per illness/accident, at least \$25,000 for the repatriation of remains in the case of death and may include a deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness. Medical evacuation coverage must be at least \$50,000. It must also have insurance claims paying ability rating of A- or better from either A. M. Best or Standard & Poors.

This insurance may be provided either through the Host Organization or through another policy meeting the U.S. government regulations on J visa exchanges. This insurance must be submitted with your J-1 application to the American Immigration Council for vetting. You also have the option of purchasing insurance from the American Immigration Council through your program.

If you need to seek medical treatment during your stay, please be sure to seek care appropriately for the condition/situation that you are experiencing. If you have questions with regards approved physicians or urgent cares within the area, please reach out the number listed on your insurance card. Keep in mind if you are treated for a medical issue, you may have to pay the bill first and file a medial claim with your insurance provider afterwards. Please be sure to reach out to your provider should the need arise. Please keep us informed as well should you suffer a medical emergency. As your J-1 visa program sponsor, we are concerned about your health, safety, and wellbeing. You can contact us by reaching out directly to your J-1 case manager, via email at [j1program@immcouncil.org](mailto:j1program@immcouncil.org) or via phone at 202-507-7532.

## SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

Exchange visitors must apply for a U.S. Social Security Number at the Social Security Office nearest to your Host Organization. This number will be used for your host site's payroll records, to open bank accounts, rent apartments, apply for a driver's license, etc.

Please wait at least 3 – 5 days after your J-1 status has been activated in SEVIS by your J-1 case manager before applying for your Social Security. To locate the Social Security Office nearest your host site, go to <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>. (If that web address is too confusing, you can link to it from [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)).

To apply for a Social Security Number, you will need the following items:

- Original DS-2019 form
- Passport with your J-1 visa stamp and I-94 status
- I-94 Admission Record (downloaded from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>)
- Application for a Social Security Number (Form SS-5)

The Form SS-5 can be downloaded at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>

Things to remember when completing the Form SS-5:

- Fill in your name as it is on your passport
- Use your U.S. residential or your training/internship site address
- You are a legal alien allowed to work
- You will need to enter your mother's birth surname (maiden name)
- All requests for Social Security information refer to the U.S. system, not to your home country
- Dates are written month, day, year

Please understand that obtaining a Social Security Number can take several weeks. If you have not received the Social Security Card within one month, you should notify the American Immigration Council with the following information:

- The date you applied for the number
- The address of the Social Security Office where you applied for the number
- The name of the agent who took your application, if known
- Your U.S. mailing address and telephone number
- The Social Security application reference number, if known

If there are delays in receiving a Social Security Number, you must still begin your training or internship. The following web site explains to your host site how to put you on the payroll pending the receipt of the Social Security card: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm>.

## GETTING ON THE PAYROLL

You will need to fill out various forms before your employer can add you to the company payroll. The first is required of all employees, both U.S. citizens and aliens, to document the legal ability to work. An I-9 form should be completed within three days of starting the on-the-job component of your training or internship.

To complete the I-9 form you will need the following:

For column A:

Passport - Confirms Identity

I-94 admission record - Confirms legal entry, length of stay, and J-1 status

The American Immigration Council suggests you may wish to include the DS-2019, which notes your host company as the approved employment site, in column A as well. With the completed I-9 form, the employer may wish to retain photocopies of the passport identity page, the J-1 visa, the I-94 admission record, and the DS-2019 form.

You will also need to fill out a W-4 form. This form tells your employer what Federal taxes should be withheld from your pay. As a J-1 trainee/intern you are subject to U.S. Federal taxes, except in the extremely rare event of a tax treaty between your government and that of the U.S. Unless you have previously been in the United States within the last six years on a J-1 visa, you will be classified as a nonresident taxpayer for Federal taxes. This means you are not subject to Social Security or Medicare withholding during the first two calendar years, or parts thereof, that you are in the U.S. on a J-1 visa. You will need to provide your employer with two documents:

- A memo stating that you are a non- resident taxpayer due to your J-1 visa status, therefore not subject to Social Security or Medicare withholding.
- A completed W-4 form.

As a non-resident taxpayer, you are considered to be single (even if you are married) and you are allowed one exemption (even if you have children). Following the guidelines of IRS Publication 515, non-resident alien taxpayers are suggested to fill out the W-4 form as follows:

- Check off "single" in box 3, regardless of actual marital status.
- Claim only one exemption on line 5 (unless a tax treaty applies).
- Write "Nonresident Alien" or "NRA" above the dotted line on line 6.

For a more detailed explanation than this, you should download Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publication 519, the U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens and IRS Publication 515, the Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Entities at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p515.pdf>.

Exchange visitors from Canada, Mexico, American Samoa, Japan, Korea, or India may want to check with a tax specialist to determine if a tax treaty will affect their withholding information.

Exchange visitors who have been in the United States previously on J-1 visas, and who meet the substantial presence test as described in IRS Publication 519, will be classified as a resident taxpayer, and subject to the same taxes as American citizens, including Social Security and Medicare.

Many States and local communities also tax income. You may wish to visit the website for the State where your training/internship site is located or speak to a tax agent at the State Department of Taxation. Websites can be located through the following link: <http://www.taxadmin.org/fta/link/default.php?lnk=10>

With tax law changing from State to State, Community to Community, and year to year, the American Immigration Council cannot give definitive tax information. If you need help, call, and we will direct you to the IRS or State office that can help you.

## EVALUATIONS

U.S. government regulations under which you have been issued the J-1 visa require that you and your direct supervisor complete a Mid-Stay and an End-of-Stay evaluation. The American Immigration Council may require additional evaluations during your stay. The timely submission of the evaluations to the American Immigration Council helps to ensure that you stay in good standing with your J-1 visa. All evaluation questions are completed in our application system. You and your supervisor will access the forms at the proper times using your e-mail addresses and passwords to enter the system.

Current evaluations/surveys include:

- 30-day post arrival survey – completed by the J-1 participant
- Mid-stay evaluation – completed by the J-1 participant and supervisor for programs of six months or longer
- End-of-stay evaluation – completed by the J-1 participant and supervisor
- Alumni survey – completed by the J-1 participant

## TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

If you are planning to travel outside the U.S. for vacation or holiday during your J-1 program, you must have your DS-2019 form endorsed by the American Immigration Council before you plan to travel. Please send the original copy of your DS-2019 form to the American Immigration Council at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled date of departure by courier (FedEx, UPS, Express Mail, etc.) with a Travel validation Request form completed by your direct supervisor stating the approved dates of your travel and confirming the mailing address of your host site. The American Immigration Council will then sign the front of the form, indicating you are in good standing in our program, and return it to you at your host site address. If you are sending the DS-2019 with less than two weeks to process the request, you should include a pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope in which for us to return your form to you.

Before you leave the U.S., check the expiration date of the J-1 visa in your passport and the end of training/internship date on your DS-2019 form. If your J-1 visa expires while you are in the U.S. and your DS-2019 is still valid, you may legally continue your J-1 program. However, if you leave the country you will need to apply for another J-1 visa before you can re-enter and continue your training/internship. Please contact the American Immigration Council if this is the case and we will help you get your documentation in order so you can apply for another J-1 visa while you are abroad.

## FAMILY MEMBERS TRAVELING SEPARATELY

If your spouse or children plan to enter the U.S., they must each have their own DS-2019 forms and must apply for J-2 dependent visas before they can come to the U.S. Each must also be covered by sickness and accident insurance in compliance with the minimum standards of the J regulations. If you plan to have your family join you in the U.S., please notify the American Immigration Council.

## PROGRAM EXTENSIONS REQUESTS

The maximum length of training under the American Immigration Council program is 18 months for trainees, 12 months for interns, and 5 years for the Scholar program. If your host company originally requested a training period shorter than the maximum duration an extension may be requested. This request is initiated through our on-line system by both you and your supervisor completing the Extension Request tasks 30 days before your current program end date and via email to your J-1 case manager. The requests must detail why the extension is necessary and what new skills you will be acquiring during the extension. A new DS-7002 form will need to be developed for the period of the extension. There is also a fee for this service.

Remember, the J-1 visa in your passport shows the dates you may legally enter the U.S. These dates will not affect your extension unless you need to leave and re-enter the country. Please notify the American Immigration Council as soon as possible if you need to leave the U.S. with an expired visa.

## HOST ORGANIZATION TRANSFER REQUESTS

Please note that you are only allowed to train with the Host Organization listed on your Form DS-2019 and DS-7002. If you wish to transfer to another Host Organization, this must be approved by the American Immigration Council. The new training program would have to be similar in nature to your current program. Your J-1 case manager would need to vet the potential new program to ensure it meets U.S. Dept of State J-1 regulation. Should a transfer be granted a few is associated with this service.

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

From the day we are born, cultural norms form our understanding of what should be expected. Our cultural norms unconsciously influence what we talk about, what we eat, what we wear, what smells are considered normal, how the bathroom works, what we consider to be "fun", and what is the "correct way" to do something. Adjusting to a new environment, where everything carries new meanings and new definitions of correctness, typically produces a series of emotional highs and lows. Faced with daily questioning of why we do what we do puts our personal identity and self-esteem in crisis. This crisis produces stress.

There are five very important things you can do to reduce the stress caused by cultural change and to maintain your overall health:

- Drink plenty of water and juice
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet; be sure you are getting enough protein, vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates as you experience foods that are new to you.
- Get enough sleep. Cultural adjustment can be exhausting.
- Lower your expectations. You have spent a lifetime learning about your own culture. It will take time to understand a new culture and routine.
- Ask questions. Do not assume that because something looks the same as it does at home, it carries the same cultural meaning in the U.S.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your J-1 case manager for assistance at any time. As noted throughout your J-1 program, your health, safety, and welfare are our top priority. We can refer you to resources to help you adjust to your new community.

