

# J-1 CAMP PARTICIPANT PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

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*Your journey is about to begin. The better prepared you are, the more likely you are to have a safe, successful, and enjoyable experience. Please read this orientation booklet carefully and contact us if you have questions.*

***Please remember that the purpose of the J-1 program is cultural exchange. Your camp placement allows you to work only for your approved U.S. camp employer while also taking part in camp activities, events, and experiences that support cultural exchange. Participating in cultural exchange is a program requirement, and you will be asked to document those activities for your sponsor. Some activities may involve personal costs, and you are responsible for those expenses. Your visa also allows a 30-day grace period for travel after your program end date, unless you are support staff and you work through your last possible program end date, in which case, you will need to return home immediately after.***

*This booklet contains important information that you must review.*

- ***Final Preparations***
- ***Available Funds***
- ***Entering the USA***
- ***Cultural Exchange Requirements***
- ***Mandatory Check-In and Communication Requirements***
- ***Social Security***
- ***Employment***
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- ***Taxes***
- ***US Laws***
- ***Medical Insurance Information***
- ***Society and Culture in the US***
- ***Travel***
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- ***Two Year Home Country Foreign Residence Requirement***

## FINAL PREPARATIONS

Once you receive your visa, you can begin making your final travel and arrival arrangements. **Use this section as a last checklist before departure.**

- Confirm your expected arrival date, time, and location with your employer **before** purchasing your airline ticket.
- Confirm arrival details.
  - If someone meets you on arrival, confirm that person's name and phone number in case your travel is delayed.
  - If no one is meeting you, research transportation from the airport to your destination in advance and plan for possible delays.
- Book your round-trip ticket. You may arrive up to 30 days before your program start date and travel up to 30 days after your program end date. If you are support staff, you are restricted and cannot travel outside of your school's summer break and within the "window of opportunity" for the program for your home country. You must return home in time for the first day of classes if applicable.
- Make copies of your important documents, including your DS-2019, SEVIS receipt, visa, passport biographical page, and medical insurance card. Email copies to yourself in case the originals are lost or damaged during travel.
- Make sure all required supporting documents have been submitted, including your signed pre-departure orientation confirmation and, where required, your police background check and medical screening.

The U.S. Department of State also provides helpful information about program purpose, rules, and participant protections.

You must read the materials that apply to your program. Keep in mind that many camps are exempt from minimum wage and overtime rules, so compensation may be provided as an overall salary or stipend rather than an hourly wage.

Exchange Visitor Welcome Brochure: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EVP-Welcome-Brochure-2022.pdf>

Camp Counselor Welcome Letter: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Welcome-Letter-Camp-Counselor-2022.pdf>

Summer Work Travel Welcome Letter: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SWT-participant-advisory-letter-2020.pdf>

Exchange Visitor Rights and Protections: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EV-TRIFOLD.pdf>

Human Trafficking: <https://campstaffusa.com/assets/English-Online-Reading-5-20-2013.pdf>

Active Exchange Visitor Reminder Email: <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Newly-Validated-Exchange-Visitor-Email.pdf>

\* These documents are also available on the Participant Resource Page.

You can also find more information and helpful links to letters and forms at: <http://www.campstaffusa.com/j1-participant-resource-page/>

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

### What will I need to have when I enter the United States?

U.S. entry procedures may change from time to time, so it is important to travel prepared. Keep your key documents with you in your carry-on bag so you can easily present them at the port of entry.

You will need to have access to:

- **Your passport with visa**
- **Form DS-2019 (you must keep the biographical page and the explanation page together)**
- **SEVIS receipt (confirmation of payment of I901 form)**
- **Medical insurance information**
- **J-1 sponsor emergency contact information**
- **Writing instrument (pen)**



Canadian citizens will obtain their visa at the port of entry and must also have the SEVIS payment receipt.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that you hand carry the following documentation:

- **Evidence of financial resources;**
- **Sponsorship letter of support;**
- **Employment contract with name and address of your employer.**

### **Please do not check any of these forms in your baggage!**

If your baggage is lost or delayed, you will be unable to present the documents at your port of entry. As a result, you may not be able to enter the United States. Be sure to keep all documentation in your backpack or on your person at all times.



For greater detail on procedures for traveling and arriving in the United States, visit:

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/video-gallery/2015/01/youve-arrived>

## AVAILABLE FUNDS

You should have enough accessible funds in U.S. dollars to cover unexpected travel, medical needs, or basic living expenses before your first paycheck arrives. If your camp provides lodging and meals, at least \$800 in addition to transportation costs is usually recommended. If your camp does not provide lodging and/or meals, at least \$1,000 beyond transportation costs, any housing deposit, and the first month's rent is usually recommended, depending on location. You should also have access to additional emergency funds through a bank account, credit, or family support.

## ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I REACH THE UNITED STATES PORT OF ENTRY?

At the U.S. port of entry, a Customs and Border Protection officer will ask why you are entering the country and where you are going. Explain clearly that you are entering the United States as a **J-1 Exchange Visitor** to work at your approved camp placement, and be ready to provide your employer's name and address. You should also make sure the officer signs and returns your Form DS-2019 to you.



### ELECTRONIC I-94 (RECORD OF ADMISSION)

Most travelers now receive an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper form when arriving by air or sea. After arrival, you should retrieve and print your I-94 record because you may need it for your Social Security application, employment verification, and other immigration-related purposes.

You can obtain your I-94 record from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94). For more information, use this fact sheet:

<https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2016-Mar/i-94-automation-fact-sheet.pdf>

### WHOOPS! I FORGOT MY PAPERS.

#### What happens if I cannot locate the required documents?

If you cannot locate or provide all of your information or the inspector cannot verify if the information provided, you will need to go through a "secondary inspection." Officials will direct you to an interview area set apart from the primary inspection lines. If you fail to provide the necessary documents at the US port of entry you may be refused entry under the J-1 visa. In certain circumstances, the Customs and Border Protection Officer may issue you an I-515A form, Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor. This form **temporarily** permits your admission to the US.



#### What happens if I receive an I-515a form?

If you are issued an I-515A form, you will need to obtain the proper documentation and mail it to the address indicated on the form. Do not mail original documents unless instructed. After the documents are processed by the Customs and Border Protection Office, they will either mail them to the address indicated on the form or to your sponsor who will forward them to you.

**Contact your sponsor for any additional assistance! You can contact your sponsor by calling toll-free 1-855-517-8233 or use the number indicated on your form DS-2019.**

## CULTURAL EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS

The Summer Work Travel and Camp Counselor programs are **cultural exchange programs**, not standard work visas. Although you may work legally in the U.S. through your program, cultural exchange is a core requirement. You are expected to participate in activities, events, and experiences that help you learn about U.S. culture and share your own. Examples may include camp events, holiday celebrations, international nights, new activities, local attractions, fairs, or travel experiences. During your required check-ins, you must report your cultural exchange participation to your sponsor and may be asked to share journal entries, photos, ticket stubs, or similar examples.

## MANDATORY CHECK-IN AND SPONSOR COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS



**Getting your visa and entering the United States are only the first steps. You must also complete your sponsor check-in and stay in regular contact throughout your program.**

**Initial Check-In:** You must check in within 5 days of the program begin date listed in Section 2 of your Form DS-2019, regardless of when you entered the United States. During check-in, you must provide a working email address and an active phone number. Completing the check-in form confirms your arrival and allows your sponsor to update your visa status from “initial” to “active.”

***\*If you do not complete the check-in form and do not contact your sponsor, the SEVIS system may change your visa status to “invalid” or “no show.” If that happens, your program is no longer valid, you cannot legally work, and you must return home. In some cases, reinstatement may be possible, but all related fees and costs are the participant’s responsibility.***

**Scheduled Check-Ins:** You must stay in regular contact with your sponsor. Check in on, or within 5 days of, the 1st and 15th of each month through your program end date.

**Reporting Cultural Exchange:** As part of your program, you are required to actively engage in cultural exchange activities and report them to your sponsor through your check-ins. Summer camp offers many simple opportunities that qualify as cultural exchange, such as engaging in conversations with peers of a different nationality, learning a new language or song, taking part in camp activities, or using facilities that are different from what you would normally experience in your home country.

**Residential Update:** You must update your sponsor if your physical living location changes, including a new apartment, bunk, cabin, room number, or housing assignment.

**Sponsor-Initiated Contact:** You are required to respond to all sponsor-initiated contact within 5 days.

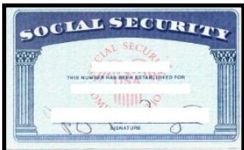
**Employer Approval Process:** You were pre-placed or pre-approved for sponsorship with your initial camp employer. If you complete your initial job offer and your window of opportunity permits, you may request post-camp employment consideration. However, you **MUST** obtain approval from your sponsor prior to any employment change. Accepting unapproved employment violates the program regulations and will result in visa termination as per Department of State requirements.

***\*If you do not communicate with your sponsor as required, your sponsor may be required to terminate your visa. If your visa is terminated, you must return home immediately at your own expense. You should expect check-in requests and reminders about cultural exchange reporting about every two weeks. If you do not receive an email within two weeks of a check-in, contact your sponsor right away.***

## SOCIAL SECURITY

To apply for a Social Security number, you must complete Form SS-5, print your I-94 record, and visit a Social Security office. Timing matters. **You cannot apply until you have checked in with your sponsor and your visa has been validated.** With the electronic entry process, it usually takes about 3 to 5 business days after validation for Social Security to verify your status. Do not wait too long to apply, however. Your visa must normally be validated for 3 to 5 days before application, and your program end date must be at least 14 days away when you apply.

