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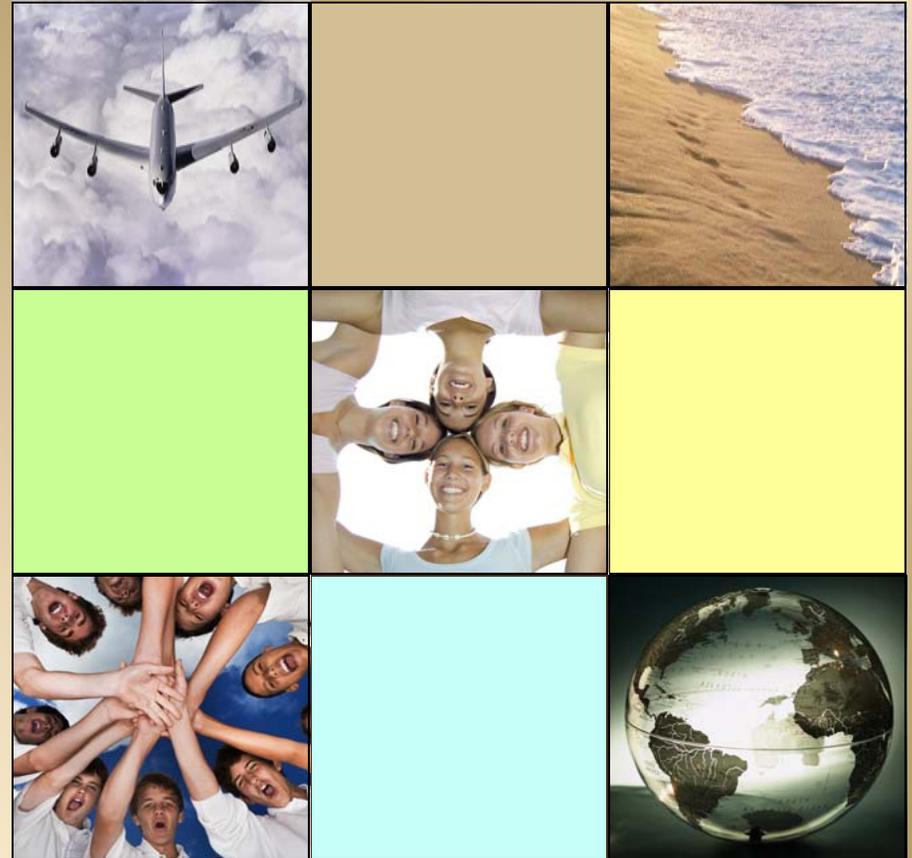
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HTP

J-1 VISA PROGRAMS



Exchange Visitor's Handbook

August 2007 Edition

The purpose of this handbook is to provide HTP Exchange Visitors (EV) with relevant information pertaining to their program.

You should keep this handbook as a reference for use during your training in the US.

After reading this handbook, you still have questions, please feel free to contact HTP. We are always glad to be of assistance.

Within this manual you will find several internet web addresses. HTP provides this information as a tool for our EV's, HTP is not responsible for the accuracy of each sites' content.

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What to do if.....

Lost or stolen documents

The most common problem that EV's experience is lost documents. **Make copies of all your documents in order to make the process easier on you!** If you do happen to lose one or all of your important documents follow the instructions below to help recover your document (s).

DOCUMENTS	WHAT TO DO
DS-2019	Contact HTP @1.888.549.4HTP, during normal office hours for a replacement. A replacement fee will apply.
Passport and J1 visa	Contact your home countries embassy or consulate located in the U.S. as they are the only ones that can replace your passport. Your J1 visa cannot be replaced once you have entered the U.S. as the purpose of the visa is only for entry into the U.S. If requested, HTP will issue a support letter confirming your participation in the program. If you lose your original passport with your J1 visa you should carry your photocopied passport with your original visa along with your new passport at all times.
I-94 Arrival and Departure Card	Applying for a replacement card through USCIS takes up to 8 weeks and requires a fee. Visit www.uscis.gov for replacement information.
Social Security Card	Contact the Social Security Administration directly (1-800-772-1213) or visit www.socialsecurity.gov to obtain instructions for applying for a replacement card.
Insurance Card	Contact HTP @1.888.549.4HTP, during normal office hours for a replacement.

Capital: Salem

Pennsylvania www.visitpa.com

Capital: Harrisburg

Rhode Island www.visitrhodeisland.com

Capital: Providence

South Carolina www.discoverouthcarolina.com

Capital: Columbia

South Dakota www.travelsd.com

Capital: Pierre

Tennessee www.tnvacation.com

Capital: Nashville

Texas www.traveltex.com

Capital: Austin

Utah www.utah.com

Capital: Salt Lake City

Vermont www.vermontvacation.com

Capital: Montpelier

Virginia www.virginia.org

Capital: Richmond

Washington www.experiencewashington.com

Capital: Olympia

West Virginia www.wvtourism.com

Capital: Charleston

Wisconsin www.travelwisconsin.com

Capital: Madison

Wyoming www.wyomingtourism.com

Capital: Cheyenne

Program Sponsor

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), SA-44, Room 734 301 4th Street SW, Washington D.C., 20547, tel: 202-203-5096, fax: 202-203-5087, a governmental agency under the auspices of the US Department of State, administers the overall Exchange Visitors Program, which provides foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the US and then return home to share their experiences. ECA designated sponsors, such as **HTP, Inc**, to administer individual exchange visitor programs.