## EMERGENCIES

As your program sponsor, the American Immigration Council is officially responsible for you during the time reflected on your DS-2019 form. It is our duty to provide you with up-to-date information and emergency assistance, if necessary, to give you the best possible experience as an exchange visitor in the U.S. Please note the procedures for the following common emergency situations:

- Medical emergency: first call 911 for emergency assistance, and then contact the American Immigration Council as soon as possible. Insurance inquiries should be directed to your medical insurance company.
- Lost or stolen passport. File a police report in the jurisdiction where you believe the passport was lost or stolen, and then notify your home country's Embassy or Consulate in the U.S. as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup> Act fast, do not allow yourself to become a victim of identity thief.

- Lost DS-2019: Contact the American Immigration Council.
- Lost Social Security Card: call the Social Security Administration at toll free 1-800-772-1213.
- Tax and payroll: first speak with the payroll personnel at your host site. Contact the American Immigration Council if you are having difficulty resolving issues.
- Crime victim emergency: first call 911 for assistance, and then contact the American Immigration Council as soon as possible. Note that a crime victim emergency is for an event that is in progress or has just happened. If you discover you have been a victim of a crime after the fact, call the regular number for the local police department.
- Arrest: please note that if you are arrested for a crime or misdemeanor, the American Immigration Council may not be able to help you. We would contact your consulate in the United States if you are not able to do so, and we could refer you to legal counsel. You would be responsible for any court or legal counsel costs. In any case, if you find yourself in legal trouble, contact American Immigration Council as soon as possible.

If you are unsure if the American Immigration Council can help you with a specific question, please notify us. We will be happy to help you or to direct you to the agency or department that can help.

## LEGAL INFORMATION

### Local Laws

Unlike most countries, laws in the United States vary from state to state and even city to city. It is important for exchange visitors to become familiar with and obey the local laws in the town or city where they are living, so as to avoid any potential legal difficulties. For example, most states require a driver to carry his or her license whenever driving. In some states, driving without a license can result in immediate incarceration, while in other states the driver may be given a citation or an opportunity to produce the license at a later time.

Local laws that govern public alcohol consumption, noise levels, and group gatherings can be strict. In order to maintain order, local police often aggressively enforce minor laws.

### Narcotics

Illegal possession of controlled substances (drugs) in the U.S. is subject to prosecution by law. The penalties for drug possession vary from state to state and region to region. Any type of illegal drug use is a serious offense in the U.S. and cause for termination from the American Immigration Council J-1 Program. People are subject to fines and possible time in jail for any drug possession or association with people who have drugs themselves. Offenders face deportation and could be prevented from returning to the U.S. at a later time.

State laws regarding the possession and use of marijuana are particularly confusing. While some states now allow for the possession and use of small amounts of marijuana, federal law still prohibits this drug

nationwide. The American Immigration Council recommends that exchange visitors avoid testing the state laws as federal consequences could affect future visas to the United States.

## Alcohol

People are required to be at least 21 years old to drink alcohol legally in the United States. Many exchange visitors come from countries where the legal drinking age is much younger and this can be quite a culture shock. People are asked to produce picture identification to prove that they are above the legal drinking age if they look 30 years old or younger. Drinking in public (i.e. outside a bar, restaurant, or the residence) and with an open container is prohibited in many places, especially in beach or resort towns. Exchange visitors will be subject to fines and possible jail time if they are found guilty of these infractions.

### Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

A national campaign to raise awareness of "drunk driving" and decrease alcohol related traffic accidents has swept the United States. Because of this, the enforcement of DWI/DUI laws has become very tough. Americans generally appoint a "designated driver" when going out with a group of friends. This person agrees to refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages and serves as the driver to get the friends safely home.

## Smoking

As part of an intense anti-smoking campaign in the United States, tough measures provide a smoke-free environment. There are federal, state and local laws governing smoking in public places. Smoking is banned on all domestic air flights and will eventually not be allowed in all restaurants and bars. Many communities have laws prohibiting smoking within a set distance of an entry door. Smokers should look around before lighting a cigarette and ask what the rule is before smoking. "No Smoking" signs are usually, but not always, posted in a clear, visible location. In order to purchase cigarettes, one must be at least 18 years old and must show identification to verify age. Smoking may also deliver cultural messages regarding the age, class, and gender of the smoker that can be interpreted differently in various parts of the United States.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any time an individual is uncomfortable with another's comments, discussions, or approaches that can be interpreted as carrying a sexual overtone. It is illegal in the United States and can result in employment suspension or termination. Understanding what constitutes sexual harassment in the United States may be one of the greatest cultural differences you face. An explanation of "it's different in my country" will carry little weight in the American workplace.

## ENDING YOUR TRAINING/INTERNSHIP

Before you leave the U.S., you and your supervisor complete an End-of-Stay evaluation in connection with your J-1 program. The evaluation forms are found in our application platform. There are two sections, one for you and one for your supervisor. Your Certificate of Completion will be sent only after the End-of-Stay Evaluation is received from both of you. You must also reach out to your J-1 case manager to provide



them with your return flight information. If you have any questions regarding, please contact the American Immigration Council.

As a J-1 exchange visitor you are allowed to be in the country as a tourist for a total of 30 days after the final date of the program on your DS-2019 form. You are not allowed to train or work at your host company during this time; however, you should use these 30 days as a way to travel and see the U.S. before you return to your home country.

During this 30 day "grace period," you can stay in the United States lawfully while you prepare for departure. You have had the wonderful opportunity to gain career enhancing skills that will be of great benefit to you and your future. You have also had the chance to be exposed to a new culture and to share with those around you the unique culture that you bring. The American Immigration Council hopes that you have great success in your future plans and that someday you can visit the U.S. again. In the meantime, we would love to hear how you have used what you learned as an American Immigration Council sponsored trainee or intern to further your career at home. Send us an e-Mail or comment on J1 Journeys!

## LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

As an exchange visitor with the American Immigration Council Exchange Visitor Program, you have been given a great opportunity not only to learn important skills to further your career in your home country, but also to learn about U.S. culture and the way of life that is unique to Americans. During your stay in the U.S., you should visit the local attractions and sites in your city. Venture outside of your immediate area and, when time is available, travel around the country, seeing the diversity that makes America great.

During your program, you are encouraged to attend social functions with your host company, as well as to visit the many parks, museums, theaters, and historical sites, and other cultural opportunities available in your area. You will find not only that there are many differences between your home country and the U.S., but there are also many similarities that will open your eyes and show not only our diversity, but also how alike we all are.

To get to know Americans, it pays to know certain mannerisms and habits many Americans share.

## Getting Started

### Electricity

The United States electrical system uses 110 volts, 60 Hz (cycles). It is the same system throughout the entire 50 states. If bringing appliances from home, the exchange visitor will need to purchase a transformer and plug adapter that can handle the wattage of the particular appliance.

### Time Differences

The United States is divided into five time zones - Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific and Hawaii-Aleutian. Most, but not all, states maintain Daylight Savings Time. [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock) is a good web site for figuring time changes.

Most Americans view time as a commodity that can be spent or saved. Being "on time" is valued. Being late can be seen as evidence of disrespect or disinterest. If you find that you are going to be more than five minutes late for an appointment, you will be expected to call with your apology and expected time of arrival.

## Temperature Measurement

In judging temperatures, there is an easy formula for roughly translating Fahrenheit to Celsius. Subtract thirty from the Fahrenheit number and divide by two to calculate the Celsius temperature. To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply the Celsius number by two and add thirty. (If you want to be more accurate, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit number, then divide by 9, next multiple by 5.)

### United States Units of Measurement

The United States does not use the metric system; rather our system is broken down into inches, feet, yards, etc. Exchange visitors who want more information about the metric conversion are encouraged to check out [www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com) and search for conversion factors.

## Everyday Life in the United States

### Greetings and Introductions

Americans shake hands firmly with each other when first introduced, or when they meet again, but rarely when they part. When having a conversation, it is considered impolite not to introduce newcomers who may join. Hugging is acceptable when greeting someone who is a close friend or family member. However, touching or handholding with someone who is not a close friend or family member can be seen as an expression of sexual attraction. In recent years, casual friends have begun to "fist bump" upon greeting. This is thought to be more hygienic than a handshake but is considered less formal.

### Distance and Eye Contact

When two Americans are standing and talking to each other they stay an arm's length away from each other. Maintaining eye contact is a sign of interest and respect. Avoiding eye contact is understood as discomfort or an admission of shame.

### Gender Roles

Discrimination based on gender, race, or ethnicity is not accepted in the United States. In the workplace, you can expect to see women and men sharing the same jobs and having equal responsibility.

## Foreign Languages

If an exchange visitor is with a group of mainly English-speaking people and the conversation is going on in English, it is not polite to speak in the exchange visitor's own or another foreign language. Avoid swear words in any language (people are often surprised when someone else has a comprehension of the language they are speaking). Swear words are not acceptable in professional settings. They carry a much stronger offensive meaning in the United States than they might in other English-speaking countries.

## Formal and Informal Attire

For some people, and in some regions of the United States, "informal" means blue jeans and T-shirts. For some others, it means sports jackets and ties. Ask specific questions about the expected attire for an event. Even if informal clothing is in order, clothes should be kept clean and neat. The phrase "formal" (also referred to as "Black Tie") means tuxedos for men and evening dresses for women. Semi-formal means business suits (jacket and tie) for men and cocktail dresses for women.