The SS-5 form is available at [www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf). Many camps organize a group trip to the Social Security office, but if needed you can find the nearest office at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) by entering your employer’s ZIP code.



**You will also need to present the following documents:**

- Valid passport with J-1 visa
- DS 2019 forms
- I-94 Record of Admission printed from [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) or white I94 card provided upon entry.
- Job offer

**NEW FORM for use with Social Security Applications! Release your number to your employer automatically.**

Social Security has now developed a form that participants can submit with their application that in essence gives permission for the release of their social security number to the employer for payroll and tax purposes: <https://campstaffusa.com/assets/ssa132.pdf>. Complete this form and submit it with your application.

**You should make a copy of all of these documents and keep them safe in case of loss or theft of the originals.**

Your Social Security card will be mailed to the address listed on your SS-5 form. It may take 2 to 12 weeks to arrive, but you are still legally allowed to work while it is being processed. To check your application status, call the Social Security Administration at

1-800-772-1213. If your application has been processed, you may be able to visit a Social Security office in person and receive your number verbally. Bring your passport for identification.

As a J-1 Summer Work Travel or Camp Counselor participant, you are exempt from the sponsor letter requirement as described in <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0110211345>. If the Social Security officer requests a letter of work authorization from your sponsor, please reference POMS section RM 10211.345, subsection A.

## EMPLOYMENT

Clear communication helps prevent many workplace problems. Most participants have positive experiences with their supervisors, but misunderstandings can still happen. The suggestions below can help you communicate effectively with camp leadership.

- **Read your contract carefully.** Even if you receive general information about minimum wage and overtime, most camps are exempt from one or both of these rules. Your contract explains the terms of your position.
- **Talk to your immediate supervisor about any questions you have.** Ask even if the question feels small or if you are worried about your English. Your effort and honesty will be appreciated.
- **Do not pretend to understand instructions if you do not.** Ask follow-up questions until you are clear on what to do.
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** This can make communication easier for everyone.
- Be professional, friendly, and respectful in your interactions with coworkers and supervisors.

## SALARY

You should expect to receive the compensation described in your job offer. In some cases, pay must follow federal, state, and local wage rules; however, **many camps are exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime requirements**. Seasonal residential camps often provide housing and meals as part of total compensation. Applicable taxes may also be withheld from your pay and should be shown on your pay stub. See the Taxes section below.

## SUMMER CAMP HOURS AND WAGES

Camp work can be rewarding, but it is also demanding. Before you begin, make sure you understand how hours, compensation, and responsibilities may differ from a standard hourly job.

1. **Hours are LONG!** Most counselors work 6 days a week and are responsible for their campers from wake up to bedtime with breaks in-between. Most kitchen staff work in shifts that may span most of the day to cover breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breaks are taken between meals. It is task oriented so it may take longer at the beginning of the summer so breaks may be shorter until you become more efficient with tasks. Most other support staff will work set hours as per the contract issued.
2. **Most camps are exempt of minimum wage AND overtime.** This means you will earn a set salary as indicated on your contract for a maximum of 9 weeks with a per day pay thereafter regardless of the hours you work. Remember to calculate housing and meals that are offered as part of your total compensation package. ***(ACA estimate is \$194/week)***
3. Where camps are required to pay minimum wage, most are exempt of overtime. This means you will be paid per hour given a set wage regardless of hours worked.
4. When accepting employment with a minimum wage camp, participants will be responsible to pay the portion of program fees that camps usually pay when exempt. In this case, you will be responsible for any balance of program fees that the camps would have paid on your behalf.
5. Most camps are physically closed for the winter months so when you arrive, you may be helping to open the facilities regardless if you are a camp counselor or support staff. This can be a dirty job, but it is part of preparing for a great summer.

## ADDITIONAL ORIENTATION

Each camp will provide an orientation specific to its structure, values, policies, and procedures. You are expected to arrive in time to attend it. During orientation, your employer should explain your duties, responsibilities, workplace expectations, and rules for conduct and housing.

## PROHIBITED JOBS

**THE SUMMER WORK TRAVEL VISA** permits general, manual and skilled labor options with SEASONAL NEEDS. Our program focuses on placements in summer camps with employment opportunities in positions such as kitchen staff, cooks, maintenance, office, security and laundry among other positions that support the camp's day to day running. Camp support staff are not permitted to move positions from support staff to camp counselor or au pair and are not able to work hours predominantly between 10pm and 6am. **Unapproved employment acceptance is in violation of the program regulations will result in visa termination.**

**THE CAMP COUNSELOR VISA** is specific to the counselor role having direct responsibility for supervision of groups of American youth and of activities that bring them into interaction with their charges. There may be times specifically during pre-camp

preparations, big camp events or even post-camp clean up when counselors may be assisting the camp with a variety of non-counselor tasks. While it is recognized that some non-counseling chores are an essential part of camp life for all counselors, this program is not intended to assist American camps in bringing in foreign nationals to serve as administrative personnel, cooks, or menial laborers, such as dishwashers or janitors.