Program Rules

HTP as an international exchange organization and your program sponsor, is also subject to certain J-1 visa rules and regulations. HTP's program guidelines and rules are defined by the US Department of State. These rules need to be followed in order to maintain your J-1 visa status. **Failure to follow these rule will terminate your program and your J-1 visa will be revoked.**

Where can I find the current regulations?

The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, 22 C.F.R. Part 62. Major revisions were published in the Federal Register on March 19, 1993 (58FR 15180). These regulations are generally available for review on line at www.state.gov or large public libraries.

Remember...

DO NOT leave the U.S. without having your DS2019 validated for travel by HTP. Send your original DS to HTP no later than **two** weeks before your anticipated travel date.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION BEFORE ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

Preparation is one of the most important aspects of a successful training program and the best way to prepare is through research. Research can not only help make you better prepared it can save you lots of money and time.

The USA is a very big country with a tremendous amount of diversity in people, cultural, climate and geography. HTP encourages you take the time to familiarize yourself with where you are going and what you are going to do when you get there.

The most important thing to remember is **you** must manage your expectations of the program and understand that you get out of this program what you put in.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with all the documents that have included in your DS packet. They provide valuable information regarding your arrival and stay in the US.

Your right to stay in the United States

Visit www.UnitedStatesVisas.gov. This website has been created to help you find information about current visa policy and procedures quickly and easily.

Necessary documents

Form DS 2019

As a candidate in HTP's Exchange Program you will receive a "certificate of eligibility" (Form DS 2019) documenting your participation in the program. Form DS 2019 shows the period during which you will be allowed to train in the US. This document allows you to apply for the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. Make sure to read the second page of the DS 2019 and sign the form before applying for your J-1 visa.

A Form DS2019 does not guarantee that you will receive a J-1 Visa.

J-1 Visa

In order to secure the J-1 visa, present Form DS 2019 issued by HTP to the United States Consulate in your home country. They will stamp your passport with the J-1 visa and **return** the Form DS 2019 to you. When you arrive in the United States, you will present your passport with Form DS 2019 to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at your point of entry.

Capital: Boston

Michigan www.michigan.org

Capital: Lansing

Minnesota www.exploreminnesota.com

Capital: St. Paul

Mississippi www.mississippi.org

Capital: Jackson

Missouri www.missouritourism.org

Capital: Jefferson City

Montana www.visitmt.com

Capital: Helena

Nebraska www.visitnebraska.org

Capital: Lincoln

Nevada www.travelnevada.com

Capital: Carson City

New Hampshire www.visitnh.gov

Capital: Concord

New Jersey www.state.nj.us/travel

Capital: Trenton

New Mexico www.newmexico.org

Capital: Santa Fe

New York www.iloveny.com

Capital: Albany

North Carolina www.visitnc.com/index.asp

Capital: Raleigh

North Dakota www.ndtourism.com

Capital: Bismarck

Ohio www.discoverohio.com

Capital: Columbus

Oklahoma www.travelok.com

Capital: Oklahoma City

Oregon www.traveloregon.com

Capital: Denver

Connecticut www.ctbound.org

Capital: Hartford

Delaware www.visitdelaware.com

Capital: Dover

District of Columbia www.washington.org

United States Capital

Florida www.visitflorida.com

Capital: Tallahassee

Georgia www.georgia.org

Capital: Atlanta

Hawaii www.gohawaii.com

Capital: Honolulu

Idaho www.visitid.org

Capital: Boise

Illinois www.enjoyillinois.com

Capital: Springfield

Indiana www.in.gov/enjoyindiana/

Capital: Indianapolis

Iowa www.traveliowa.com

Capital: Des Moines

Kansas www.travelks.com

Capital: Topeka

Kentucky www.kentuckytourism.com

Capital: Frankfort

Louisiana www.louisianatravel.com

Capital: Frankfort

Maine www.maine-tourism.com

Capital: Augusta

Maryland www.mdisfun.org

Capital: Annapolis

Massachusetts www.massvacation.com

The immigration officer will return your DS 2019, which you should always keep safely with your passport.

I-94 Form

While you are on board the airplane enroute to the United States, you will be given an I-94 form. This is a white card which you will complete before you depart the airplane.

When you arrive in the US and proceed through immigration, have your documents in hand, the immigration officer will review your documents and:

- Your I-94 will be stamped, separated and stapled to your passport
- Your passport will be stamped
- Your Form DS 2019 will be stamped

Make sure you receive all three documents back from the officer before you proceed to Customs.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AFTER ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Let HTP know you have arrived

Check In with HTP within 3 days of your arrival in the US. You may call us toll free at 888 549 4HTP 24 hours a day or you may visit our website; www.htp-usa.com and complete the Arrival Form.

Insurance Card

You will receive your insurance card in your Welcome Box. You should keep this card in your possession at all times. You will need it in the event of a medical emergency. Please refer to the *insurance* brochure included in your Welcome Box for a complete explanation of your insurance coverage.

Applying for your Social Security Card

It is very important to apply for a Social Security Card when you reach the community in which you will be living. We suggest waiting seven days after your arrival to visit the Social Security Office in your area.

Your host organization's payroll and the United States tax system will identify you by the number on this card and your host organization may have difficulty issuing you a paycheck without this number.

To apply for a Social Security card you must:

- Visit your local social security office, to find the office nearest you look in the telephone book under "Social Security Administration"
- Complete form SS-5 available online at www.ssa.gov or at the Social Security Administration Office
- Take your DS 2019, I-94 form, your passport and a letter from your host organization confirming your employment to the local Social Security office.

Make sure you receive your documents back from the officer before you leave.

Your Social Security card should be mailed to you within ten business days of the date of application. Request a temporary certificate (form SSA-5030) when you apply for the card; this temporary certificate has no number, but it is proof that you will be receiving the card.

It is your responsibility to report your Social Security number to your host organization immediately after receiving the actual number. If you leave your host organization before receiving your number and you received stipends, you are still required to report the number to that host organization. Not reporting the number could lead to tax problems for the host organization and jeopardize the use of the establishment for future participants.

Even though you must have the Social Security card and number, you are exempted from Social Security tax. This tax appears under the heading of "FICA" on paychecks and should not be withheld by your host organization. Any questions about Social Security taxation may be directed to HTP, or your host organization.

Housing

Did you know that the average monthly rent for an apartment in the US is \$983.00. Do your research before you come to the US. Some properties **may** assist you with housing, but ultimately it is your responsibility to find your own housing.

Part-Time Jobs

No! While you are on a J-1 visa you are not permitted to hold down a part-time job. These rules are outlined by the US Department of State and can not be violated.

United States that are operated by the American Youth Hostels, Inc., a member of the International Youth Hostel Federation. In order to use AYH facilities, you must be a member of the organization (see bicycle section above).

YMCA's and YWCA's are completely non-denominational and provide inexpensive temporary lodging. For information on accommodations, call "Y's Way International" at (212) 760-5856. Visit www.ymca.net for more information

There are many low-cost motel chains throughout the United States. For more information the [Where to Stay USA](#) and [Let's Go: USA](#) publications are very useful guides. They include general information on budget travel, accommodations, and listing of places of interest. Camping in the United States can be a fabulous experience. The facilities are widespread and generally excellent. For a list of the parks maintained by the National Park Service, contact the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 and ask for "Camping in the National Park System".

Visit www.wheretostayusa.com www.letsgo.com and www.nps.gov for more information.

Regional information and tourism

Following is a list of our 50 United States. Websites are listed for each state. Make sure to read as much information about the area you will be living in as you can.

The website, www.SeeAmerica.org is a great US Travel and US vacation guide offering US maps, and information about our National Parks and Byways.

Alabama www.touralabama.org
Capital: Montgomery

Alaska www.travelalaska.com
Capital: Juneau

Arizona www.arizonaguide.com
Capital: Phoenix

Arkansas www.arkansas.com
Capital: Little Rock

California www.visitcalifornia.com
Capital: Sacramento
Colorado www.colorado.com

By train:

Amtrak, the national railroad passenger corporation sells an "All Aboard America" pass, which offers maximum coach fares for train trips within a certain period of time. Tickets must be purchased and reservations made at least five days before beginning your trip. In addition to the "All Aboard America" fares, Amtrak also offers a USA Rail Pass similar to a Eurailpass. There are both national and regional USA Rail Passes which are all valid for 45 days. The plan divides the country into three optional stops. You can purchase USA Rail Pass outside the United States and in any major American city. This pass is only available to foreign visitors to the US. To buy Amtrak tickets or passes check with Council Travel or Amtrak. Visit www.amtrak.com for more information

By car:

To drive in the United States all you need is a valid driver's license from your home country. However, it is advisable to carry an International Driving Permit which can be obtained from the American Automobile Association (AAA) or from the Automobile Association in your home country. Most car rental companies require that you be at least 21 years of age and carry at least one major credit card. If you are interested in driving long distances, look into the possibility of "driveaways" which arrange the transportation of cars from one part of the country to another. The car owner usually pays for the tolls and occasionally the gas, and the driver is given a certain amount of time to get it to the final destination. Agencies will be listed in the telephone yellow pages under the heading "Automobile Transport and Driveaway Companies".

By bicycle:

There are lots of bicycle clubs and organizations in the United States. One of the best known organizations associated with bicycle travel is American Youth Hostels, Inc. Memberships cards are available from the AYH National Administrative Office, 13321 I Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005. Visit www.hiayh.org for more information.

Where to stay

You have lots of choices when it comes to deciding where to stay: hotels, motels, youth hostels, YMCA's, campsites, bed & breakfasts, etc.

There are about 300 youth hostels scattered throughout the

Trips back home

Most likely, your J-1 visa will stipulate "multiple entries". This will allow you to go back home and re-enter the United States without having to get authorization from an American Consulate. You must however, have the first page of your DS2019, **Travel Validation By Responsible Officer** signed by HTP. Without this validation, you will not be able to re-enter the U.S.

The "travel" signature is valid for up to 12 months, so you do not have to send your form to HTP each time you travel, but you **must** notify us each time your travel out of the U.S.

Send your DS-2019 form to HTP for signature at least two weeks prior to your trip. When sending your DS-2019 include a note with the following information:

1. Dates of travel
2. Destination
3. Reason for travel
4. Return address to send the DS-2019

HTP uses FedEx to return your signed form. **A \$25 fee applies.**

If an emergency arises that requires you to leave the U.S. **before** you have your form signed, don't worry— you can leave the country without having your form signed. However, you **must** have your form signed **prior to returning to the US** so that you will reenter the country with J-1 visa status.

Send your DS-2019 form to HTP, as above, include the international address and phone to which you would like your form returned. **A\$25 fee applies.**

It's important to remember, be sure that whenever you travel outside the U.S., you have a valid I-94 card, your Form DS2019, passport valid for at least 6 months after your intended return, and J-1 visa stamp in your passport (valid at time of re-entry and valid for "multiple entries").

Visits to Canada or Mexico

Check your passport to make sure you have "multiple entries" marked on your J-1 visa stamp. Make sure to check as well if a special visa is necessary for someone from your country to visit Mexico or Canada. Be sure to have your Form DS 2019 signed and your valid passport to show at the U. S. border when you are returning. **You will not be able to re-enter the United States without them.** Be sure to explain that you are re-entering the

United States following a brief stay outside the U.S.

Most EV's who visit other countries have no problem whatsoever. Should you have any questions or difficulties, however, contact HTP at 888 549 4HTP

Income taxes you should pay

In the United States, income taxes are imposed by the federal, state and local governments. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) collects personal income taxes, usually on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. This means that your host organization generally withholds income tax from your salary and pays it directly to the government.

Federal Income Tax

Income tax is paid by all income-earning individuals to the federal government. It is paid on income from salaries, stipends and tips. Approximately 30% of your salary will be withheld for federal income tax, a portion of which you may claim back as a refund at the end of the year.

State and City Income Taxes

States and cities levy income taxes according to local tax codes. These codes are as varied as the states and cities themselves. To find out if state or city income taxes are levied where you are living, ask your host organization. These tax codes may define "resident" and "non-resident" differently than federal tax codes.

Like federal income tax, state and local income taxes will be withheld from your paycheck. You may be able to claim a refund for a portion of these taxes at the end of the year.

Income Taxes you should NOT pay

- Social Security Tax
- Medicare
- Federal Unemployment

As an Exchange Visitor you are not eligible for Social Security or Medicare benefits, therefore you are **exempt** from paying these taxes. It's in your best interest to remind your host organization that you are not subject to these taxes.

The catch is that roommate services will generally charge a fee. To locate such agencies, look under "Roommate Referral Agencies" in your local Yellow Pages telephone directory. Remember that the term "roommate" usually does not mean sharing the same bedroom.

After successfully completing your Training Program

At the end of your training program you are permitted to remain in the US for 30 days beyond the dates listed on your Form DS-2019. This "grace period" is meant to give you the opportunity to pack up, close your affairs and possibly travel the US for a bit. During this time you are not allowed to continue training or travel outside of and reenter the US.

Travel in the United States - Regional information and tourism

Travel in the United States

Hopefully you will be able to see more of the United States than just the area where you live. When deciding to travel, be sure to investigate all options available to you: bus, train, plane, car. Depending on your route and final destination, any one of these modes may be the cheapest means of getting there.

Methods of travel

By air:

Air travel is a frequently used method of travel in the US. Obtaining the best fare at the time you want to travel is becoming very complex in the current market. Be sure to check the internet for up to date promotional fares. Some popular websites are: www.cheaptickets.com www.expedia.com www.priceline.com and www.faremax.com

By bus:

Bus travel has always been an inexpensive and popular way to travel around the United States. The major bus companies can help you connect to local bus transportation to reach even the most remote towns. One of the best bargains in bus travel is Greyhound's International "Ameripass" for exchange students. This can be purchased in the gateway cities of New York, Miami, Los Angeles, and San Francisco and allows you unlimited travel anywhere in the United States for a specified period of time. Visit www.greyhound.com for more information

You will probably be asked to pay one month's rent as a "security deposit". This will be returned to you when you leave if there has been no significant damage to the apartment during your occupancy. Therefore, it is a good idea to inspect an apartment with the landlord before signing the lease and get written acknowledgment of existing damages and a listing of furnishings and their conditions.

Classified advertisements

The best place to look for an apartment is the classified section of your local newspaper (The Sunday editions are usually most helpful with expanded classified sections). Look at the advertisements to give yourself an idea of the cost of rental in your area. In areas where there is a shortage of affordable housing you will find that inexpensive apartments are rented almost immediately so you should call as soon as you see the advertisement.

Classified sections are written in abbreviations that might be confusing to you. Some examples are: BR = bedroom, util = utilities (cost of gas and electricity, sometimes included in the rent), pvt = private, elev bldg = building with an elevator, co-op = an apartment building whose apartments are owned (rather than rented) by the building's tenant.

University listings and bulletin boards

If you are in a town with an university, ask on campus where there is a bulletin board on which students have posted notices looking for roommates (Almost all universities and colleges have at least one). Most universities also have an "off campus housing office" which keeps listings of available housing in the area. These listings are usually only available to students at that university, but with a little luck, an exception might be made for you.

Real estate agencies

When you rent an apartment through a real estate agency you will probably be charged a fee (usually an additional month's rent). When calling about an apartment be sure to ask if you will have to pay a Realtor's fee.

Roommate services

These services list apartments where people are looking for roommates. These are people who may not also list their apartment in the newspaper. So, such services can help you get beyond the classified ads.

W-4 form Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate

When you begin your training program your host organization will give you a W-4 form (Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate) to fill out so that taxes may be withheld from your pay. Your host organization will keep this form on file while you are participating in the training program. Your host organization uses the information on this form and tax tables to determine at what rate taxes should be withheld from your paycheck. The objective is to match the amount of tax you will actually owe for the year.

If you do not fill out your W-4 form properly, you may have to pay more tax to the IRS when you file your taxes at the end of the year.

The following are instructions from IRS Publication 515 (rev. 1/2005) "Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Entities." These instructions supersede the instructions on the W-4 form:

"A nonresident alien subject to wage withholding must give the employer a completed Form W-4 to enable the employer to figure how much income tax to withhold. In completing the form, nonresident aliens should use the following instructions instead of the instructions of Form W-4."

1. Check only "Single" marital status on line 3
2. Claim only one withholding allowance on line 5, unless a resident of Canada, Mexico or South Korea.
3. Request that additional tax of \$7.60 per week be withheld on line 6. If the pay period is two weeks, request that \$15.30 be withheld instead.
4. Do not claim "Exempt" withholding status on line 7.

W-2 form

At the end of the calendar year your host organization will send you a W-2 form. The W-2 form is a computerized document which details your total stipends, as well as the amount of each tax that was withheld. It is essential that you receive a W-2 form from your host organization since you will be required to submit copies of the form with your tax returns. Make sure to give your host organization your address in your home country after finishing your training program. If you have not received your W-2 forms by February 15, you should contact your host organization for replacement.

Tax Return Forms and Tax Refunds

When you receive your W-2 form in January, you will have to fill out a tax return form. There are separate federal, state and city tax return forms. All forms are available from banks, post offices and libraries in the United States; federal tax return forms are also available from United States embassies or on line at www.irs.gov.

The federal tax form you will have to complete is the 1040NR.

Use the charts available with the tax return forms to determine the amount of tax which you owe on your income. If too little tax was withheld from your stipends, you must pay the balance that you owe to the government by April 15. If too much was withheld (as will most likely be the case), you will be eligible for a refund from the United States government. To receive your refund, you must file your income tax return form by April 15. Remember, the earlier you file, the sooner you will receive your refund.

HTP will do its best to refer you to various sources of information for tax assistance, but we are not professional tax accounts and we are not certified to give tax advice. The most comprehensive recourse for tax advice is the IRS Publication 519- The US Tax Guide for Aliens, www.irs.gov/pub/ire-pdf/p519.pdf

Responsibilities - Yours and Ours

HTP's responsibility to you

As sponsor of your exchange visitor program in the United States, HTP is officially responsible for you throughout your stay in the United States. We are ultimately responsible for you if you find yourself in legal trouble, or facing unexpected medical treatment. Should any of these or other unforeseen situations arise, do not hesitate to contact HTP first.

For extreme emergencies, you may call us toll free at 1.888.549.4HTP. Use your best judgment and be prudent with this privilege.

Your responsibilities to HTP

Keep your commitments! As an EV in HTP's program you made a serious commitment not only to your self but your host organization here in the US. Your commitment enabled you to participate in this program. In most cases both you and your

Central, 10:00 am Mountain and 9:00 am Pacific.

Imperial to metric conversions

1 mile = 1.6 kilometers	1 foot = 0.3 meters
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters	1 gallon = 3.8 liters
1 pound = 454 grams	1 ounce = 28 grams
1 liquid quart = .95 liters	

Housing in the United States - finding a place to live

As might be expected, not only do the northeastern metropolitan and resort areas have exorbitant rents, it is also difficult to locate available accommodations. In New York City, for example, finding an empty apartment can become a lengthy and detailed process. Make sure you have arranged accommodations ahead of time for the first week. Most host organizations will help you identify housing if you do not already have done so. If you are on your own as you look for a place to live, keep in mind the objective of your visit. Try to find a living arrangement where you will be with Americans and not only people of your own nationality. Also, try to avoid paying so much for an apartment that you will not be able to do other things in your spare time. If you are trying to decide whether to live alone or with a roommate, remember there are many advantages to sharing an apartment when living in a foreign country. Aside from helping you meet people, moving in with a roommate or subletting can often mean that the apartment will be furnished right down to the pots and pans.

Rent, sublet or share

When you begin looking for a place to live you will find apartments available to rent, sublet and share. When you rent an apartment, you do not sign the lease, but legally rent the apartment from the person who has signed the original lease. Leases usually cover a minimum of 6 months. Regardless of whether you rent directly from the landlord or sublet you should always sign a rental agreement and keep a copy for yourself. Such a written contract should define the terms by which a particular apartment is rented. It is presented by the landlord to the tenant and protects both the landlord and the tenant by stating the rental price and the time period the tenant will reside in the apartment and give rent. Before you sign any rental agreement, be sure to read it carefully and get an explanation for any terms which are unclear. Remember that whatever agreements are made verbally should also appear in writing. Only written information on a rental agreement is binding. Verbal agreements are not binding.

Telephone

A telephone number in the United States consists of ten numbers. The first three digits are called the area code; the last seven digits are the number of the home or business establishment you are calling. A local call is one placed to a number within the same town as the one you are calling from.

If you decide to apply for a service contract for your own private phone, keep in mind that you will have to make a refundable deposit with your telephone company of about \$100. Also, keep in mind that depending on the long distance company, long distance calls are usually discounted at certain times. Ask long distance companies for special rates.

Two different kinds of telephone books are available to you if you are looking for someone's number or address. One, the White Pages lists numbers by last name and city; the other, the Yellow Pages, is the business directory where listings are under general business categories.

For a number in the local area, dial "411" . For a number within the same area code, but not local, dial "1-555-1212" and for one in another code, dial "1", the area code and "555-1212". The operator will first ask "what city" and the person's name or business establishment.

Mail

Mail letters at the post office or in the blue United States mail boxes located on many street corners. Mail within the U.S takes between a day and a week to arrive; to northern Europe and South America, a week to 10 days; to southern Europe two to three weeks.

