



United States Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Washington, DC 20522

February 1, 2017

Dear Summer Work Travel Participant:

Congratulations on your participation in the Exchange Visitor Program! On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I want you to know your decision to come to the United States is important to us. We want your stay to be a positive and memorable experience for you.

As a summer work travel participant, you are part of a U.S. Department of State cultural exchange program in which you, like thousands of other summer work travel participants, will have the opportunity to share your language, culture, and customs with the Americans you meet in your local communities, places of employment, and travel destinations over the course of your semester break from your college or university back home. As you meet new people, make new friends, and experience new personal and professional challenges, you will learn about the United States, its values, and its people. Because you may be the only person from your country an American has met, remember to represent your country well. Your decision to come to the United States and your active participation in sharing details about your culture will help create new and lasting relationships between our countries.

You are a valued guest in the United States and we want you to succeed in this program. Your goal should be to learn as much as you can about American customs and culture while you work, travel, and explore the U.S. In order to ensure that you have a safe and exciting cultural exchange experience here, we encourage you to take a few precautions both before and after you arrive:

- Contact your employer to obtain written confirmation of any job offer details. Make sure all terms and conditions are clear and that you understand them all. In addition, make sure you understand any housing agreements. If there is anything you do not understand, ask your U.S. sponsor or host employer before you come. Note that the terms and conditions of your job must follow all local, state, and federal laws.
- Notify your U.S. sponsor and host employer of your exact arrival time and make sure you fully understand the best way to travel to your housing or employment address. If your sponsor is not meeting you, plan the journey to your destination carefully.
- Make sure that you have enough money to cover your expenses. Your U.S. sponsor should provide you with an estimate of the necessary amount. If they have not provided this information yet, ask them. Also consider bringing extra money in case of an emergency.
- Study all the pre-arrival materials provided by your U.S. sponsor. Make sure you understand your rights, both in this country and in your program, as well as your obligations, such as updating your address once you arrive. Contact your U.S. sponsor if you have additional questions.
- Learn about the area in which you will live and work in the United States before you come. Pay special attention to that area's safe and affordable housing areas, public transportation, medical facilities, banks, shopping areas, and so on. Your U.S. sponsor should advise you on these matters if you are unsure.

- Make sure you keep information about your program sponsor, local coordinator, and emergency resources close at hand at all times. This information should be included in your orientation materials.

Your U.S. sponsor, identified on your Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) Status, is your first point of contact throughout your stay in the United States. If you have any questions about your exchange program, if you need assistance of any kind while you are here, or if something just does not feel right to you, immediately contact your U.S. sponsor. It is your sponsor's responsibility to help you with any problems, needs, or concerns you may have. Your U.S. sponsor should have given you an emergency telephone contact number in your program orientation materials. This telephone number should be available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have concerns or issues that your U.S. sponsor has not resolved, or you find you cannot reach your sponsor, please contact the Department of State through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline (1-866-283-9090), which is also available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at jvisas@state.gov. Moreover, because your safety is of the utmost importance to us, the Department of State has prepared information to make sure you can always get help if you ever need it. Please review the information in the following link before you leave for your program: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/rights-protections-temporary-workers.html>

As a Summer Work and Travel participant, you are now an alumni of a U.S. exchange program. We welcome you to join the International Exchange alumni website -- a place where past and present U.S. exchange program participants find tools to advance their communities and our world. Membership to this exclusive online community grants access to: grant opportunities; professional development resources; exclusive video webchats with VIPs; and 20,000 online magazines and newspapers. Members can also: network with fellow alumni around the world; find the latest research in your field; develop plans for your alumni association, or find an association to join; and read alumni success stories, perspectives, and ideas. To join please visit: <https://alumni.state.gov/>

We are pleased that you made the decision to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program and I hope you enjoy your stay in the United States.

Sincerely,



G.K. Saba
Director, Policy & Program Support
for Private Sector Exchange