



# The Exchange Visitor Program

## *WELCOME BROCHURE*

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Private Sector Exchange  
United States Department of State

The Department of State welcomes you to the United States. We are pleased to receive you as an exchange visitor. As an Exchange Visitor Program participant, you will acquire an experience in the United States and as an ambassador of your country you will help educate the American people about your home country and culture.

This brochure will help you understand the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program and introduce you to some of the major requirements of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations that are most relevant to you.

### **THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM**

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE** administers the Exchange Visitor Program under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States with the expectation that on completion of their exchange program, they will return home to share their experiences.

**Sponsors** – The U.S. Department of State designates U.S. organizations such as government agencies, academic institutions, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations to administer exchange visitor programs. These organizations are known as sponsors. Sponsors screen and select exchange visitors to participate in their programs based on the regulations governing the exchange activity and stated in 22 CFR Part 62. Sponsors provide exchange visitors pre-arrival information, an orientation, and monitor activities throughout your exchange program. Sponsors offer or identify cross-cultural activities that will expose exchange visitors to American society, culture, and institutions. You are encouraged to participate in activities that provide you with an opportunity to share your language, culture, and history with Americans.

**Responsible Officers** – Sponsors appoint individuals as responsible officers and alternate responsible officers to advise and assist exchange visitors. These officers issue the Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019), and conduct official communications with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on your behalf. Should you have any questions about the regulations or any aspect of your exchange program, your initial and primary contact is the sponsor. Unless provided specific contact information by your sponsor you should contact the person whose name and telephone number can be found on your Form DS-2019.

**Exchange Visitor** – An exchange visitor is a foreign national selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program and who is seeking to enter or has entered the United States temporarily on a J-1 visa.

**Spouse and dependents** - Some categories of the Exchange Visitor Program permit a spouse and/or unmarried children, under 21 years of age, to accompany an exchange visitor to the United States. These individuals may apply for J-2 visas with the permission of your sponsor.

## **REGULATIONS - RULES**

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU** understand and abide by the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, U.S. laws and sponsor rules. Regular contact with your sponsor will help you keep current of any change which may affect your J-visa status. Some requirements of the Federal regulations and where to find them are indicated below.

**Register with your sponsor** – Your Form DS-2019 was created in a computerized system known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This System is administered by the Department of Homeland Security and is used to collect and maintain information on the current status of non-immigrants and their dependents in the sponsor's program during their stay in the United States.

**When you arrive in the United States, you must contact your sponsor to ensure that your data in SEVIS is accurate and updated. Failing to maintain your status could result in serious consequences and may affect your ability to remain in or return to the United States.**

**Activities and Program Provisions** – You entered the United States in a specific program category, and are required to engage in that category and the activity listed

on your Form DS-2019. You must comply with the specific program provisions of the regulations relating to your exchange category.

**Insurance** – You are required to have medical insurance in effect for yourself (J-1), your spouse and any dependents (J-2) for the duration of your program. Some sponsors provide the required insurance for their exchange visitors. Other sponsors may allow you to make your own arrangements or may help to identify insurance carriers. Consult with your responsible officer before the start of your program.

(a) Minimum Insurance Coverage – Insurance shall cover: (1) medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000; and (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$50,000.

(b) Additional Terms – A policy secured to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness, and must meet other standards specified in the regulations.

(c) Maintenance of Insurance – **Willful failure on your part to maintain the required insurance throughout your stay in the United States will result in the termination of your exchange program.**

**Maintenance of Valid Program Status** – You are required to have a valid and unexpired Form DS-2019. Sponsors may terminate an exchange visitor's program for violating U.S. laws, Exchange Visitor Program regulations, or the sponsor's rules governing their particular program.

**Required Notifications to Sponsors** – You must immediately inform your sponsor if you change your address (residence) or telephone number, or complete or withdraw from your exchange visitor program early. Doing so assists your sponsor in complying with their notification and reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. Failure to keep your sponsor informed could result in the termination of your program status.

**Current Regulations** – The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, (22 CFR, Part 62). The regulations are generally available for review at the offices of your sponsor, universities, law schools, or large public libraries. They are also available on the Internet at: <http://www.J1visa.state.gov>

**For Further Information** – Additional requirements that may apply to you are set forth in the Exchange Visitor Program Regulations. Review a copy of the current regulations and consult with your responsible officer.

**Contacting the Department of State** – The Exchange Visitor Program is administered under the oversight of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and is comprised of four offices: The Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation, the Office of Private Sector Exchange Administration, the Office of Exchange Coordination and Compliance, and the Office of Policy.

The Office of Designation is comprised of two divisions. The Academic and Government Programs Division and the Private Sector Programs Division. Contact information and the exchange categories for the divisions are identified below:

***Academic and Government Programs Division*** Categories of exchange: Government Visitor, International Visitor, Professor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, Student (College and University). Inquiries regarding AG categories and sponsors can be emailed to [AGexchanges@state.gov](mailto:AGexchanges@state.gov), or by telephone at: 202-203-7131.

***Private Sector Programs Division***

Inquiries on the following categories of exchange may be sent to: Alien Physician ([DesignationAlienPhys@state.gov](mailto:DesignationAlienPhys@state.gov)), Au Pair ([DesignationAuPairPro@state.gov](mailto:DesignationAuPairPro@state.gov)), Camp Counselor ([DesignationCC@state.gov](mailto:DesignationCC@state.gov)), Intern ([DesignationIntern@state.gov](mailto:DesignationIntern@state.gov)), Secondary Student ([DesignationSSSP@state.gov](mailto:DesignationSSSP@state.gov)), Summer Work Travel ([DesignationSWT@state.gov](mailto:DesignationSWT@state.gov)), Teacher ([DesignationTeacherPr@state.gov](mailto:DesignationTeacherPr@state.gov)), and Trainee ([DesignationTrainee@state.gov](mailto:DesignationTrainee@state.gov)); or by telephone at: (844) 300-1824.

The Office of Private Sector Exchange Administration and the Office of Exchange Coordination and Compliance are responsible for monitoring the health, safety and welfare of exchange visitors and designated sponsors for regulatory compliance.

**J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline:** 1-866-283-9090.\*

This line is for use by exchange visitors and third parties in the case of urgent situations. \*A Department of State representative is available 24 hours a day.

**Regular Communications or questions:** [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov).

This e-mail address is to communicate non-emergency issues, questions, and concerns regarding sponsors, exchange visitors, and the Exchange Visitor Program.