



## Introduction

As you know, there is a COVID-19 pandemic happening around the world. As a participant on a cultural exchange program, it is your responsibility to educate yourself and be prepared.

**Please read each section** carefully. We hope it will help you understand the conditions in the U.S. You should also make an effort to learn more about the local circumstances individually as it can vary greatly from region to region. Reading local news sources and checking in with your host is a good way to start.

As we learn more about the virus every day, the circumstances in your U.S. community and home country are expected to change, as is the guidance provided by hosts, sponsors, and medical experts. Please be prepared to adjust course and take necessary precautions as needed. CIEE will continue assessing the situation and communicating with participants directly while you are in the U.S.

**Before you travel to the US**, please be sure to check with your airline and review the [CDC website](#) about any requirements for entering the US.

## Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19

- Some people infected with the virus have no symptoms.
- Common symptoms include fever, body ache, dry cough, fatigue, chills, headache, sore throat, loss of appetite, and loss of smell.
- Severe symptoms include high fever, severe cough, and shortness of breath, which often indicates pneumonia.
- Neurological symptoms include loss of smell, inability to taste, muscle weakness, tingling or numbness in the hands and feet, dizziness, confusion, delirium, seizures, and stroke.
- Some people have gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms, such as loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain or discomfort associated with COVID-19. These symptoms might start before other symptoms such as fever, body ache, and cough.
- **If you think you may have contracted COVID-19, please contact a medical provider immediately and avoid any contact with other people. Please also notify CIEE.**

\*source <https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-basics>

## Understand and practice the preventative measures

Practicing healthy habits - particularly handwashing, physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and disinfecting surfaces and objects potentially contaminated with germs – are the best ways to help prevent the spread of illness.

The [WHO](#) specifically recommends the following to reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
- Practice social distancing, keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Maintain at least 6 feet (2 meter) distance between yourself and others.
- Wear a face mask in indoor public settings or where social distancing is hard to maintain
- Avoid going to crowded places.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies, and notify CIEE and your host.

If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority.

\*Source: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

## Be prepared

COVID-19 has changed our world in countless ways – some temporary, some likely permanent. Prepare for your program now to make the most of your experience.

- Educate yourself
- Reach out to your host employer to know what to expect in your community, and in relation to your job
- Bring extra money
- Read about your U.S. community and any local restrictions
- Be prepared to wear face masks, practice social distancing, or observe other restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19
- Reconsider post program travel or keep it within your region

We are here to help. We know that your program experience may look and feel different from what you expected but we are putting lots of measures in place and we believe that you will still enjoy it! We are also here to help, call/email if you have any questions or concerns ([1-888-268-6245](tel:1-888-268-6245) or [contact@cieee.org](mailto:contact@cieee.org)).

## Action: Participant Declaration concerning COVID-19:

In light of the current circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. and around the world, and in order to participate in a CIEE Work & Travel USA, Camp Exchange USA, Internship USA, Career Training USA or Scholar USA program, you must commit to the below terms. Applicants are agreeing to the terms by signing off on the program Application Terms & Conditions and submitting their application to CIEE for review.

I agree to:

- Educate myself on the risks associated with travel and participating in a cultural exchange program abroad
- Purchase a round trip ticket to the U.S. (if program is shorter than six months)
- Travel to the U.S. with \$1,500 USD and additional funds to support myself in case of an emergency, for a repatriation flight, or to support myself in the event of a shelter-in-place order
- Quarantine appropriately upon arrival to the U.S., and upon my return to my home country
- Provide CIEE with an email address and phone number that I check regularly, and respond to all CIEE communication requesting a reply
- Inform CIEE and my host employer promptly if tested positive for COVID-19, and follow appropriate measures as advised by a medical professional
- Follow the instructions of my host employer and/or CIEE in the case of an outbreak in workplace or housing
- Respect others' wishes for social distancing and wear personal protection equipment, such as a mask, whenever appropriate

AND

I understand that:

- There may be disruptions to my program due to COVID-19
- I may be required to change placements or move locations in the U.S. as instructed by CIEE
- I may need to return home immediately if instructed by CIEE, my university, or government (U.S. or home government)
- I must follow CIEE's instructions and respond to outreach as requested
- I am responsible for supporting myself financially in case of quarantine or a shelter in place order in my community

## Section 1 – Welcome

### Introduction

Welcome to the CIEE Professional Exchange USA Orientation! Here you'll find all the information you need to prepare for your experience in the United States. This orientation should take about one hour to complete. Please give yourself time and space to read each section carefully.

### International Exchange Programs

This J-1 visa program is part of the much larger U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program. The J-1 visa is designed to provide a rich, meaningful experience by bringing foreign nationals to the United States to explore our culture and make lasting connections with our people. Interning or training at a top U.S. company is one of the smartest career moves you can make. Not only will you gain real-world skills that will serve you throughout your career, but you will also get valuable firsthand insight into American culture and business practices as well as the opportunity to polish your English skills and connect with local communities. Along the way, you will share ideas with colleagues, make important new business connections, and build lifelong friendships.