## Public Services

The term "public services" refers to services available to consumers offered by private stores, corporations, and companies, rather than by the government or not-for-profit organizations. Products and services vary greatly in quality, accessibility, price, and suitability. Visitors will have to become informed consumers to get the greatest value and working knowledge out of the American markets.

## Newspapers

Newspapers are as a convenient tool to scan the local businesses, services and resources. Newspapers often have discount coupons that can be presented to merchants for savings on many products and services. Weekend editions of newspapers contain valuable information about the specific city including movies, concerts, special events and other items of interest. Increasingly, American newspapers are being published on-line. They can provide interesting insight into the community before and during your J program.

## Public Libraries

Exchange visitors are encouraged to search out the local public libraries to familiarize themselves with the facilities. Most libraries have consumer information, books on getting the most value for the dollar, orientation lectures and booklets, Internet services and free consumer-oriented publications and pamphlets. The public library is simply the best source for information about practically anything. Library staff is trained on how to find the information.

## Photo Developing

It has become difficult to get camera film developed in the United States. Many discount stores and drug stores will send the film away to be developed. It can take several days for the photos to be returned electronically.

Electronic pictures can be printed at many discount and drug stores at reasonable prices and the pictures are returned the same day. Be sure to check the quality of the pictures before paying for them.

## Drug Stores

Drug stores in America sell more than medicine, though all will have a section where prescription drugs are dispensed. Drug stores can be as big as supermarkets, with aisles selling stationery supplies, light bulbs, food and greeting cards. Drug stores are also called "pharmacies."

The pharmacist may be an excellent resource for recommending over the counter remedies to minor ailments such as poison ivy rashes, pollen allergies, and the common cold. Many drug stores now have on-site health clinics for dispensing flu shots and treating minor ailments.

## Public Restrooms (toilets)

Public restrooms in the United States vary widely in availability and cleanliness. Most can be used without paying a fee. In the middle of large cities, hotels are the easiest places to find a clean public restroom facility. On the road, service (gasoline) stations and fast-food restaurants have free restroom facilities.

## American Money

The basic unit of American currency is the dollar (\$1). Coins are in the value of 1 cent (a penny), 5 cents (a nickel), 10 cents (a dime), 25 cents (a quarter), 50 cents (a half dollar), and one dollar. Fifty-cent coins are rarely seen.

American paper money is the same color and the same size in all denominations. \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 dollar bills are most commonly used. Each bill will have a picture of a famous American on the front, and the bill's numerical denomination on each of the four front comers. Exchange visitors will have to be careful at first not to confuse the denominations.

American coins are even more confusing than currency notes. American coins do not have a number value on them but instead the amounts are spelled out. The coins are not minted in size order. The dime is smaller than the penny.

## Tipping

It is important to realize that for many professions, particularly waiters and waitresses, taxi drivers, hairdressers, porters and bellhops, tip income is at least half of the worker's total income. If in doubt, tip a little more than usual, especially if service was good or the person was friendly.

## Restaurant Tipping

In America, when served by a waiter or waitress at a "sit-down" restaurant, people are expected to leave a tip or gratuity of 15 to 20 percent of the bill. Service is almost never included in the price of the meal. In some restaurants, a service charge will be added to the bill, which means the group does not have to leave a tip, but this practice is rare. If consumers receive poor or rude service, this is expressed with a smaller tip. If the restaurant check is divided with several other people, the diners would then take the sales tax and tip into consideration when figuring out how much each person owes.

## Service Personnel

When people order take-out food or groceries, there should be tip of 5 to 10 per cent of the total bill.

### Taxi drivers

Taxi drivers are usually tipped 10 -15% of the total bill.

### Porters, skycaps and bellhops

The general etiquette is to give porters at least \$1 for each bag.

### Hairdressers and barbers

Hairdressers are generally tipped at least 15%.

### Coat check

When someone checks his or her coat, it is appropriate to tip \$1 if there is no charge for the service.

### Hotel services

The maids (housekeepers) are generally tipped 2 or 3 dollars a day or more, depending on how messy you are. Room service waiters are tipped at 15% of the food bill. If the hotel concierge goes out of his or her way to help someone, a tip from \$10 - \$20 is expected.

### Valet parking

Valet parking attendants expect a \$1-2 tip for their services.

## Banking Services

Exchange visitors may want to open a checking account at a local bank as soon as they can upon arrival. Services and fees vary from bank to bank and area to area. Checking accounts may have fees per month and per check. It is advised to check with several different banks to find the one that best suits your individual needs. Also ask what documents the bank will need to see in order to open an account.

### Automatic Teller Machines (ATM)

Most bank accounts provide bank cards that can be used at 24 hour automated teller machines (ATMs). At least two banking networks, the Cirrus network and the Plus network, offer services at machines in

many locations across the United States. When staying in major cities, a bank card may prove as useful as traveler's checks or credit cards. Exchange visitors will want to check with their local financial institution before leaving home to verify if they are able to use their bank card at these machines.

Banks may charge a fee of between \$1- 2 or more per withdrawal for using an ATM machine belonging to another bank. Some banks do have a service charge for using their own personal ATM.

### Getting Money in a Hurry

#### Traveler's Checks

Traveler's Checks are a convenient and safe way to finance travel expenses. They are refundable if lost or stolen, and can be purchased at any bank. Making a separate list of check numbers and buying small denominations are pro-active measures when using Traveler's Checks. Some establishments do not accept Traveler's Checks, and exchange visitors will need to ask before shopping. Where an establishment specifies, "no checks accepted," this usually refers to personal checks from the bank account, not Traveler's Checks.

#### Western Union

This service makes it possible to transfer money from the exchange visitor's home country or state to anywhere in the United States within 15 minutes on any day of the week. There is a handling charge, which will vary according to the amount of money sent. The exchange visitor can call 1-800-325-6000 to learn more about Western Union services.

#### Telegraphic Transfer

This allows the exchange visitor to transfer money from a bank in their home country to a bank in the United States. This can often take a week or longer. The charge varies from bank to bank; both the receiving and sending banks may charge the exchange visitor. Not all banks offer this service - Ask in advance.

#### Bankers Drafts

These can be bought from the exchange visitor's home bank and then mailed through the Post Office's Express Service. This usually takes between three and seven days. Exchange visitors sometimes have difficulty cashing them at banks where they do not have an account. Exchange visitors will want to designate an emergency contact in their home country or state in case this service is used.

#### Credit Cards

Most Americans have credit cards. They are a convenient and safe way to make large purchases, or to get cash advances from banks. Be careful about overspending with "plastic money"- all debts have to be paid eventually. A credit card is also handy if you plan to stay in a hotel or rent a car while in the country. A credit card can also be useful with unexpected emergencies that may arise.

Please note: It will be very difficult for exchange visitors to be approved for a credit card in the United States because they will have no previous American credit history. If the exchange visitor has a credit card issued from home, it is recommended to bring it with them. However, check the currency conversion policy before using a credit card issued outside the United States for purchases here.

## Sales Tax

Sales tax is added when consumers pay for any retail items. Sales tax varies from state to state and from region to region. For example, the sales tax is 2.9% in Colorado and 7.5% in California.

Sales taxes exist in most, but not all, states. Merchants are responsible for collecting sales tax on purchases and then giving it to the state. Not all products are taxed. Often food and clothing are exempt, depending upon the state. Many services, hotel rooms, gasoline and other items may have additional use taxes.

## United States Holidays

Like in any country, holidays are a time to reflect and celebrate. All holidays are observed by the United States population, but this does not mean that exchange visitors are guaranteed holidays off. Each employer sets its own policy regarding holidays. While it is common for employers to observe 6 holidays each year, (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas), the Federal Government also officially observes Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, and Veteran's Day. Private employers often close on fewer holidays.

### New Year's Day: January 1

Official holiday. New Year's Eve, December 31, is often more celebrated than is New Year's Day.

### Martin Luther King Day: third Monday of January

Official holiday. Martin Luther King Day commemorates the birth (January 15) of the Civil Rights Leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated in 1968. Dr. King led the non-violent movement protest of the era's discriminatory laws regarding voting and access to jobs.

### Groundhog Day: February 2

The groundhog or woodchuck is a burrowing marmot that hibernates during the winter months. Traditionally, if the groundhog comes out of its hole, sees its shadow and runs back into the hole out of fright, spring will take a full six weeks to come. If the groundhog doesn't see its shadow, spring will come early, in about six weeks.

### Presidents Day: third Monday in February

Official holiday. Originally scheduled to fall between George Washington's birthday (the first President of the United States) and Abraham Lincoln's birthday (the President during the American Civil War), the holiday now commemorates all U.S. Presidents.

### Valentine's Day: February 14

Lovers exchange their vows of love. Elaborate greeting cards and gifts are exchanged. This is the traditional day for proposing marriage. Don't do it! You have to go home at the end of your J program.

### Saint Patrick's Day: March 17

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland; Irish immigrants brought this holiday to America. People celebrate this holiday by wearing something green. If you are going to drink something green, find a designated driver.

### April Fool's Day: April 1

This day is marked by the custom of playing practical jokes on friends and colleagues. However, practical jokes may not be appropriate in a professional or work environment.

Easter: A Sunday in March or April

A religious holiday for Christians who believe that on this day Christ rose from the dead. Many folk traditions are now connected with Easter, including the decoration of brightly colored eggs and the Easter Bunny giving gift baskets to children.

### Passover

Passover is an eight day Jewish holiday celebrating the liberation of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt over 3000 years ago. Passover is celebrated with a special ritual dinner called a "Seder."

### Mother's Day: Second Sunday in May

On this day Americans honor their mothers by sending flowers, buying small gifts, and taking their mothers out to eat so that they don't have to cook or do work around the house.

### Father's Day: Third Sunday in June

Fathers are honored on this day. Children of all ages give their dad's cards and gifts.

### Juneteenth: June 19<sup>th</sup>

Juneteenth is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. <https://www.juneteenth.com/>



## Memorial Day: Last Monday in May

Official holiday. Memorial Day is the day on which Americans commemorate those who have died in military service for their country. The day is marked with patriotic parades and speeches. American flags are placed on veteran's grave sites. This day is considered the beginning of the summer season.

## Independence Day: July 4

Official holiday. Independence Day commemorates the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. The holiday is celebrated all over the country with picnics, parades, political speeches and community get-togethers that culminate in fireworks displays.

## Labor Day: First Monday in September

Official holiday. This holiday was established in recognition of the labor movement's contribution to the productivity of the country. This day is the last holiday of the summer season and is celebrated with picnics and other outdoor events.

## Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: Late September/Early October

Rosh Hashanah, commemorating the creation of the world, is the first of the Ten Days of Penitence, which ends with Yom Kippur, the most solemn of Jewish holidays. For Rosh Hashanah, families gather for a feast in which an apple is dipped in honey to express hope for a sweet year ahead. Yom Kippur is a day of judgment; on the eve of Yom Kippur, Jews ask forgiveness from those they may have wronged.

## Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. Lasting for the entire month, Muslims fast during the daylight hours and in the evening eat small meals and visit with friends and family. It is a time of worship and contemplation and a time to strengthen family and community ties.

## Columbus Day: Second Monday in October

Official holiday. Columbus Day celebrates the "discovery" of America by Christopher Columbus on October 12, 1492. Be sure to check out our J1 Journeys post on this holiday.

## Halloween: October 31

It is celebrated mostly as a children's holiday. Traditions include carving out pumpkins with funny faces as well as dressing up in costumes and going around the neighborhood to receive treats. When people come to the door, children say, "trick or treat," meaning, "if the person doesn't give me a treat, I will trick the person." In recent years, trick or treating is often being replaced by costume parties.

## Election Day: the first Tuesday after the First Monday in November

This is Voting Day for all national and most state and local elections. However, many local communities schedule their local elections at varying times throughout the year.

### Veterans Day: November 11

Official holiday. Veterans Day honors veterans of America's military. It is celebrated by parades and speeches.

### Thanksgiving Day: Fourth Thursday in November

Official holiday. The most widely celebrated holiday in the United States, Thanksgiving is associated with early settlers to Massachusetts, the Pilgrims, who in 1621 gave God their thanks for having survived their first year in America (with the help of the local indigenous tribe). It was declared an official holiday by Abraham Lincoln in 1860 as a day for Americans to reflect and give thanks.

### Hanukkah: Eight days, usually in December

This Jewish holiday is known as the Festival of Lights. The tradition can be traced back almost 2,400 years. Hanukkah celebrates a miracle in Jewish history. When the time came to light the Eternal Light of the Temple, the Jews could find only one sanctified jar of oil. It was only enough to last one evening. The lamp was lit with this small jar of oil and, miraculously, stayed lit for eight days, until more oil suitable for the temple was made. Today, Hanukkah is marked with parties, games, gifts for children and the lighting of the nine candles of the menorah.

### Christmas: December 25

Official holiday. Traditionally commemorates the birth of Christ. Although its origins are religious in nature, it is a holiday widely celebrated, often as an occasion for families to gather and exchange gifts. Families decorate a Christmas tree, join in the festivities of the Christmas season, and wait for Santa Claus to arrive.

### Kwanzaa: December 26 through January 1

Kwanzaa is a holiday celebrated by many African Americans. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits," celebrates the: oneness and goodness of life, and puts particular emphasis on family life and African American continuity with the past.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Exchange visitor:** anyone entering the United States on a J visa.

**Application Platform:** Our database system which contains your program activity files. You will access your case through your e-mail address and password.

**DS-2019 form:** The Certificate of Eligibility provided to you by American Immigration Council that allows you to obtain a J-1 visa. You will need this to enter the U.S. on a J-1 visa and to obtain a Social Security card and train or intern at your host company. You will also need this form signed by American Immigration Council before you travel outside the U.S. at any time during your J-1 program.

**DS-7002 form:** The training plan approved by the American immigration Council which must be followed to maintain J-1 status as an intern or trainee.

**I-94 Entry Control verification:** Your official arrival and departure record. Your record is accessed through the government website at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>. It is usually marked "D/S" which stands for "Duration of Status." This means that you may stay lawfully in the United States pursuing your training or internship program for the length of time listed on item 3 (dates of program) of your DS-2019. If your I-94 record does not say "J-1 D/S", please contact the American Immigration Council.

**1-901 form:** The receipt that the \$100 SEVIS fee was paid.

**J-1 visa:** The visa obtained from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate which is stamped in your passport. The visa gives the dates and number of times during which you can enter the United States in J status. It does not indicate the dates you can be in the United States (see I-94 above).

**J-1 Intern:** An Exchange Visitor applicant who is currently enrolled in an accredited post-secondary academic program outside of the U.S.; OR Graduated within the past 12 months from such a program outside of the U.S. (online institutions do not qualify).

**J-1 Trainee:** An Exchange Visitor applicant who holds a degree/certification from an accredited post-secondary academic institution plus 1 year of work experience outside of the United States in the proposed training field; OR 5 years of full-time experience in same field outside of the United States.

**J-1 Scholar:** An Exchange Visitor applicant whose primary purpose is conducting research, observing, or consulting in connection with a research project at research institutions, corporate research facilities, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited academic institutions, or similar types of institutions. A research scholar also may teach or lecture where authorized by the sponsor.

**J-2 dependent:** Your spouse or child who is accompanying you on a J-2 visa during your exchange program.

**J-1 Sponsor:** The American Immigration Council. Organization designated by the U.S. department of State to oversee the exchange visitor program.

**Host organization:** The entity that is providing your internship/training or research and program supervision.

**Host site:** The location of the training, internship, or research. The location of your Host Organization.

**Host supervisor:** The individual at your host site who is providing daily supervision.

**SEVIS:** The Federal web-based system for maintaining information on international exchange visitors and students in the United States. You must be in "Active" status in SEVIS to maintain your J-1 visa status while in the United States.

**J compliant insurance:** Sickness and accident (traveler's) insurance that meets or exceeds the requirements of Federal regulations for exchange visitor programs.

**Port of entry:** The location where you are permitted to enter the United States.

**Social Security Number (SSN):** A taxpayer identification number used for payroll and banking purposes in the United States.

**IRS:** Internal Revenue Service. The agency that enforces tax laws and collects taxes for the U.S. government.

**Federal Income Tax:** Taxes paid to the U.S. government by all income earners, including exchange visitors in trainee or intern programs.

**Social Security Tax:** A tax withheld from the wages of U.S. residents to provide a supplement to retirement income. Exchange Visitors are usually exempt from this tax.

**Medicare:** A government fund to provide health care to elderly U.S. residents. Medicare taxes are withheld from the checks of U.S. residents, but exchange visitors are usually exempt from this tax.

**Federal:** Refers to the national government of the United States. The United States is a federation of 50 sovereign states, each with their own laws and customs. The federal government regulates international policy, including J exchange visitor programs, and interstate commerce.

**USCIS:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. The federal agency which exclusively focuses on immigration and citizenship services. It can assist you with information on forms and fees concerning your stay in the United States.

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS, WEBSITES, AND ADDRESSES:

American Immigration Council

Suite 200, 1331 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20005

Tel: 1-202-507-7500

24-hour Emergency Number: 202-368-5385 (**NOTE: This number should only be used in the case of an emergency affecting your health, safety, or well-being.**)

[www.AmericanImmigrationCouncil.org](http://www.AmericanImmigrationCouncil.org)

Social Security Administration

Tel: 1-800-772-1213

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Internal Revenue Service

Tel: 1 -800-829-1040

[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Tel: (202) 401-9810

[InternTraineeNotify@state.gov](mailto:InternTraineeNotify@state.gov)

<http://j1visa.state.gov/>

Directory of U.S. Embassies abroad [www.usembassy.state.gov](http://www.usembassy.state.gov)

CALL 911 for emergency MEDICAL OR POLICE ASSISTANCE

## APPENDIX 1:

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE INFORMATION FOR J-1 HOLDERS

DoS Welcome Letter

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EVP-Welcome-Brochure-2022.pdf>

Intern Welcome Letter

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Welcome-Letter-Intern-2022.pdf>

Trainee Welcome Letter

[Welcome-Letter-Trainee-2022.pdf \(state.gov\)](#)

Scholar Welcome Letter

[Scholar-welcome-letter-2021.pdf \(state.gov\)](#)

Newly Validated Exchange Visitor

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Newly-Validated-Exchange-Visitor-Email.pdf>

Exchange Visitor's Rights and Protection

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EV-TRIFOLD.pdf>

Wilberforce Pamphlet

<https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Wilberforce-Pamphlet-1.pdf>

## About the Council

The mission of the American Immigration Council is to be a leader in strengthening America by honoring our immigrant history and by shaping how the public thinks and acts towards immigration now and in the future.

The American Immigration Council believes that the dignity of the individual knows no boundary. Our nation's moral and ethical values must be reflected in the way we welcome immigrants.



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