## BE ON TIME

Work schedules vary by position, but arriving late can create problems and may lead to disciplinary action or termination. Plan ahead and be on time.

## HOUSING

### CAMP HOUSING

Most summer camps provide free housing as part of the compensation package, but housing arrangements vary by camp. Counselors may live in bunks, cabins, or tents with campers and other staff. Support staff may live in dormitories or other staff housing, and in some cases may live alongside campers. Air conditioning, showers, and other amenities vary by site. Your job offer should describe your housing. If you have questions about housing or packing, contact your camp director or supervisor before arrival.

### EMPLOYER PROVIDED/ASSISTED HOUSING

If housing is not provided on site, camp employers often help participants secure off-site housing or host-family arrangements. In some cases, housing is included as part of compensation and permitted housing deductions may be taken from pay. In other cases, details such as deposits, monthly rent, utilities, deductions, and people per room should be clearly explained in a lease or rental agreement. Housing rules vary by location. If you arrive and believe your housing is not appropriate, contact your sponsor immediately.

*\* If your bunk, cabin, apartment, or other housing location changes, you must update your sponsor through the check-in link within 10 days, even if the change is on the same camp property. **Failure to report your physical address or update your sponsor within 10 days of a change may result in program termination.***

## TAXES

Your paycheck may be lower than your contract amount because some taxes may apply. As a J-1 participant, you are generally **not** required to pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, and these deductions should appear on your pay stub if they were taken. If your employer withholds these taxes in error, notify them right away. You may also be able to request a refund by filing a tax return by April 15 of the year after your employment. Your sponsor provides tax filing guidance at <https://campstaffusa.com/tax-filing-information>. Sprintax and J1 Summer Tax Back may also be able to assist when tax season arrives.

If you leave the United States before receiving your Social Security number, or if you never completed the Social Security application process, you may still be able to file a tax return. You may need to apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number by using Form W-7, available at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw7.pdf> and through [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Submit the completed W-7 and required documents with your tax return. Sprintax and J1 Summer Tax Back may be able to assist with that.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**January 31.** US employers are required to issue a W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) form summarizing your overall earned income and withheld taxes for the previous year by January 31st or next business day if that falls on a weekend. If you do not receive your W-2 by this date, contact your employer immediately. If you do not hear from your employer, contact your sponsor.

**April 15.** Taxes must be filed by April 15th unless you file for an extension. Exchange visitors are considered non-resident aliens; therefore, you will need to file a Form 1040NR.

## US LAWS

### ALCOHOL.

The legal drinking age throughout the United States is 21. If you are under 21, do not purchase or consume alcohol during your program. Laws about underage drinking and open containers vary by state, but they are taken seriously. Driving while intoxicated is a major offense that can result in jail time, fines, and loss of your visa.

### DRUGS.



Illegal possession or use of drugs or drug paraphernalia is a serious criminal offense. Penalties may include arrest, jail time, fines, and loss of your U.S. visa. Even if marijuana is legal under some state laws, it remains illegal under federal law and can still create immigration and employment consequences. Employers may also drug test employees and terminate employment based on drug use, including marijuana.

### SMOKING.



Many U.S. states restrict smoking in public places, including restaurants and bars. You should also check your camp or housing rules to confirm whether smoking is allowed on the property.

### SHOPLIFTING.



Security cameras are common in U.S. stores. Shoplifting is a criminal offense and can lead to arrest and prosecution. You can also be charged if you help someone else steal, change a price tag, or otherwise assist with theft.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Harassment in the workplace or in social settings includes unwanted comments, gestures, or physical behavior that create an uncomfortable, hostile, or unsafe environment. Such conduct can lead to discipline, termination, arrest, or other legal consequences.

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

### Available Health Care, Emergency Assistance and Insurance Coverage

The exchange visitor program requires all participants to have medical insurance coverage for the entire duration of their program (that is from your beginning date through your end date). **If you fail to maintain medical insurance coverage for the entire program, your sponsor is required to terminate your visa.** While it is not required, it is recommended that all participants maintain medical insurance coverage to include travel before and after program dates. If your planned travel extends past your program and you want medical insurance coverage for your travel, you can request an extension at your cost.



**Please note that the medical insurance issued does NOT cover pre-existing conditions and does not include traveler's insurance for lost or stolen luggage. If you have a pre-existing condition that may require medical attention while you are in the U.S., you may need to obtain secondary insurance.**

**For routine or minor care:** Do not call 911 or go to the emergency room for minor illness or minor injuries. Most camps have a wellness center on campus that can help with common problems such as colds, minor cuts, and other basic health concerns.

**For non-emergency medical care:** Contact the insurance carrier before seeking treatment whenever possible. They can help you locate a covered clinic, urgent care center, or other approved facility. Emergency room visits for illnesses that do not result in hospitalization, or visits to clinics not associated with your coverage, can be **EXTREMELY** expensive and may become your responsibility.