### Meet Your Sponsor, CIEE

#### Meet CIEE

CIEE – the [Council on International Educational Exchange](#) – is your J-1 visa sponsor for your professional exchange program.

The U.S. Department of State has approved us to sponsor program participants like you while you visit the United States. We are here to help you have a great experience. We issue paperwork for your visa, in most cases provide your travel insurance, make sure you are aware of and follow program rules, and look out for your safety and well-being while you are here.

In other words, we are here to help! Reach out with any questions or concerns about your placement, your health, or anything else.

#### There are two easy ways to reach us:

Call 1-888-268-6245. We're available Monday- Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m. EST. For emergencies, we are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Send an email to [contact@ciee.org](mailto:contact@ciee.org). We'll respond as soon as possible.

It's important to **check your email frequently while you're in the U.S.** so you don't miss reminders for required tasks and other updates.

#### Find Us Online

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CIEEInternshipUSA/>

### **U.S Department of State**

Office of Private Sector Exchange Designation  
Academic and Government Programs Division  
ECA/EC/D/AG - SA-4E, Room E-B001  
2201 C Street NW, (Mailing)

2430 E Street, NW (Physical)  
Washington, DC 20520  
[Agexchanges@state.gov](mailto:Agexchanges@state.gov)

### **Private Sector Exchanges**

[jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov)  
844-300-1824

Be sure to add CIEE to your phone now: 1-888-268-6245.

### **Stay Curious**

The United States is a vast and vibrant country. One thing is certain: No matter where you go, you are likely to have new and exciting experiences. Some things will be positive, while others may be more challenging. We encourage you to keep an open mind and respond to each day with curiosity. We also encourage you to:

- **Research your community before you travel.** Learn more about the services and conveniences in your area, such as available transportation, medical centers, libraries, and banks.
- **Be prepared for a period of cultural adjustment.** At first, most participants are excited and happy to be in a new place. However, as you begin to adjust, it's normal for excitement to wear off. This may leave you feeling anxious, frustrated, or homesick. Give yourself time to develop a new routine and gain confidence.
- **Be patient** with yourself and others.
- **Be curious** about yourself and everything around you. Take part in and reflect about the differences between the U.S. and your own country. It's the best way to adapt, to learn, to grow, and to make the most of your program.
- **Be aware of phone and email scams.** Some scams involve phone calls from alleged government representatives demanding personal information and money with threats of deportation from the U.S. Never give your personal information, social security number, or bank information over the phone. If you feel alarmed or unsure, talk with your host organization or contact CIEE.
- **Ask for help.** No matter how you are feeling, you are never alone. You can contact CIEE by calling 1-888-268-6245 any time. We are always happy to hear from you.

**Remember That We're Here to Help!**

## Section 2 – Know Your Documents

### Essential Documents

You must have certain documents in hand to enter the U.S. Some of these documents will come from your international representative or CIEE; others, such as your passport, are your own responsibility.

#### Document Checklist

##### **DS-2019 form**

This form permits you to apply for a J-1 Visa. You will need it at the airport (or border) when entering the U.S.

##### **DS-7002 form**

This is your training plan. Most likely, you collaborated with your host organization to work on the details found on this document. Once you are in the U.S., the DS-7002 will serve as the guide for your training.

##### **SEVIS receipt**

Your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) receipt confirms that CIEE has paid your registration fee with the U.S. government. You will need this receipt for your J-1 visa interview.

##### **Confirmation of Insurance (for holders of CIEE insurance only)**

This document serves as confirmation of your CIEE health insurance coverage dates.

##### **Insurance ID (Identification Card)**

Your proof of travel health insurance. It is located on your confirmation of insurance document

##### **Social Security Officer Letter**

This is an optional letter of support that some Social Security offices may request. It is available for download on CIEE's [website](#).

##### **U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Welcome Brochure**

This brochure explains the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program and provides information on contacting the U.S. Department of State. You can access the brochure [here](#).

#### Documents you must obtain on your own:

- **Passport**  
Your passport must be in good condition and is recommended to be valid for six months beyond the period of your intended stay in the U.S.
- **U.S. J-1 visa**  
You will need a valid J-1 visa in order to enter the U.S.
- **Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record Card**  
The I-94 number is issued upon entrance to the United States. You may go to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's [I-94 website](#) after you have arrived to download and print a copy of your number.

- **U.S. J-2 visa for dependents (if applicable)**

Spouses and unmarried children under age 21 are eligible for J-2 visas. [Learn more.](#)

Your documents are your identification while you are in the U.S. and law enforcement authorities might request to see them at any time. [Learn more](#) about these important documents on our website and through the PDF documents available for [download](#).

**TRAVEL TIP:** *Make two photocopies of each document and pack both sets in different places in your carry-on luggage. You should also scan and email a copy of these documents to your personal email account and leave one copy at home with a parent or friend.*

**Do not pack any of these documents in your checked luggage.**

## Section 3 – Before you Travel

### Program Requirements

As participant in the Internship USA or Career Training USA program you will be expected to complete a very specific set of program requirements. Some of these requirements, like this orientation, must be completed prior to your arrival in the U.S. Other requirements must be met at various points throughout your program, or once you have returned home.

