



HOST COMPANY HANDBOOK

Summer Work Travel



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INTRODUCTION

At Dynamic Global Exchange, we aim to create an environment for our participants, host companies, and international cooperators that allows all of us to share ideas and learn about each other's cultures. At our core, we want to make the world a better place by encouraging friendships and understanding between people of the world. We are pleased to have you as a Host Company and we know your experience with your Summer Work Travel Participants will be a rewarding one.

Your participation is critical to the success of our program. Host Companies serve as the day-to-day point of contact for our Participants and are often one of the main reasons they have such a wonderful experience in the program. Host Companies provide opportunities, support, and cultural activities. In return, our host companies get a bright, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, enthusiastic boost to their work forces.

The health, safety, and welfare of the Participants is the primary concern. The information in this handbook will assist in preparing you for your role as a Host Company. We ask that you read the following material carefully as well as your DGE Host Company Agreement, which you previously signed.

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IMPORTANT TERMS

DS-2019 Form: The Form DS-2019 identifies the exchange visitor and their designated sponsor and provides a brief description of the exchange visitor's program, including the start and end date, category of exchange, and an estimate of the cost of the exchange program. This form permits a prospective exchange visitor to seek an interview at a U.S. embassy or consulate in order to obtain a J visa to enter the United States. Also known as the "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status."

Host Company: U.S. based business entity willing to cooperate under J-1 Exchange Visitor Program rules and regulations. This is your company.

J-1 Visa: The Exchange Visitor (J) visa category is temporary, non-immigrant visa that allows foreign nationals to live and work in the U.S. as part of cultural exchange programs that promote the sharing of knowledge and cultural understanding. There are fifteen different categories of participants under the J-1 visa program, including the Summer Work Travel program.

Participants: Participants must be college and University students enrolled full time and pursuing studies at post-secondary accredited academic institutions located outside the United States. They must have a proficient level of English to successfully interact in the U.S.

Program Duration: Each country has specific dates approved by the Department of State determined by university vacation dates and other factors. The maximum program duration is 4 months. Each Participant has his or her individual program dates listed on their DS-2019.

Summer Work Travel Program: Foreign students have an opportunity to live and work in the United States during their summer vacation from college or university to experience and to be exposed to the people and way of life in the United States. All exchange visitors are expected to return to their home country upon completion of their program in order to share their exchange experiences.

Sponsor(s): Dynamic Global Exchange is an U.S. Department of State designated Sponsor in the Summer Work Travel and Intern and Training programs. Only designated Sponsors have the authority to select eligible foreign nationals and produce the necessary immigration paperwork so they can apply for the J-1 visa. DGE is always available to assist you with any questions you may have.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

SEVIS (STUDENT EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEM)

The SEVIS system is for the government and the Sponsor to know where the visa-holder is at all times. The Participants DS 2019 forms will have your business address. As soon as they arrive and receive their housing information, they must register with their current living address (including dorm or room number) within 3 days of their legal start date. They do so by validating (or “checking in”) on their Sponsor’s website. Please note, Participants will not be able to register until the start date noted on their DS-2019 form.

MONTHLY CHECK-IN

All Participants are required to check in with their Sponsor on a monthly basis. They will receive a reminder email from their Sponsor on the first of each month, asking them to respond to let us know how they’re doing and attendance of cultural activities. We may seek your assistance in reminding Participants who have not completed this requirement. A participant that fails to complete a Monthly Check In is in violation of the regulations and is putting his/her program in jeopardy. Sponsors often reach out to Participants and Host Companies in regards to the feedback they are receiving on the Monthly Check In.

I-94s

The I-94 form is issued by the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer to all foreign visitors entering the U.S. Host Companies require this form for onboarding and it is required when Participants apply for a Social Security Card. Participants can retrieve their I-94 form online via the following website: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>

IMPORTANT: Participants must wait 24 hours from the time of arrival in the US before they attempt to retrieve their I-94 record.

Participants should enter all required information in CAPITAL letters.

If Participants receive a message stating their I-94 is “Not Found”, they may need to call the nearest Deferred Inspection site and/or report in person in some cases. Participants will need to have their Passport, DS-2019, and Boarding Pass when contacting Deferred Inspection. To locate the nearest Deferred Inspection Site, please see:

<https://www.cbp.gov/document/guidance/deferred-inspection-sites>

SOCIAL SECURITY AND TAXES

SOCIAL SECURITY APPLICATION

A Participant can legally begin employment on the Program Start Date on the DS-2019 form. It is our expectation that Participants are paid beginning on their start date since most payroll systems allow “Dummy” Social Security numbers until the actual numbers arrive. However, it is our shared goal to make sure that the participant obtains this card at the earliest possible date.

Participants can apply for a Social Security card 10 days after they are successfully registered in SEVIS. To avoid delays in the process, Participants should register with SEVIS as soon as they arrive and wait 10 days to go to the Social Security office. Social Security Card will be sent approximately 6-8 weeks following the application. We strongly advise that the mailing address on the application be your company mailing address to ensure you receive a copy of the participant’s card.

At many of our island locations, a representative of the Social Security office will come directly to the location. If this is not the case with your location, we would appreciate your help with transporting Participants to the nearest office.

When applying, Participants will need to bring the original and two copies of the following documents with them:

- Passport
- Sponsor Letter or Job Offer
- DS-2019 (for J-1 Participants)
- A printed copy of the electronic I-94 issued upon entry into the U.S.
- Passport and Visa page of pass with J-1 stamp

If you file your wage report before receiving the Participant’s Social Security number, you have to file Form W-2C (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement).

TAXES & W-2, W-4 FORMS

All Host Companies should consult with their accountant or tax adviser for advice on taxes. We assume no liability whatsoever for the information contained herein. IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens, may be a useful document for you to consult.

Taxes: All J-1 program Participants have to pay Federal, State, and Local taxes but are exempt from paying Social Security and Medicare.

W-2 Forms: Host Companies are *responsible* for sending W-2 forms to the former Participants. We recommend sending W-2 forms electronically (by e-mail). Be sure to have correct e-mail before the students depart.

W-4 Forms: Like any new hire, Participants need to fill out a W-4 form. Do not use the Personal Allowances Worksheet as it is for U.S. residents only. Please refer to the IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens.

Helpful links:

More information on exemption from Social Security and Medicare taxes:

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/foreign-student-liability-for-social-security-and-medicare-taxes>

IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p519.pdf>

INSURANCE AND EMERGENCIES

INSURANCE AND MEDICAL ISSUES

All insurance information can be found on the Sponsor's website. It is very important for the participant to call the insurance company for instructions before incurring any costs. Participants are only to use emergency rooms for true emergencies; deductible costs are much higher if the participant did not require emergency services. A walk-in clinic or urgent care is a better option in most situations. This may be different from the practice in their home country, so please try to guide them.

Each participant receives detailed insurance information prior to their arrival in the U.S. Coverage begins from SEVIS validation date to the end program date found on the DS 2019 Form. If Participants are traveling after their program, they are *required* to have insurance and have the option to purchase additional coverage thru DGE. Please refer them to us if they have questions.

In cases when Participants are injured on the job, the Host Company's Workers' Compensation Policy would be expected to provide coverage for any medical treatments. International workers are treated the same as any employee in this respect. The Host Company's responsibility for injuries on the job is the same as it is for American employees. Please notify our office if a participant is being treated for a work-related injury.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency, each Sponsor has a 24-hour Emergency Hotline which can be found on their website. Because of our relationship, you are always welcome to call Deb, no matter the Sponsor of the student, the number is: **(248) 885-0004**. Emergencies are any issues that need immediate attention involving the health, safety and welfare of our Participants.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

DGE has a zero-tolerance policy for threats of any kind, theft, and/or physical violence. If something should occur, please contact us immediately.

WORK RELATED INFORMATION

WORK SCHEDULE AND WAGE

Participants are guaranteed at least 32 working hours per week at the original Site of Activity noted on their DS-2019 form. This is not an average of 32 hours- it is 32 hours each week. The Participant cannot work in a position where the hours fall predominantly between 10:00pm and 6:00am. Participants must earn at least minimum wage, in addition to earning the same wage as their American counterparts in the same position. Please refer to your Host Company Agreement for more information.

START DATE & END DATE

Participants can legally **ONLY** work from the start to end dates noted on their DS-2019 form. If the Participants arrive a few days early, please note that they *cannot* legally start on your payroll until the program start date. Similarly, Participants can legally work only until the program end date noted on their DS-2019 form.

SITES OF ACTIVITY AND SECOND JOBS

Participants may only work at the Site of Activity noted on their DS-2019 form and are **NOT** permitted to work at any other Site of Activity – even if it is owned by the same Host Company. Participants are *only* allowed to work at second jobs if they are approved by DGE. If you want your Participants to work at two locations, you must fill out the Second Job Form and complete the Host Company vetting requirements so it is properly documented in SEVIS. However, their priority must be to the Primary Host Company listed on their DS-2019. If you are aware of one of your Participants working at an unapproved second job, please contact us so we can take the proper steps and ensure the Participant remains in compliance with program rules.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

HOUSING

Ensuring Participants have a safe, legal, and affordable housing is essential for a successful program. The Department of State places an emphasis on the safety, security, and quality of housing for J-1 Participants. To be considered safe, housing must, at a minimum, meet all local, state, and federal housing, building, and fire safety codes. The housing must be provided to the students in a clean, livable condition and should not feel overcrowded. Please note, students cannot be required to share a bed.

To avoid any confusion, you may consider a housing contract/rental agreement, as well as an initial housing walk-thru/inspection with the Participant. If you have your own housing contract, we ask that you review it thoroughly with the Participant, as legal jargon could be difficult for the Participants to understand. If you require a housing deposit, please inform Participants how the deposits are managed and returned. It is your decision if rental payments will be out-of-pocket or through payroll deduction. You should provide copies of all deposits and rental receipts to the Participants.

TRANSPORTATION

It is important that the housing you have provided has accessible transportation to the work location as well as nearby points of interests like shopping and recreation. If students are expected to walk or bike, it must be safe to commute this way (ex. No highways).

Easy to use and safe transportation options are very important. Access to transportation ensures that participants can arrive for their scheduled shifts on time and that they have access to cultural activities in their time off. Provide participants with information regarding local transportation options. This can include bus routes and schedules, reliable taxi companies, bicycle rental, and Host Company-provided shuttle services.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

CULTURE SHOCK

Almost all international participants will encounter some difficulties adjusting to living and working in the U.S. There is a chance that your Participant has never been to the U.S. before, and not only your workplace but everything around is new to them. Culture shock can be best defined as a natural response to stress upon immersing oneself in a new environment. Even the most open-minded and travelled individuals are not immune to culture shock.

You should expect a short transitional period while the Participant “warms up” to his or her new situation. Showing patience as they adjust and learn is a small but significant way to contribute to their success and well-being in the U.S. Making a participant feel welcome and secure is often times the most important thing you can do for them as Host Company. If you find that your Participants still seem to be suffering from the following symptoms after the initial period of adjustment, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Common symptoms of culture shock may include: homesickness, feeling isolated and lonely, not wanting to speak English, not wanting to adjust to the new schedule, foods, lifestyles, dress, melancholy, lack of motivation and energy, depression, crying and excessive sleeping.

Helpful Link regarding Cultural Shock:

https://www.internationalstudent.com/study_usa/way-of-life/culture-shock/

PREPARING HOST COMPANY STAFF

We encourage Host Companies to talk to their staff about working with J-1 Participants. In most ways, J-1 Participants are the same as regular employees but below are some differences it may be important for supervisors and coworkers to be aware of:

- Most Participants are not native English speakers, but their English level should be at a level competent for living and working in the U.S. Sometimes the Participants’ language abilities are temporarily affected by the shock of living in a new country, or they might become shy or easily overwhelmed by how quickly others speak and by all the slang and jargon used. Patience is key – you might have to explain things more than once because of the language barrier, but the students are intelligent and competent and should be treated as such on and off the worksite.
- The students are here for a cultural exchange program, so please prepare your managers and staff members to get involved in the cultural exchange aspect of the program along with the students. It can be as much as asking questions about their culture, discussing the American lifestyle with the Participants, or hosting an international meal night where students make a national dish for everybody to try.
- The Participants’ visa should never be discussed or threatened. If you have questions regarding a participant’s program or visa status, it should be solely directed to DGE.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Your Participants are here in the United States as exchange visitors. They have come here to learn about our culture, our customs, our history, our local differences. Your role as a Host Company is to help them discover what makes our country special. We require that you arrange something for your Participants once a month.

Engaging Participants in these events allows them to feel welcome and leads to a more successful program for both Participants and Host Companies. Whether you coordinate an outing to a local museum, a hike in a national park or a dinner enjoying local cuisine, you'll be contributing to developing better relationships between the U.S. and all the countries that participate in cultural exchange programs.

Cultural events and exchange opportunities could include but are not limited to:

- Cookout, BBQ or Company Picnic
- Shopping excursions; be sure to visit local malls and outlet shops
- Volunteering in the community
- Enjoy typical American foods and candy
- Hiking or Canoe trip
- Visits to local historical sites and museums
- Celebrate holidays and birthdays
- Visit beaches or parks
- Organizing group trips to local fairs, festivals, and sporting events
- Movie nights
- Arrange a trip to the Farmers Market
- Ask students to share their own culture; consider an international potluck or cultural dress nights

We have sent you a list of Cultural Events and we ask that you post it somewhere the Participants can see it.

Additionally, please be sure to e-mail photos from your cultural events to DGE and let us know about them so that we can help inform our students and encourage them to participate!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

YOU MUST NOTIFY DGE IF:

- Participants do not arrive at the site of activity to begin their program
- If you have any concerns about the health, safety, or welfare of a participant
- There is a change in the Participant's housing address (this even includes the room number)
- A Participant leaves his or her position ahead of the planned departure
- You would like the Participant to work at another location (See Work Related Info Section)

REMEMBER:

- Participants are not allowed to work at second jobs, unless they are approved. If a participant works at an unapproved second job, they will not be allowed to return next season.
- Be sure to share with Participants on arrival the importance of staying to their program end date. If a student leaves your employment early, we must be notified immediately.
- Managing expectations is key for a successful program for both the Participant and Host Company. Be clear and realistic about the nature and responsibilities of position duties.
- Between jet lag, new accents and the pace of communication, many Participants take a week or two to fully utilize the English-speaking skills they already have, but virtually all Participants quickly adapt to their new environment.
- For your records, it is important to have a copy of the participant's DS form and passport (first and visa page) on file.

THANK YOU!

We could not run this cultural exchange program without you. We hope that participation will be a positive experience for your company, and we want to thank you for the opportunity you are giving these international Participants. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns.