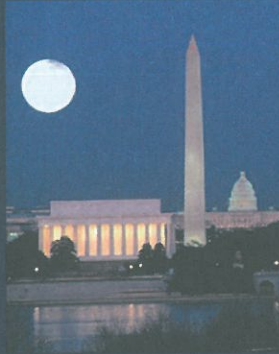


Welcome to the United States!

President: Donald Trump

Capital City: Washington D.C.

Largest City: New York

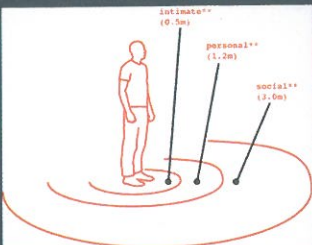


On July 4, 1776 the United States of America was established with the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson. This Declaration protected life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

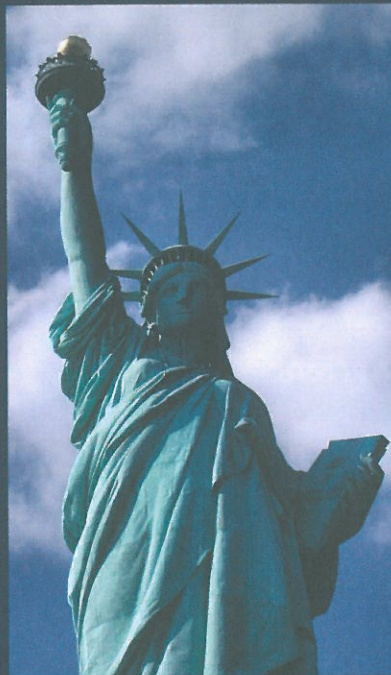
When you arrive to the USA for your J-1 Cultural Exchange Program you will live among America's 320+ million residents. To prepare you for your American experience, keep some of the following things in mind:

Interactions With Americans

America is a country of immigrants, thus making it one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. A standard greeting in American culture is, "Hello, how are you?" You should begin all interactions this way. It is polite to offer a handshake to introduce yourself. It is not necessary to shake hands with every person you meet, always begin any personal or business interaction with this greeting.



Americans expect to have their personal space respected. It is not acceptable to maintain physical contact with someone during a face to face conversation. When speaking with someone you do not have a close personal relationship with, you should maintain a distance of about one arm's length.



American Practices and Values

The United States Constitution states, "All men [and women!] are created equal..."

When having personal interactions in the U.S. always treat others as your equal no matter their gender identification, race or religion. When interacting with elders or authority you must always be respectful. Supervisors should be referred to as "sir" or "ma'am." Police officers should be referred to as "officer."

Americans value punctuality and being on time. Most Americans arrive early.

Americans tip 18-20% at restaurants and for services such as haircuts, taxi rides and deliveries.

Americans do not look kindly upon cutting in line, pushiness, or hatred towards others.

Americans value good personal hygiene. It is important to shower daily with soap, use deodorant, and wash your clothes regularly.

Conversation Topics

All Americans have the right to freedom of speech. However, you must be sensitive to certain topics that may offend the people around you. You should avoid discussing tense social issues, politics and religion with people that you do not have an established relationship with.

Religion is a very sensitive and personal matter for most Americans. Do not insult or make jokes about religious figures. Many Americans do not openly express their religion, you should not ask them about it if they do not share.

Travel and Transportation

By Foot: Do not walk along major highways. Make sure to walk against traffic, and cross at designated crosswalks - doing otherwise can result in a ticket for "jaywalking"

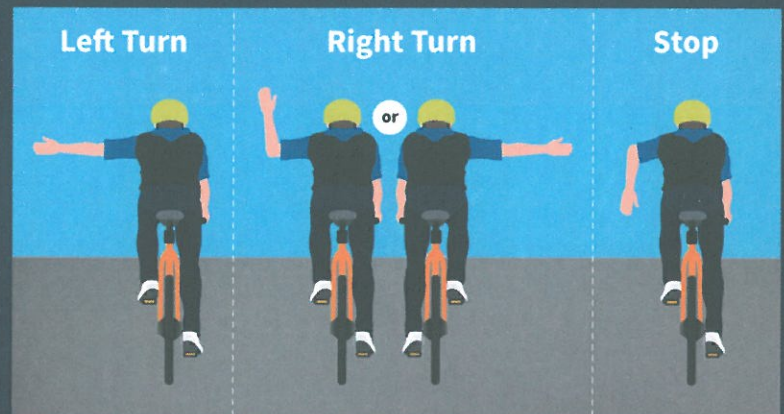
By Bike: Always wear a helmet! Ride your bike with traffic. You must use arm signals at every stop and turn. You and your bike must have reflective gear or a blinking light. You should have a light on the front and back of your bike. Since bikes have the right to ride with other vehicles, you must obey all traffic signs and lights. That means stopping at red lights and stop signs and only riding on the portions of the road you are allowed to. Never ride a bike on a highway or any road that has a speed limit greater than 30 MPH.



The Law - Obey them All!

American police are very diligent and will arrest and prosecute anyone who commits a crime or breaks the law. Even if you are not arrested you can be issued a citation, fine or summons to appear in court which may result in jail time. It is best to avoid any possibility of breaking American laws.

- 1.) You may not engage in any inappropriate or sexual conduct with a minor. A minor is defined as someone under the age of 18
- 2.) The legal drinking age is 21. You may not consume or purchase alcohol under this age. You may not purchase or provide alcohol to anyone under this age. It is illegal to carry open alcohol containers in public.
- 3.) You may not consume or possess illegal drugs.
- 4.) Shoplifting, sexual harassment, theft, destruction of property and disorderly conduct are just a few of the many crimes that may result in arrest.



Make a strong effort to share your culture and be friends with American people. Treat every new person you meet with respect. Follow the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Be kind to everyone; however, be conscious of individuals who may not have the best intentions. Never carry all of your money with you - open a bank account to secure your money, do not travel alone at night, and always lock the doors and windows to your house or apartment when leaving.

If you follow these suggestions, you give yourself the greatest opportunity to grow and learn through the American experience. Be safe, be brave and we promise you a cultural experience that you will never forget!

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