**In order to participate in the Internship USA or Career Training USA program you must:**

- Be in possession of all required program documentation.
- Complete the exchange visitor's orientation prior to your arrival in the U.S.
- Register your address in the SEVIS database upon arrival in the U.S. and whenever you change your address.
- Apply for and receive your Social Security number.
- Respond to all CIEE notifications sent to you via email and/or phone.
- Complete all mandatory program evaluations.
- Observe all travel restrictions associated with the J-1 Visa

**Failure to comply with any of the above requirements may result in withdrawal or termination from the program.**

### Plan Your Finances

It's important not to underestimate the true cost of living in the U.S., which includes rent, food, transportation, entertainment, and other expenses. It is also important to note that many internships and training programs take place in major American cities such as New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, where the cost of living can be much higher than in rural areas. CIEE recommends that you research the area that you plan to live in before you travel so you can plan accordingly. Managing your funds wisely will help ensure that you have an enjoyable and stress-free stay in the U.S. and may also allow you to set aside some money for travel at the end of your program.

Expenses may include a housing deposit, transportation to and from your training, transportation to and from the Social Security Office, and daily meals.

**Typical expenses for the start of your stay:**

- Airport hotel: \$50-\$150 per night
- Taxi from airport to housing: \$20-\$100
- Housing deposit: \$500-\$1,500
- Rent for the first month: \$500-\$1500
- Groceries: \$200-\$250
- Public transportation: \$25-\$100
- Bicycle, light, and helmet: \$25-\$200



## Health Check

### Take Care of Your Health Before You Depart

For most participants, CIEE provides medical insurance. This covers most sudden illnesses and emergencies while you are in the U.S., but does not cover preexisting conditions, routine medical procedures, annual examinations, or dental care. **Visit your doctor and dentist before you depart!**

If you have questions about if a visit will be covered or not, contact CIEE prior to making an appointment.

### Now is the time to:

- Set up and complete medical and dental appointments in your home country.
- Order any prescription medications you'll need – enough to last the duration of your stay in the U.S. Ask your local U.S. embassy if there are documents you need to enter the country with your medication.

For an in-depth explanation of your CIEE insurance benefits, please visit our [insurance website](#)

## Important: Plan Ahead for Housing

It's important to plan ahead for housing. CIEE recommends you:

Start your search now. The more you know about what to expect before you leave your home country, the easier it will be to get settled once you arrive in the U.S. Use the Internet to research housing, transportation, and geography, as well as destinations and activities.

Find housing before you come to the U.S. Most host organizations do not provide housing, but you can still ask them about housing options near your workplace. The internet makes it easier to find apartments, but look out for housing scams. Unusually low rent, requests to wire money, or to give cash to people you do not know are warning signs. If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Use your instincts. If you are unsure, talk with your host organization or call CIEE.

Have a place to stay when you arrive. If you are unable to find long-term housing before you leave for the U.S., you should arrange short-term accommodation at a hotel, hostel, or motel. If you will travel by bus or train to your final destination, you may need to arrange accommodations in more than one place.

## Housing Resources

Use this list of online resources to start your search:

- [Craigslist.org](https://www.craigslist.org) – This free classified advertisement website serves many areas of the U.S. There is no cost to place an ad on Craigslist, so here you'll find many listings for affordable housing.
- [Apartmentlist.com](https://www.apartmentlist.com) – Search by neighborhood with many filtering options. Log in with your Facebook account to access special features.
- [Apartments.com](https://www.apartments.com) – Apartment listings by state and city. Sign up and ask for listings to be emailed to you. Includes an iPhone app.
- [Roommates.com](https://www.roommates.com) – Lists apartments where people are looking for roommates. Services like this are often free to join, but often charge fees and may take longer than other options.
- [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) – Offers short-term stays in private apartments, and lists monthly rentals.
- [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) – Join CIEE J-1 Professional Exchange Programs on Facebook to connect with other students looking for roommates near you.

## Section 4 – Traveling to the U.S.

### Immigration and Customs

#### Arrival

When arriving in the U.S., you must pass through immigration and customs. There may be separate lines for U.S. citizens and Green Card holders and other visitors. Make sure you join the line for visitors!

#### Immigration

At immigration, officials will verify your passport, DS-2019 form, I-901 SEVIS Payment Confirmation, and J-1 visa. Officials will take your photograph and fingerprint, then ask questions about your citizenship, your program, and where you will stay. They will also ask about information on your documents. This process is straightforward, customary, and required for most people entering the U.S.

*Please note: Many airports now have automated passport control, where you go through these steps at an electronic kiosk.*

#### Customs

Next you will retrieve your luggage and continue to customs. Expect officials to open your luggage for inspection and ask for your customs declaration form, which tells them what you are bringing into the country.