**For a medical emergency:** Call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room for life-threatening emergencies. After emergency help has been contacted, notify your sponsor for additional support. For the names and numbers of local medical centers, hospitals, and walk-in clinics, call the medical insurance company. For additional assistance you can call toll free at **855 J1 STAFF (813.517.8233)**.

## SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN THE US

### LOCAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Before you travel, research the area where you will be living. Online tools such as Yelp and Google can help you find transportation, stores, libraries, entertainment, and other local services. Many camps offer internet access, although connections may be limited in rural areas. Libraries, restaurants, and coffee shops may also provide internet access so you can find information and stay in touch with family and friends.

## SOCIAL EQUALITY

People in the United States generally expect to be treated with respect, fairness, and courtesy. At camp, you may meet people from many different backgrounds, beliefs, and identities. Treat others professionally and respectfully regardless of race, religion, sex, disability, occupation, background, or identity.

## USE OF NAMES

- First names are more readily used in the United States than in other countries, especially at camp. It is almost always acceptable to use the first name of someone of approximately your same age or younger as soon as you meet the person.
- The use of nicknames is fairly common, especially in the camp environment. Being called by a nickname is not uncomplimentary if done in good taste, and is often considered as a sign of acceptance and affection.
- If you are unsure how to address someone, ask what name they prefer and tell them what you would like to be called.

## CONSUMERISM

You may notice many sales, discounts, and marketing offers in the United States. Be careful before signing up for subscriptions, store promotions, payment plans, or credit offers. Read the details closely and avoid spending money you may need later for travel or emergencies.

***\* Many participants enjoy ordering items online. However, if you leave before a package arrives, the camp or employer may not be able to forward it to you. It is your responsibility to track deliveries, update shipping information, and contact the seller if your plans change.***

## FRIENDLINESS AND FRIENDSHIPS

Many U.S. camps are friendly, social, and fast-moving environments. People may seem open and informal, especially during the first days of camp, but friendships still develop at different speeds for different people. Be patient, respectful, and open to getting to know others over time.

- In the United States, people often will ask, "How are you?" or "How are you doing?" when you meet them. These are usually polite phrases more than personal questions, and they do not always expect an honest answer. If you are well acquainted with this person, you might say how you truly are feeling. If not, the accepted response is usually "Fine, thank you. How are you?" even if you are not feeling very well.
- At camp, some people may greet others with a handshake, hug, pat on the back, or high five. Comfort with physical contact varies from person to person. If a gesture makes you uncomfortable, communicate your preference clearly and respectfully.
- People in the United States may differ in how much personal space, touch, or emotional openness they prefer. Friendly interactions do not always indicate romantic interest. If something makes you uncomfortable, communicate your boundaries clearly and respectfully.

As in any culture, it takes time to make good friends. Just be patient, try to meet as many people as possible, and with time you may form friendships while in the United States that could last a lifetime.

## DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

Personal relationships and social expectations can vary widely in the United States, just as they do in other countries. The most important principles are respect, clear communication, personal boundaries, and consent. The guidance below is intended to help you navigate social situations appropriately and respectfully during your program.

- People in the United States often interact casually and directly in social settings. Friendly conversation does not necessarily mean romantic interest.
- Anyone may invite someone else to spend time together. What matters most is respectful communication and mutual interest.
- Expenses for a date may be paid by one person or shared. It is best not to assume what the other person expects.
- Going on a date in American society is to express the desire to get to know the other person better. It does not assume any kind of sexual involvement. It is unacceptable — and in some cases even criminal — to impose one's sexual desires on another person. Make sure you respect the other person's wishes and, likewise, make sure you are not forced to do something you do not want to do.
- People in the United States have diverse sexual orientations and relationships. It is not acceptable to discriminate against or make disrespectful comments about someone because of their sexual orientation. If someone expresses romantic interest and you do not share that interest, respond politely and clearly.
- It is illegal to engage in sexual relations with an individual under the age of 18 years old.

- Sexual harassment is a serious issue in the United States. Unwelcome comments, messages, gestures, or physical advances can lead to discipline, termination of employment, or legal consequences.

Remember that every situation is different and must be approached with consideration for the other person's standards, values, and sensitivities. Remember as well that HIV, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases are present in the United States, and you should always take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from infection.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE

Personal hygiene expectations can vary across cultures, but in shared living environments cleanliness is important for comfort, health, and respect for others. During camp, you will likely live and work closely with other people, so regular hygiene and clean clothing are important.

Some people use perfume, cologne, or other scented products, but strong scents can also bother others. If you use these products, use them lightly.

Grooming choices such as shaving or wearing makeup are personal decisions. They are not required for social acceptance.

### *Here are a few tips and suggestions:*

In shared living and working spaces, managing body odor, clean clothing, and daily hygiene helps create a comfortable environment for everyone.

