



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

January 8, 2019

Dear Trainee:

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

As a trainee, you are part of a U.S. Department of State cultural exchange program in which you, like thousands of other trainees from around the world, will have the opportunity to share your language, culture, and customs as you enhance your skills and expertise in your future profession. Through well-structured and guided training, you will improve your knowledge of American techniques and technology, and increase your understanding of American culture and society, and enhance your American colleagues' knowledge of foreign cultures and skills.

During your time here, we hope you will challenge yourself to examine the similarities and differences in the professional practices and overall working and cultural environments in the United States and your home country. As you meet new people and experience new personal and professional challenges, you will have the opportunity to learn about the United States, its values, and its people. Your active participation in this program 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. 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: 1) Obtain written confirmation of any training offer details; 2) Know the best way to travel to your housing or host organization's address; 3) Bring enough money to cover your expenses and some extra money in case of an emergency; 4) Research the local area and learn about nearby medical facilities, shopping areas, and public transportation; 5) Keep information about your program sponsor and emergency resources close at hand at all times.

Your U.S. program 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. program sponsor.

If you have concerns or issues that your U.S. program sponsor has not resolved or you cannot reach your sponsor, please contact the Department of State through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline at 1-866-283-9090, which is available 24 hours a 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 depart your home country: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/rights-protections-temporary-workers.html>

As a trainee on the Exchange Visitor Program, you are now part of the alumni network of over one million current and former exchange visitors. 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G.K. Saba', enclosed within a circular scribble.

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