### Preparing for Travel Challenges

You should be sure that you travel to the U.S. is no more than 30 days before your DS-2019 start date. Please check with your international CIEE representative to be sure that your travel dates are within your insurance dates. Once you have secured your U.S. J-1 visa and finalized your travel plans, please contact your host organization. You should tell them when your flight will arrive and when you expect to be on site for your first day of your internship or training program.

Your Host Organization can often assist you with local information and advice about transportation and accommodations, so we urge you to use them as a resource prior to your departure from home.

#### Travel Challenges

Even when you plan travel well, sometimes things go wrong. Here are some common travel issues and advice on how to handle them:

**Missed connecting flight:** If you miss a connecting flight due to travel delays, find an agent with your airline and ask him or her to book you on the next flight. You can also call your airline's toll-free number and talk to an agent about a new itinerary. There are often free telephones in major airports. Remember to also call or email your host organization if you will arrive later than expected.

**Lost luggage:** Check with your airline's lost luggage office at airport baggage claim.

**Lost documents:** If you lose one or more documents, use your backup photocopies. Report a lost passport to airport security and to CIEE right away. For more tips, check out our useful [arrival](#) guide!

## Section 5 – First Days in the United States

### Mandatory: Register for SEVIS

#### Call CIEE to register for SEVIS

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security keeps track of visitors with a system called SEVIS, or the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. All J-1 visa holders must register. You cannot register until you've arrived in the United States. Once you have arrived **you have 10 days after the start date** on your DS-2019 form to complete registration. If you fail to register, you will have to return home immediately.

If at any point on your program there is any change to your address, email or phone number you must call CIEE within 10 calendar days to report the change.

To register, call CIEE at 888-268-6245, Monday-Friday between 9 a.m.-6 p.m. EST. Have the following information ready:

- DS-2019 number
- The address where you are living in the U.S.
- Email address
- U.S. phone number, if applicable

### Your First Day of Training

The first day at your internship or training position will include the completion of paperwork and an orientation. If anything seems confusing, feel free to ask questions of your supervisor.

#### On your first day, bring the following documents with you:

- Passport and J-1 visa
- DS-2019 form
- DS-7002 Training/Internship Placement Plan
- Receipt showing that you have applied for a [Social Security number](#) (if you have already applied)

#### During your first day, you should also complete these forms:

- I-9 form: This form confirms your employment eligibility. The form will ask for a Social Security number; if you have not been issued one yet, your host organization can add it at a later date.
- W-4 form: For paid positions, your host organization will automatically deduct money from your paycheck to pay for federal taxes. The W-4 tells your host organization how much to deduct.

Visit our website for [additional information](#) on how to fill out the W-4 form.

*Please note: Most U.S. states also tax income, meaning you may have to fill out an additional state tax form. The state tax form may look different from the federal tax form but asks for the same information and should be filled out the same way.*

**If you have questions about the federal or state W-4, or the I-9 form, please check with your supervisor or the human resources department at your host organization. If your host organization asks you to fill out any other tax forms, such as the 1099 form, please [contact](#) CIEE immediately.**

## **Mandatory: Apply for a Social Security Number**

### **You Must Have a Social Security Number**

You need a Social Security number (SSN) to get paid, open a bank account, and pay taxes. You might also need to share your SSN with your landlord. If you are a returning participant and already have a Social Security number, bring your card with you to the U.S. If your position is not paid, it is strongly recommended that you apply for a Social Security Number as you will still need to file a tax form at the end of the calendar year to report your presence in the U.S.

### **Application Instructions**

1. Apply for a Social Security number at least five (5) business days **after** completing SEVIS registration by visiting a local Social Security office. Find one [here](#).
2. Bring the following documents with you:
  - a. DS-2019 form
  - b. Passport with J-1 Visa
3. You will get a receipt upon completing your application. Keep this important document safe. You will need to send it to your host organization to prove that you are eligible to train and be paid. You may also need it to open a bank account or rent an apartment.
4. Treat your Social Security number as confidential information; avoid giving it out unnecessarily. Once you receive your Social Security card, keep it in a safe place. Don't carry it with you unless you need to show it your host organization or service provider.

## **Your First Paycheck**

If you have a paid internship or training position, you will likely get paid weekly or every other week, either by check or direct deposit into your bank account. Your host organization will provide a statement showing the number of hours of training, pay, and the taxes and other deductions taken out of your paycheck.

When you receive your paycheck, review it carefully to make sure it is correct and that you are not paying either Social Security or Medicare taxes. You *are* required to pay federal, state, and any

applicable local income tax, which should be deducted from your pay. If you ever have a question about your paycheck, speak with your supervisor as soon as possible.

**You are not permitted to be paid as an independent contractor** (using tax form 1099). This status does not withhold proper taxes and you will likely end up having to pay additional money at the end of the calendar year.

## Section 6 – Living in the United States

### MANDATORY: Follow All Program Rules

If you do not follow CIEE program rules, you are at risk of CIEE **shortening** your internship or training program. Shortening your program means that your CIEE sponsorship and insurance will be ended. You will no longer be legally allowed to train in the U.S.