US Measurements

Temperatures

The formula for translating Fahrenheit into Celsius is to subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature and multiply by 5/9. It may be easier to memorize some of these temperatures:

C: -18	0	10	20	25	30	35
F: 0	32	50	68	77	86	95

Time zones

The continental United States is divided into four time zones. From the East to West coast they are Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific. When it is 12:00 noon Eastern time, it is 11:00 am

host organization have waited months for the paperwork to be processed and your visa approved, and during this process your training program was held especially for you. For this reason it is essential that you keep your commitment and you remain at your host organization for the duration of your training.

Evaluation Forms and Reports

Three weeks after your arrival in the United States, you are required to send us the "Initial Evaluation Form", (this form and a self address stamped envelop is included in your DS-2019 packet) letting us know how your first few weeks are going.

Throughout your training program you will receive ongoing evaluations via email. Please complete these forms in a timely manner. This will ensure that you stay in compliance with the Department of State Regulations governing the Exchange Visitor Program.

SEVIS

Since January 2003, the new *Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)* was implemented to track all non-immigrant visitors coming to the United States. SEVIS mandates that HTP monitor our exchange visitors in order to keep the SEVIS database current.

To ensure SEVIS compliance, the U.S government requires you to provide HTP with the following information:

Within 30 days of the start of your training:

- U.S. Home address
- Home telephone number
- e-mail address that you check frequently

Within 1 week:

- Any changes to your U.S. Home Address
- New e-mail address

These changes can be updated at our website:

www.htp-usa.com

American Co-workers in your country

During your stay it is likely that you will meet American co-workers who will ask you if they can have a professional experience in your country in the same way you have the opportunity to do our hospitality exchange program in the United States. The answer is YES!! HTP's Exchange Visitor's Program is a reciprocal program that also allows Americans to

travel and receive training in your country and other countries. Ask those who are interested to contact HTP for details of this possibility.

Health insurance

There is no "National Health Insurance" in the United States. Before coming to the United States, you must purchase health insurance in your home country, meeting the requirements set by United States federal regulations. Make sure to have a copy of your insurance coverage in the English Language with you. Accidents or major sickness are covered immediately for you. If you are treated for a non-emergency medical problem, however, you will have to pay the bills first and then file a claim with your insurance company for reimbursement. It is therefore imperative to keep careful records and receipts of all medical services that you receive. If you do not have a copy of a claim form with you, contact your insurance company to get one.

Hospitals, Emergency Rooms and Walk-In Clinics

Medical fees will depend on the doctor, the type of facility and its location in the country. In certain areas, especially large cities, medical care will be significantly more expensive. Unless you need immediate treatment, it is better not to go to a hospital Emergency Room to see a doctor. You should use these facilities for emergencies only as they tend to be quite costly.

When you have established yourself in an area it is a good idea to find a private doctor who will agree to see you if you become ill. You can ask friends or colleagues or call your local hospital for recommendations.

"Walk-in clinics" have sprung up all around the country in recent years. They offer an alternative to seeing a private physician or going to a hospital emergency room. They tend to be less costly and for people who do not have a continuing relationship with a doctor they can be ideal.

If you use medicine that you also need to use during your exchange program, make sure to bring the prescription from the doctor in your home country.

bank to bank; therefore, you should check with several different banks to find the one that best suits your needs. Below is a checklist to help you decide which bank may be appropriate for your needs:

- what is the period of time between opening the account and writing checks that use the money in the account
- what is the period of time between depositing checks into the account and the clearing of those checks (the time when deposited money becomes available for withdrawal).
- is there a monthly service charge or a charge per written check
- is there a minimum balance required to prevent service charges.
- is 24 hour banking available via MAC (Money Access Card)

Bank hours vary from bank to bank and throughout different regions of the country, but are usually open M-F from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. some banks are open later hours on Friday and open on the weekend. It is necessary to be aware of your bank's business hours so as not to find yourself without money. Most banks will only cash checks for customers who have an account with that bank, no matter which bank the check is drawn on. In some cases it is possible to cash a check at a bank where you do not have an account, but this is only applicable if the check is drawn on that bank. It is therefore highly recommended to deal with one bank for all of your banking needs.

Sales tax

Sales tax varies from state to state and is in addition to the marked purchase price. Taxable items also vary from state to state.

Tipping

It may be best for those on a tight budget to avoid restaurants that require tipping. However, if you dine in a restaurant with waiter or waitress service, you must remember that a service charge is not included on the bill. Americans generally tip the waiter / waitress 20% of the price of the meal. Similar practices apply to bartenders, taxi drivers, hair stylists and various other service industry individuals.

Telephones & Mail

Legal information

Drugs

Illegal possession of controlled substances in the United States is subject to prosecution by law. The penalties for drug possession vary from state to state and region to region. Become familiar with the laws in your area. Any participant arrested for possession or use of drugs will be terminated from the program and will have to leave the US immediately.

Alcohol

The legal drinking age in the US is currently 21. A national campaign has swept the US to increase Americans' awareness of "drunk driving" and to decrease the number of alcohol related accidents. In response to this, the enforcement of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) laws has become very stringent. To keep yourself and others safe, do not drink and drive.

Money

The basic unit of currency is the Dollar (\$1.00). Coins are minted in denominations of 1c (one cent or a penny), 5c (a nickel), 10c (a dime), 25c (a quarter) and 1 dollar. Bills are printed in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20 \$50 and \$100.

Credit/Debit Cards

If you open the wallet of any working American you will see a whole line of credit cards. Americans use them more frequently than checks, and we suggest you obtain an international credit card before leaving. VISA, and Euro/Mastercard are the most frequently used credit cards. American Express is useful for transferring funds, but is not as universally accepted in small stores as other cards. When you open a bank account you ask for a debit card. It looks like and can be used like credit cards, but funds are withdrawn from your bank account immediately.

Traveler's checks

In many places you can use traveler's checks more easily than personal checks. Remember to keep your receipts separate from your checks. American Express checks are the most popular and most universally accepted type throughout the United States.

Banking

You will want to open an account as soon as you have settled into your place to live. The kinds of services and fees vary from

Dentists

Like doctors, dentists usually have private practices and are expensive. Many large hospitals, particularly those associated with universities, have dental clinics which are open to the general public and charge established clinic fees which are much lower than those charged for private treatment.

Drug test

Before you start your training program, your host organization may require you to undergo a drug test. Your host organization may also require employees to participate in random drug screening tests throughout the duration of your training.

A failed drug test will terminate your program and your J-1 Visa. You will have to return to your home country immediately.

HAVE FUN...

Take the opportunity to explore and enjoy the culture and many attractions in your local area. Visit the websites below for some information on local dining, entertainment, and live music and events.

www.citysearch.com

www.thingstodo.com

www.seeamerica.org

www.jambase.com

www.entertainment.com



INFORMATION DURING YOUR EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Managing your expectations and being realistic about your US experience is one of the most essential steps in applying, participating and successfully completing your training program.

American people

Some 300 million people now call America home, but in fact they have origins in every part of the world. Cultural diversity is maintained in American society more than the traditional "melting pot" image might lead you to believe. You will find cities divided into ethnic neighborhoods and many concentrations of immigrant groups, that retain their own customs and social traditions. However, almost everyone merges into the American mainstream in some aspect of life, in schools, sports, business and science, to name a few, although they may keep many of their own customs socially and at home. Wide geographical differences also make for profound differences in attitudes and values. For example, a traditional New Englander's point of view is as different from a Texan's as the traditional French outlook is from the British.

With some initiative on your part, however, you will most likely find it easy to meet Americans. As a visitor from another country, you have an "added" charm. Don't be put off by an American's ignorance of your country. As citizens of a nation insulated by vast oceans and absorbed for 200 years in its own rapid development, Americans can be quite unaware of other countries' cultures but at the same time be very curious and interested. Take advantage of this opportunity to spread the good word about your country. As the newcomer to a job and community in the United States, the "burden" is on you to be outgoing and extend the first hand of friendship. Whatever you do, be open to new experiences. Try not to make judgments right away and keep your sense of humor.

American attitudes and characteristics.

As you meet people you will see that there is no one definitive set of cultural traits which describe all Americans. You may find some well-known stereotypes and probably some unexpected characteristics and attitudes. The following are brief observations on some of the cultural attitudes and traits which are often commented upon by foreign university students in the United States.

If a company has financial difficulties, it is possible that the company eliminates your position. Most people get two-weeks notice before they have to leave, but this is not required by law, although it may be by union contract. If you are to be laid off, be sure to contact HTP and we will assist you in finding another host organization.

If you are fired or terminated from your position it is because the company is unhappy with you. It is rare that trainees are fired for poor technical skills; on the rare occasions when trainees have been fired, it was because the trainees were consistently uncooperative. Americans are usually very open about actions of employees that are seen as unsatisfactory. Some employers may even express anger. Don't be afraid to politely present your point of view or to admit a mistake. This is usually a chance to make things better, not a prelude to being fired.

Terminated from your host organization means:

You will no longer be in J-1 status

You will no longer have health insurance

Your status in SEVIS will be terminated

You must leave the US immediately

You must return your original Form DS to HTP

You may encounter difficulties whenever trying to obtain a visa to visit the US

Changing your host organization

Only in very rare circumstances are EV's allowed to change their host organizations. You **may not** change host organizations without authorization from HTP.

Support Service Manager

Clear and efficient communication is essential with both your host organization and HTP. HTP will not be able to assist you unless we have direct communication with you. HTP has a dedicated Support Service Manager that is available to you while you are training in the US. You will receive a welcome email from her when you make your flight arrangements.

Remember above all else, stay focused on the positive, ask for assistance and know that your program will be what YOU make it!

Practical matters

seen as aggressive or a sexual advance.

-use a firm handshake when you meet a man or a woman.

-Americans smile and laugh a lot and show that one is polite and happy to be where one is. Americans often mistake European's more reserved behavior as aloofness or "Snobbishness".

-be careful not to cut people off in the middle of sentences. Show that you are listening with eye contact and head gestures.

Stipend / Salary

Salary is called "wages" or , "pay", or "what you make". No laws exist concerning how much you may be paid although there is a federally determined minimum wage. You will receive a stipend once per week, every two weeks or every month. You will always receive less than your gross salary (what you agreed upon). Money will be subtracted from your gross salary. These subtractions are called "deductions". The money you receive after the deductions is your net salary. On the training program you will have federal taxes deducted ("withheld") from your salary. You may, in some communities, have state and local taxes deducted as well. These deductions may seem confusing. Your host organization should give you a salary statement or payslip which explains these deductions. As an exchange visitor, you should not have social security taxes deducted from your salary.

Benefits

You are not required by law to receive many of the social advantages that are required in many European countries i.e.: vacations, sick leave, medical insurance, etc. Most host organizations do provide these benefits but they vary from employer to employer. Some host organizations offer extra benefits such as profit sharing, credit unions, etc. You must check with your host organization to find out what benefits you should receive.

Unions

Employees form labor unions in order to improve working conditions. The workers in each company usually select the one union they want to represent them. In some companies, the membership fees or "dues" will be automatically deducted from employee's gross salary.

Lay off and firing

Friendliness

Because Americans are highly mobile, they have developed skills that enable them to make friends in virtually any new setting. You will probably find that most Americans are very warm and accepting toward you from the moment they first meet you and that they treat you informally in almost any social situation. You should be aware, however, that this friendliness does not necessarily mean that the Americans are interested in long-lasting, intimate friendships.

Some foreigners feel, after several months in the United States, that the friendliness of Americans is rather superficial. Americans are sometimes criticized for not "following through" in the long run by working to maintain a strong friendship after the initial show of friendliness. Remember that deep friendship takes a long time to develop in the United States as in most other countries.

Pace

When you arrive in the United States, it may first seem like everyone is in a rush. Particularly in large northeastern cities such as New York, bus drivers will be abrupt, waiters will hurry you and people will push past you. Although this may appear rude, you shouldn't take pace and seeming impatience too personally. The pace is gentler outside the big cities, as it is in other countries as well. Americans who live in cities often assume that everyone is equally competitive and self-sufficient and expect others to behave that way. Once Americans discover you are stranger, they usually will make an effort to help you. If you need directions or other assistance, go up to someone and ask for help. Most people will stop and talk to you. However, you must let them know you need help. A few may not respond helpfully. If this happens, don't be discouraged, just ask someone else.

Openness

America is not a nation of hedges and walls or gates and inner courts. It often surprises foreigners, especially northern Europeans, to find a lack of desire for certain kinds of privacy among Americans. Lawns run into one another without fences, office doors are left open while people work; friends run in and out of each other's houses without telephoning first, sometimes even without ringing the doorbell.

Americans do however value personal privacy and time alone. They tend not to live in extended families but in smaller groups

with each person considering himself or herself a separate individual. If possible, children are given their own private rooms where they may like to go and close the door. In many cultures wanting to be alone is a sign of something wrong. Not so among Americans, who will often resist the constant companionship offered by foreign friends and acquaintances.

Silence

Many Americans find silence uncomfortable. They will talk on to fill any silence if it extends for more than a moment. Students often study with loud music playing and people will leave the television on for "companionship" of sound, even though they might be doing something in another room. If you are silent for long periods, someone will probably try to "draw you out" or will ask if you feel all right or if there is anything they can do to help you.

Assertiveness

Most people in the United States tend to be candid and make little effort to hide their thoughts and opinions. Do not be surprised if people share with you a wide range of facts about their personal lives, even on short acquaintance. It is quite normal to jump right into a subject and say exactly what is on one's mind. Americans expect "direct" questions, to which they respond with "straight" answers. In dealing with others who are seeking advice or guidance, they try to be as objective and accurate as possible; they do not necessarily try to say something that will be momentarily pleasing. This may seem blunt, but is not intended to be impolite.

Time

It has been said that "we are slaves to nothing but the clock". You will find in the United States that time is treated as if it were an almost tangible entity. It is "budgeted", "saved", "wasted", "stolen", "killed" and "cut". Americans account for it as well as charge for it. It is a precious commodity. Many people have a rather acute sense of shortness of each lifetime and plan every minute, whether for work or leisure, so that it counts.

Since people value time highly, they resent someone else "wasting" it beyond a certain courtesy point. They also expect you to be "on time". For business appointments you should arrive several minutes before the required time and wait for your interlocutor to invite you into his or her office. Arriving even five minutes after the appointed time may be taken as a personal offense. The same is also true with personal friends. If you are invited to dinner at 6 PM, don't arrive more than fifteen

minutes later or your host or hostess will begin to worry. Don't, however, show up early unless you know them well.

The American Workplace

Rights and responsibilities during your training

The American workplace may seem much less hierarchical than the workplace in Europe. You may get to call your supervisor by his or her first name (don't do this of course unless you see your colleagues do the same). Supervisors may share what seems to be information about themselves that you would normally only share with close friends. Socializing on the job is casual and will include all levels of the hierarchy. Don't let this fool you. Your supervisor is still your supervisor and although relations may seem informal, this informality or friendliness is an American form of politeness only. Watch and listen to your supervisor and colleagues to learn how formal or informal to be. Treat your supervisor with respect by being punctual and cooperative, not by formal speech or flattery.

American society reflects historical dependence on group support, even though Americans may think of themselves as individualistic. The tremendous amount of vocabulary using words from team sports in the workplace is a reflection of this. Make sure to help colleagues if they request it and don't be afraid to request help if you need it.

Time

Time, as stated in prior paragraphs, is of the essence. Being "on time" (punctual) is always important. This usually means showing up a little early (5 or 10 minutes), especially at interviews and meetings. Employees who constantly arrive at the office five minutes late may be seen as latecomers who don't take their work seriously.

Dress and non-verbal behavior

Look how others dress to have an idea of what is appropriate. Usually you should not be dressed more formally than your supervisor. Being "neat" is taken very seriously.

We all communicate without speaking. Sometimes misunderstandings arise because we do not know the non-verbal language of the environment. Some hints:

-people stand between 1 meter and 1.50 meters from people you have a conversation with. Standing "too close" may be