- Wash with soap at least once a day to control body odors.
- Brush your teeth with toothpaste at least in the morning and evening.
- Consider using underarm deodorant/antiperspirant to control perspiration odors.
- Wash your hair as often as necessary to keep it from becoming oily.
- Wash your clothing regularly. Clothing should not emit bodily odors. The American practice is to wash clothing that has taken on the smell of the wearer's perspiration before it is worn again. Most camps offer laundry services for their staff.

## JET LAG

Depending upon where you are coming from, one of the first adjustments you will have to face after your arrival in the United States is "jet lag." Jet lag is the physical shock of your body adjusting to a new time zone. Its intensity will depend upon how many time zones you have crossed during your travel to the United States. While your body is adjusting to a new daily rhythm, you may experience headaches, disorientation, sleeplessness, or sleepiness. Many people find that for every hour of time difference, it takes one day to completely overcome the effects of jet lag. However, you may find that you are through the worst of it in about half that time. After this period of adjustment, you should be able to function normally and follow a regular daily schedule.



There are a number of things you can do to help yourself through the transition. Attempt to follow the normal eating and sleeping patterns of your new time zone. Resist taking naps in the middle of the day since it will make it more difficult to sleep at night and will only serve to prolong your jet lag. Instead, take a walk, exercise, or plan activities with friends during the day when you find you are tired.

## CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is the process of adjusting to a new country and a new culture, which may be dramatically different from your own. Climate, camp food, and landscapes, as well as people and their ways all seem strange to you and you may suffer, to an unexpected degree from the fast pace of life and the group living.

If you feel this way, do not panic. Culture shock is a normal reaction. As you become adjusted to US culture and attitudes and begin to know your way around, you will start to adapt to and understand your new surroundings and way of life.

Some strategies to cope with the stress of culture shock include:

- Make sure you know what to expect before you arrive. Carefully read this guide and other books and magazines on the United States and the city where you will be living to find out more about American life and customs. This will help you orient yourself physically and mentally when you arrive in the United States.
- Camp work can feel physically demanding at first. It is normal to feel tired or sore during the first days as you adjust to the schedule and activity level.
- Eat well, sleep well, and take good care of yourself.
- Exercise is a great way to alleviate stress and tension. Ask your camp director what facilities are available to you and join a camp league when possible.

- Find some time on your day off to walk around camp and surrounding areas or to enjoy the camp facilities. This might help you develop a sense of home as you find the local stores, parks, activity centers, and so on. Most camps are fairly rural so you will need to see if Uber or Lyft options are available to you.
- Keep in touch with family and friends to tell them about your experiences.
- Take some time to relax. Listen to music, read a book, and go to bed early once in a while.
- Keep a sense of perspective. Mistakes and adjustments are a normal part of learning a new environment.

*Information was compiled from a combination of sources with a large part from, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State.*

## TRAVEL

### Can I travel outside of the United States while on my J-1 visa?

Yes, but you must make sure you have the correct documents and understand the travel rules before you leave the United States.

- Your J-1 visa allows you to seek re-entry to the United States. It does not automatically give you permission to enter another country. You are responsible for obtaining any visa or travel documents required for the country you plan to visit.
- During your program dates, travel to a contiguous territory or adjacent island is generally permitted without travel validation. Your DS-2019 may allow you to return to the United States for the current program, but it does not allow you to enter neighboring countries without meeting their entry requirements.
- If you plan to travel outside the United States somewhere other than a contiguous territory or adjacent island, you will need a **Travel Validation by Responsible Officer** signature on your Form DS-2019. Contact your sponsor at least 4 weeks in advance. If you leave the U.S. without required travel validation, you may not be permitted to re-enter under your J-1 visa and you could lose your work eligibility and insurance coverage.
- If taking short trips (30 days or less) to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean Islands during the course of your visit to the U.S., hold onto your I-94; **it should only be turned in when you leave the U.S. to return home.**

### What is the 30-day “grace period?”

After your program ends, the Department of Homeland Security allows most Exchange Visitors up to 30 additional days to remain lawfully in the United States for domestic travel and departure preparations. This grace period is **not** part of the program dates listed on your Form DS-2019. If you are in the Summer Work Travel program, both your program dates and grace period must still fit within the dates permitted for your home country.



### Can I travel outside of the United States during the 30-day grace period?

No. During the 30-day grace period, you may travel **within** the United States, but if you leave the U.S. your J-1 status ends and you will not be able to re-enter on that visa. If you plan to return after leaving, you may need a different visa.

## TWO-YEAR HOME-COUNTRY FOREIGN RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

When you agree to participate in an Exchange Visitor Program and your program falls under the conditions explained below, you will be subject to the two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement. **If you are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence (foreign residence) requirement, you cannot change your status to that of H, L, K, or immigrant lawful permanent resident (LPR) until you have returned to your home country for at least two-years or received a waiver of that requirement.** This requirement under immigration law is based on Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and Title 22 Part 40 and Part 41 in the Code of Federal Regulations.