#### Your program may be shortened if:

- You fail to follow CIEE program rules as outlined in this orientation, the CIEE website, or the application terms and conditions.
- Failure to follow Department of State Regulations.
- Change of Visa Status – CIEE is unable to assist with change of visa status. The J-1 Intern/Trainee program is intended for internship/training and cultural purposes only. Once your program concludes, you are expected to return home and apply your skills and experience in the U.S in your home country.

Serious violations of rules or regulations may result in program termination, which may impact your ability to return to the U.S. in the future.

### Extending, Changing, or Ending Your Program Early

When plans change – and sometimes they do – CIEE will do everything possible to accommodate you. Whether you want to extend your program, change your host organization, or end your program early, know that we're here to help. For more information, please continue reading below.

#### Program Extensions:

If your host organization is interested in extending your program and you have not yet reached the maximum program duration, it may be possible to extend your program. To qualify for a program extension, you must:

- Extend your program by at least three weeks
- Remain with your original host organization
- Not exceed the maximum program length (12 months for Internship USA and 18 months for Professional Career Training USA)

What is an extension for? It's a great opportunity to add value to your program by expanding your training to develop new skills. If all is going very well at your internship or training position and there are new skills still to be developed, don't be shy about asking for an extension!

**Please note: It is not possible to extend your program after your DS-2019 expires. Contact your CIEE international representative four to six weeks in advance of your original internship end date.**



## Changing Host Organizations

It's very important that participants not leave or change their host organization without approval from CIEE. While extremely rare, there are valid reasons for requesting a change of host organization. These include:

- Financial difficulties at the host organization (bankruptcy, for example)
- Unwillingness or inability of the host organization to follow the training plan or provide appropriate support and supervision
- Conflict between the participant and host organization that cannot be resolved
- Physical or emotional abuse, or harassment by colleagues or management

If such a problem arises, please contact CIEE immediately at 1-888-268-6245 or at [contact@ciee.org](mailto:contact@ciee.org). We'll work with your host organization to address the issue. If no resolution is possible or a change of host organization is still desired, you will be asked to submit a personal statement describing why the change is being requested and whether a new host organization has been identified.

**Please note:** If a change of host organization is granted, the new host organization must complete a new DS-7002 Training/Internship Placement Plan. A site visit may be required (please share our [site visit requirements](#) with your new host organization). Please note that if you have less than 25% of your program left, it may not be possible to change your host organization.

## Ending Your Program Early

If an unexpected circumstance or event requires you to end your internship or training position before your planned end date, please tell your supervisor at your host organization and contact CIEE as soon as possible at 1-888-268-6245 or at [contact@ciee.org](mailto:contact@ciee.org). Please provide a brief explanation of your reasons for leaving, the date you will leave the U.S., a summary of your departure flight details, your DS-2019 number, and your supervisor's full name and telephone number.

### Ending your program will involve the following steps:

- The participant and host organization must agree to a last day of training. Depending on the situation, this can be immediate. However, you should give two weeks' notice (if possible).
- Host organizations should use these two weeks to plan the end of your training.
- Your DS-2019 will be shortened to reflect your last day at your host organization.
- CIEE insurance will be canceled one day after you depart from the U.S.
- Except in cases of termination, exchange visitors are entitled to their travel grace period when ending their program early

Please note: You cannot shorten your current program for the purpose of starting another program.

## CIEE Evaluations

Program evaluations are one of the many reasons why CIEE programs are so successful at delivering valuable professional development and cultural exchange opportunities. They also serve as way for both CIEE and the U.S. Department of State to ensure that J-1 exchange programs meet the needs of participants and hosts. **These evaluations are mandatory and are a requirement of both CIEE and the U.S. Department of State.**

- There will be two evaluations during the program – one at the program midpoint and one at the program’s conclusion.
- These evaluations will come to you via email so please check your account regularly
- Your host organization supervisor will also be receiving a mandatory mid-point and final evaluation.

**Please note: Program evaluations are required. Failure to complete these evaluations could jeopardize your program status.**

## Laws in the United States

As a cultural ambassador, you represent your own country and all exchange visitors to the U.S. while you are here. If you break a law, your program may end and you could be sent home. Unlike most countries, U.S. laws vary from state to state and even city to city. To avoid unfortunate mistakes, it is important to know and follow the local laws in the town or city where you are living.

### Alcohol and Legal Drinking Age

You must be 21 years old to drink alcohol legally in the U.S. If you are under 21 and found with alcohol, you may be arrested and/or subject to fines. In addition, if you purchase alcohol for others under 21, you may be arrested and/or subject to fines. Drinking alcohol in public areas is also illegal in most places. You’ll be subject to fines if found guilty. Many bars, restaurants, and liquor stores require a government-issued photo identification (ID), such as a passport, to purchase alcohol. Use of a fake ID is illegal.

### Drugs

If you are caught with illegal drugs, you could be arrested and charged with a crime.

### Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) or Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Do not drive if you have been drinking alcohol. Not only is this dangerous, but DWI/DUI laws are strict and the legal limit for blood alcohol is low. You could have to pay up to \$5,000 or go to jail if found guilty of DWI/DUI.

## If You Are Arrested

Depending on the circumstances, you will likely have access to a phone. **Be sure to call to CIEE at our toll-free number: 888-268-6245.**

Breaking laws or being arrested can affect your employment, as well as your ability to continue participation on your CIEE program. Please contact CIEE immediately to report any arrests or violations.

Learn more about [U.S. laws and program rules](#).

## Transportation Safety

Knowing how to get around will not only make your life in the U.S. a lot easier, but can also help make you feel more like a local. Public transit, walking, and riding a bike are great ways to navigate and see your neighborhood, your city, and beyond. Plus, if you live within walking or biking distance of your workplace and a grocery store, you can eliminate most of your daily transportation costs.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Biking can be dangerous. This is especially true in the U.S., where using a bike as a means of transit is less common than in many other countries. As a result, many American motorists are unaccustomed to sharing the road with bikes. To protect yourself, please **follow the guidelines below:***

- In the U.S., bicyclists are considered vehicle operators. This means you are required to follow and obey traffic laws, stop signs, and right of way.
- Wear a bicycle helmet; in the event of an accident, this will reduce the odds of a head injury by 50%.
- Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Ride in the road, rather than on the sidewalk.
- If there is a bike lane, use it.
- Wear brightly colored clothing.
- Install reflectors and lights on the front and back of your bike, and always use lights at night.
- Use hand signals at intersections to let cars know where you are going.
- Check your tires, brakes, and gears before each use.

Learn more about [walking, biking, and public transportation](#) in the United States on this [video](#).

## Water Safety

Open water swimming (swimming in a lake, pond or the ocean) is different from swimming in a pool. Depending on what time of year you are in the U.S., or what part of the country you are in, open water swimming might be an option for you. We want your time at the beach to be as safe as it is fun. Follow these tips to stay safe in the water:

- **Swim in designated areas.**

Always swim in designated swimming areas supervised by lifeguards. Watch for flags posted at many beach access sites signifying water conditions.

- **Daytime is the safest time for swimming.**
- **Never swim alone.** Bring a friend and always let someone know where you are going.
- **Stay close to the shore and swim parallel to the beach.**
- **Remember that swimming and alcohol can be a deadly combination.**

Drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional death in the United States. The ocean is a complex body of water with some natural dangers:

- **Rip currents** are channeled currents of water that flow away from shore and can quickly pull even the strongest swimmers out to sea. 80% of rescues by lifeguards at ocean beaches are caused by rip currents. Since the current flows under water, it's important to know the signs of a rip current and avoid the water in that area. **If you are caught in a rip current, don't fight it by trying to swim directly to shore.** Instead, swim parallel to shore until you feel the current relax, then swim to shore. Most rip currents are narrow. A short swim parallel to shore will bring you to safety. Learn how to recognize and break the grip of the rip current [here](#).
- **Large waves** are more powerful than you might think. Dive under one before it breaks and remember: never turn your back to the ocean when you are in the water. Find more information on water and beach safety, visit this [link](#).

## Extreme Weather

Throughout the year, many parts of the United States experience extreme weather. This can include severe hot/cold weather, flash floods, lightning, or strong winds that can be dangerous if you do not take safety measures to protect yourself. It is important to practice common sense. Here are some helpful tips.

**Winter Storms:** Blizzards, sleet and, snowstorms can occur in many parts of the United States during the winter months, which in some parts of the country extend to Spring and Fall. Avoid spending prolonged periods of time outside, avoid travel, and follow safety instruction available on television or radio stations.

**Hot weather:** Always apply sunscreen when outside, and don't forget to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

**Severe storms:** Flash floods, lightening, or strong winds can occur very quickly in some parts of the United States. If any of these conditions happen in your area, be sure to follow the safety instructions available television or radio stations. Do not drive or go outside during these times.

Be sure you are aware of the extreme weather that is common to your community. You can do this by learning about the climate and geography that can occur in your community especially during the months of your program. For more information on how to stay safe in extreme weather, visit this [link](#).

Remember to check your email. In cases of extreme weather, such as hurricanes or wildfires, CIEE will be in contact to share information and confirm your location and safety.

## Emergencies

If you have an emergency and need immediate assistance or care from safety officials, **dial 911** from any telephone. **Use this number only in true emergencies.** In some cities, you could be fined if you abuse this service. Examples of emergencies include:

- Fires
- Crimes in progress
- Traffic accidents resulting in injury
- You or someone you know is in immediate danger

## Call CIEE Anytime

The CIEE team is here for you 24 hours a day for emergency support. Call **888-268-6245** if:

- You are the victim of a crime.
- You are arrested.
- You are involved in a car accident.
- You are in a situation that involves police, immigration, or media coverage.
- You are evicted from housing.
- You experience emotional distress or need urgent counseling for any reason.

For all other concerns, call CIEE Monday- Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m. EST and at **888-268-6245** or send us an email anytime at **contact@ciee.org**.

## Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a serious crime and a violation of human rights. Human trafficking occurs whenever a person is recruited, transported, or kept against his or her will by means of the threat of violence or other forms of intimidation, for purposes of exploitation such as forced labor or prostitution. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons, including political instability, economic hardship, or psychological vulnerability.

Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims.

If you encounter someone who you think is a victim or a perpetrator of human trafficking, **you should report it right away.** If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.

To report any suspected abuses, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's 24-Hour Toll-Free Hotline at 1.888.373.7888.

### **Additional resources on workers' rights and human trafficking**

- [U.S. Department of State Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers](#)
- [U.S. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign to end human trafficking](#)
- [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)
- [U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons](#)

## Section 7 Interning and Training in the U.S.

### The U.S. Workplace

With a positive outlook and willingness to be part of a team, your time at your internship or training position can be rich and rewarding. Your attitude can help you look forward to going to your position every day, and help you build friendships with coworkers.

As a participant in a J-1 Exchange Visitor program temporarily in the U.S., you have the same workplace rights as an American. You have the right to:

- Be treated and paid fairly
- Not be held in a job against your will
- Keep your passport and other identification documents in your possession
- Report abuse without retaliation
- Request help from unions, immigrant and labor rights groups, and other groups
- Seek justice in U.S. courts.

For a full explanation of these rights and others, please see the [Wilberforce Pamphlet](#) from the U.S. Department of State. If you feel that your rights are being violated, notify CIEE right away at 1.888.268.6245.

### ***Sexual Harassment and Racial Discrimination***

#### **Race/Color Discrimination**

Racial and color discrimination is illegal. These actions involve treating someone unfavorably because he/she is of a certain race or because of personal characteristics associated with race (such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features). Color discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because of skin color or complexion.

#### **Examples of Race/Color Discrimination and Harassment**

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person's race or color.

*Harassment can include:*

- Racial slurs
- Offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color
- The display of racially-offensive symbols

No language related to race or ethnicity should ever be used in the workplace that makes any individual feel uncomfortable.

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

If you are being harassed, contact your supervisor or manager. If your supervisor or manager is your harasser, you should contact your employer's human resource (HR) department instead. In either case, you should always contact CIEE at 888-268-6245. We will work to resolve the situation. You should never feel uncomfortable in your work environment.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal in the United States. Sexual harassment can be defined as:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Other verbal, nonverbal, or physical harassment of a sexual nature

Sexual harassment can interfere with your work performance and create an uncomfortable work environment. The victim of sexual harassment and the harasser can be of any gender.

### **Examples of sexual harassment**

- Sexually suggestive notes or e-mails
- Inappropriate sexual gestures
- Sharing sexually suggestive or explicit images and/or videos
- Commenting (offline or online) on someone's clothing, body, or appearance
- Inappropriate or unwanted touching
- Offensive comments about a co-worker's gender identity or sexual orientation

*Please note: The above list is not complete. Sexual harassment includes a wide range of behaviors that can be verbal, visual, or physical. As such, you should treat people – in and beyond the workplace – with respect and dignity at all times. Expect the same treatment in return.*

### **IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

If you are being sexually harassed, the first thing you should do is tell your harasser that their behavior is unwelcome. If their behavior doesn't stop immediately, contact your supervisor or manager. If your supervisor or manager is your harasser, you should contact your employer's human resource (HR) department instead. You may feel afraid or ashamed that reporting a sexual harassment incident will put your training at risk. It is illegal to punish anyone who reports sexual harassment and your host organization does not have the authority to cancel your visa.

In either case, you should always contact CIEE at 888-268-6245. We will work to resolve the situation. You should never feel uncomfortable in your work environment. For more facts about sexual harassment, please click [here](#).



### **Workplace Safety**

All host organizations are required to provide interns and trainees with a workplace free of recognized hazards that may cause serious illness or deaths as per the [Occupational Safety and Health Act](#) (OSHA).

### **Drug Testing**

Host organizations have the right to request that interns and trainees take a drug test. You may be tested before you start your training or at any point throughout your program. You may also be required to take a drug test if you are involved in an accident at the workplace. If you test positive for a controlled substance, you risk losing your internship (or training position).

### **Coping with Problems**

If you are having a problem with a supervisor or colleague, try to resolve it in a professional manner. In any training position, you may meet people you do not like or you feel you cannot work with. You may find that speaking to the person directly will help take care of the problem. If problems persist, we recommend that you speak with your supervisor.

If you ever feel the need to change your host organization due to a safety concern or problems with colleagues, please contact CIEE at 1-888-268-6245 for assistance. A change will only be approved in special circumstances and should not be done without prior consent from CIEE.

**The U.S. Department of State has an Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) Emergency Hotline – 1-866-283-9090 – a 24/7 toll-free telephone number that allows exchange visitors to directly contact the U.S. Department of State in an emergency or other urgent situations.**

## Section 8 – Traveling in America and Returning Home

### More Sights, More Opportunities for Discovery

#### Planning Your Adventures

One of the great things about CIEE's Professional Exchange Programs is the opportunity to explore this amazing country on your own. Go anywhere you like! The only limits are your imagination, your budget, and the date you need to return to your home country. Remember that if you want to take a short trip during your training, you will need to ask your host organization for time off.

You may travel in the United States for up to 30 days after your DS-2019 expires. Plan your travel dates before you come to the United States and make sure you have insurance coverage for this period. You cannot change your travel or departure dates after you arrive in the United States.

#### BEFORE LEAVING YOUR HOST ORGANIZATION

1. If applicable, request your final paycheck or agree on payment arrangements with your host organization.
2. Make sure your host organization has your contact information, so it can mail you your W-2 form (for tax purposes).
3. Make note of your host organization's contact information – you may need it later.
4. Ask your supervisor to write a letter of recommendation for you; this will be useful when applying for jobs in the future.

*Please note: If you leave your host organization before the last day scheduled on your DS-2019, you must [contact CIEE](#).*

#### BEFORE LEAVING THE U.S.

Make sure you review and act on the items below **before** you leave the United States:

- If you have not received your Social Security number one month before your DS-2019 end date, check the status of your application with the nearest Social Security office.
- Check with your landlord regarding requirements for vacating your apartment.
- Close your bank account or make arrangements with your bank to keep it open.

#### HOW TAXES WORK

As a foreign visitor receiving paid training on a J-1 visa, you are required to pay some (but not all) of the same taxes U.S. citizens pay. Roughly 10% to 15% of your salary will be withheld for federal income tax. Some states and cities also charge income tax, which would could be an additional 5% to 8%. While your

host organization should withhold the correct taxes, it is wise to review your first paycheck to make sure there are no errors and the tax withholding is correct.

**What you must pay:**

- Federal income tax
- State income tax (if applicable)
- Local or city income tax (if applicable)

**What you do not have to pay:**

- Social Security and Medicare tax (FICA)
- Federal unemployment tax (FUTA)

*Note: Your host organization must pay you through payroll with proper taxes withheld. Paying you as an independent contractor (using tax form 1099) is not allowed on this program. Please be aware the 2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) may impact some exchange visitor tax filings for 2018 and beyond. For more information, please see our [website](#).*

## **FILING TAX RETURNS**

At the end of the year, you will be required to file a tax return – which is due April 15, unless the 15th falls on a holiday or weekend, in which case it will be due the next business day. It is possible you may be eligible to claim a refund for a portion of the taxes you have paid. Failure to file a return and/or pay taxes may prohibit you from returning to the U.S. in the future.

**Please note: Unpaid participants and all J-2 dependents must also file tax forms. If your position is unpaid, you will not owe any taxes. However, participants and all J-2 dependents must still file tax Form 8843. Visit [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for details.**

You will have the option to file taxes on your own or hire a tax professional to prepare this on your behalf. CIEE sends you a reminder about filing taxes at the end of the calendar year.

## **Unlawful Presence**

### **Return home at the end of your program to avoid “Unlawful Presence”**

As a participant of the Internship USA Program you are eligible to travel and spend time in your adopted community during your travel period/grace period at the conclusion of your training. Your travel period is the time between your DS end date and program end date but cannot exceed 30 days. Please note,

that you need to have purchased insurance for the entire time that you are in the U.S., including the travel/grace period.

If you stay beyond the 30-day grace period, you will automatically begin accruing 'unlawful presence'. 'Unlawful presence', a term used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), is used to describe a J-1 exchange visitor who has stayed in the U.S. after the 30-day grace period following the dates listed on their DS-2019. The longer you stay after your grace period ends, the more unlawful presence you accrue. You won't necessarily receive notice that you have violated your status or started to accrue unlawful presence.

The only way to avoid Accruing unlawful presence is to depart the U.S. at the conclusion of your program. Changing visa status or choosing not to leave on time **can severely limit your ability to return to the U.S. in the future.**

### Staying Connected With CIEE

After completing a CIEE Internship USA, Professional Career Training USA, or the 1-Year Graduate USA Visa Program, you become a member of CIEE's global alumni community – a diverse group of 350,000 like-minded individuals with whom you can connect and network.

The [CIEE Global Alumni Network](#) is one more way that CIEE is delivering on its promise to provide life-changing cultural exchange. We know that the exchange experience is the start of something much bigger – a lifelong desire to reach out, engage with, and understand the world. We encourage you to become a part of it!

#### Member benefits:

- Expand personal and professional networks on a global scale
- Engage in professional development
- Learn about upcoming events
- Become active advocates for international exchange.

Visit [ciee.org/alumni](https://ciee.org/alumni) to learn more.

### Thank You!

Thank you for completing the CIEE Professional Exchange Program orientation. We are thrilled that you've decided to intern or train in the United States. Best of luck and we hope your training experience in the U.S is a great success!