**Two-year Home-country Physical Presence Requirement Conditions** - An exchange visitor is subject to the two-year home country physical presence requirement if the following conditions exist:

- **Government funded exchange program** - The program in which the exchange visitor was participating was financed in whole or in part directly or indirectly by the U.S. government or the government of the exchange visitor's nationality or last residence;
- **Graduate medical education or training** - The exchange visitor entered the U.S. to receive graduate medical education or training;
- **Specialized knowledge or skill: Skills List** - The exchange visitor is a national or permanent resident of a country which has deemed the field of specialized knowledge or skill necessary to the development of the country, as shown on the Exchange Visitor Skills List. <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/exchange/exchange-visitor-skills-list.html>

## DEPARTING THE UNITED STATES

### **I did not turn in my I-94 when I left the U.S., what should I do?**

If you entered the country with the new electronic system, your departure will be automatically verified. If you were given a hard copy card, Form I-94 (white) or Form I-94W (green) Departure Record in your passport and you did not turn it in, it is possible that your departure was not recorded properly.

If you departed by a commercial air or sea carrier (airlines or cruise ships), your departure from the U.S. can be independently verified, and it is not necessary to take any further action, although holding on to your outbound (from the U.S.) boarding pass - if you still have it - can help facilitate your reentry next time you come back to the United States.

If you departed by land, private vessel or private plane, you will need to take steps to correct the record. If you do not validate your timely departure from the United States, or, if you cannot reasonably prove you departed within the time frame given to you when you entered, the next time you apply for admission to the U.S., Customs and Border Protection (CBP) may conclude you remained in the U.S. beyond your authorized stay. If this happens, your visa may be subject to cancellation or you may be returned immediately to your foreign point of origin.

Under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), visitors who remain beyond their permitted stay in the United States cannot reenter the U.S. in the future without obtaining a visa from a U.S. Consulate. So if you are a Visa Waiver Program visitor who traveled by land to either Canada or Mexico for an onward flight, it is particularly important for you to register your timely departure if your green I-94W was not taken when you exited the U.S. If you fail to do so and you arrive at a U.S. port of entry seeking admission under the Visa Waiver Program without a visa, CBP Officers may order your immediate return to a foreign point of origin. If you are a VWP visitor and you left the U.S. by an air or sea carrier, you don't need to worry.

If you failed to turn in your I-94 Departure Record, please send it, along with any documentation that proves you left the United States to:

***DHS - CBP SBU, 1084 South Laurel Road, London, KY 40744***

Do not mail your Form I-94 Departure Record or supporting information to any U.S. Consulate or Embassy, to any other CBP Office in the United States, or to any address other than the one above. Only at this location are they able to make the necessary corrections to CBP records to prevent inconvenience to you in the future. The London, Kentucky office does not answer correspondence, so please do not ask for confirmation that your record has been updated.

To validate departure, CBP will consider a variety of information, including but not limited to:

- Original boarding passes you used to depart another country, such as Canada, if you flew home from there;
- Photocopies of entry or departure stamps in your passport indicating entry to another country after you departed the United States (you should copy all passport pages that are not completely blank, and include the biographical page containing your photograph); and
- Photocopies of other supporting evidence, such as:
  - Dated pay slips or vouchers from your employer to indicate you worked in another country after you departed the United States,
  - Dated bank records showing transactions to indicate you were in another country after you left the United States,
  - School records showing attendance at a school outside the United States to indicate you were in another country after you left the United States, and
  - Dated credit card receipts, showing your name, but, the credit card number deleted, for purchases made after you left the United States to indicate you were in another country after leaving the United States.

You must mail legible copies or original materials where possible. If you send original materials, you should retain a copy. CBP cannot return original materials after processing. We strongly urge you to keep a copy of what you send to DHS-CBP and carry it with you the next time you come to the United States in case the CBP Officer has any questions about your eligibility to enter. Carrying those materials with you will also allow your record to be corrected at the time of entry if, for some reason, the London, Kentucky office has not yet done so.

Delays beyond the traveler's control, such as cancelled or delayed flights, medical emergencies requiring a doctor's care, etc. are not considered unauthorized overstays, however, you will need to bring proof of the cause of your overstay next time you travel to the U.S. in order for it to be forgiven. For airline delays, ask the airline for a letter affirming the delay or a copy of your cancelled boarding pass.

For more information on this subject click on the link below

[https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/752/kw/forgot%20to%20hand%20in%20i94](https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/752/kw/forgot%20to%20hand%20in%20i94)

## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS WHILE I AM IN THE US?

Your sponsor should be your first point of contact while you are in the U.S. They are there to support you and help with questions or concerns about employment, your employer, pay, medical insurance, safety, or other program issues.

There are many ways to contact your sponsor. The easiest way is to use the **online check-in system**, or call the CampStaffUSA hotline: **855-517-8233**.

CampStaffUSA and your sponsor representatives want your program to be successful. You must complete your initial check-in to validate your visa and continue checking in regularly during your program. These check-ins confirm your U.S. address, wellbeing, safety, and cultural exchange activities, and they are also the best place to report questions or concerns. If you do not have reliable email access, call your sponsor and provide another way to reach you.

Below are the names and email addresses for CampStaffUSA and your sponsor representatives should you have any questions during your program. Note that your sponsor's telephone number is also listed on your Form DS-2019 in the signature section.

Debra Moody (RO, A Cultural Exchange Service) [debra@dealwithaces.com](mailto:debra@dealwithaces.com) or [debra@campstaffusa.com](mailto:debra@campstaffusa.com)

Marene Stang (ARO, A Cultural Exchange Service and Life

Adventures) [marene@dealwithaces.com](mailto:marene@dealwithaces.com) or [marene@campstaffusa.com](mailto:marene@campstaffusa.com)

Guadalupe Cruz (ARO, Life Adventures): [gcruz@lifeadventures.us](mailto:gcruz@lifeadventures.us) or [gcruz@campstaffusa.com](mailto:gcruz@campstaffusa.com)

Don Moody (RO, Life Adventures): [don@lifeadventures.us](mailto:don@lifeadventures.us) or [don@campstaffusa.com](mailto:don@campstaffusa.com)

General email: [info@dealwithaces.com](mailto:info@dealwithaces.com) or [info@campstaffusa.com](mailto:info@campstaffusa.com)

## WHO DO I CALL IN AN EMERGENCY?

**Call 911:** Use 911 for any immediate danger or life-threatening emergency, such as a serious injury, severe illness, fire, active crime, assault, or any situation where you need police, ambulance, or fire services right away.

**Have this ready for 911:** Your exact location, what happened, whether anyone is hurt or in danger, the name of the camp or housing site, your phone number, and any important details the operator asks for. Stay calm, speak slowly, and do not hang up until the operator tells you to do so.

**Call your sponsor emergency line:** Contact your sponsor for urgent non-life-threatening problems or for support after emergency responders have been called, including housing problems, workplace concerns, travel disruptions, lost documents, arrest or detention, safety concerns, or if you are unsure what to do next. If the situation is immediate and dangerous, do not wait to contact your sponsor before calling **911**.

### Emergency Sponsor's Lines

**ALL CampStaffUSA participants**, regardless of sponsor. **855-517-8233 (855-J1 STAFF)**

**A Cultural Exchange Service participants** can also use: **866-401-8910**

**Life Adventures participants** can also use: **888-896-4953**

The Department of State also has an emergency contact line. 866-283-9090, or email [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov)

## PARTICIPANT PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION CONFIRMATION

I received pre-departure orientation information covering U.S. entry, program rights, requirements, obligations, Social Security, U.S. laws, emergency contacts, and other information needed for a successful program. I understand that my sponsor is my first point of contact in the U.S. and will support and assist me in times of need. I also understand that my sponsor requires that I maintain compliance with the program regulations and is obligated to terminate my program if I fail to meet my responsibilities.

*For convenience, the sponsor has summarized key responsibilities below. These points highlight important program rules and participant obligations. Failure to follow program requirements may result in early program termination. If the program ends early or is terminated, the participant must return home immediately at personal expense, and program fees may not be refunded.*

- I am responsible for reporting my expected U.S. arrival and departure dates to my sponsor and for updating my sponsor if those plans change before I travel.
- I must arrange my arrival according to my employer's instructions and arrive in time for my contracted first day of work. Any travel delay or cancellation that affects this must be reported to both my sponsor and my employer.
- I must check in with my sponsor within 5 days of the program start date listed in Section 2 of my DS-2019 and provide my specific U.S. address, a working email address, and a U.S. phone number.
- I must stay in communication with my sponsor by completing required check-ins, updating my U.S. address and phone number, and responding to sponsor-initiated contact within 5 days.
- If I cannot use the internet to communicate with my sponsor or complete required check-ins, I must call my sponsor instead.
- I must make a good-faith effort to complete the employment described in the contract submitted to my sponsor and report any grievances or concerns to my sponsor.
- I must engage in cultural activities and report such activities to my sponsor.
- I must maintain medical insurance coverage for the entire length of my program.
- I must follow all U.S. laws.
- I must conduct myself in a way that does not harm the reputation of my employer, my sponsor, or the program.
- I may work only for the employer approved for my sponsorship and listed on my Form DS-2019. Accepting unapproved employment is not permitted.
- Any secondary or alternate employment must go through the required sponsor review and approval process before I can begin work.
- If my initial employment ends, I do not automatically have permission to seek or accept alternate employment. My sponsor will review my situation and determine whether I remain eligible to continue the program. If I am allowed to seek alternate employment, I must have enough funds to cover my living and travel expenses during that search, and any new employment must be approved before I begin work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE