work exchange usa

A RESOURCE FOR CENET PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

cenet

Important Contact Information

Welcome to your BridgeUSA Program! We hope you enjoy exploring the different aspects of American culture, as well as sharing your culture, during your time in the United States! As your sponsor organization, Cenet is here to provide assistance and support throughout your program. We look forward to hearing about your experiences.

Cenet

Help Line
1-866-512-3638 (free within the U.S.)
1-573-335-7111 (outside the U.S.)
Mail
Cenet
Summer Work Travel Program
338 Broadway Street, Suite 620
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701
USA
Email
summer@cenet.org
Website
www.cenet.org
Participant Portal
www.CenetOne.org

OTHER RESOURCES

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
1-800-375-5283
www.uscis.gov
United States Department of State Help Line
1-866-283-9090
jvisas@state.gov
Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs
1-844-300-1824
exchanges.state.gov
Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213
www.ssa.gov
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
1-800-829-1040
www.irs.gov

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Welcome to Cenet's Summer Work Travel Program!

We hope this will be a great adventure and an excellent learning experience you will always remember.

Cenet, also known as Cultural Exchange Network, located in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is a non-profit organization dedicated to cultural and international exchange. Cenet administers the BridgeUSA Intern, Trainee, Summer Work Travel, Camp Counselor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, Professor and Teach programs for international participants, as well as operates The Magellan Exchange, a non-profit university consortium offering student and faculty exchanges both within the United States and abroad.

Our mission is to inspire future global leaders, fostering a more prosperous and compassionate world through international education and cultural exploration.

Summer Work Travel Program

Cenet's Summer Work Travel program is a BridgeUSA Program authorized by the Educational & Cultural Affairs Bureau of the U.S. State Department. The program offers you the opportunity to come to the United States during your summer vacation to work and travel. Cenet will monitor your experience and act as an advisor and liaison between you and your supervisor, as needed. You are encouraged to travel and explore the area during your free time.

The purpose of your program is to promote cultural understanding by giving you a chance to experience the American culture and to learn more about the country and its people as well as to share your own culture with Americans.

CENET SERVICES
Cenet strives to provide all that is needed to make your stay successful. Your program fee includes:

- Determination of application procedures, requirements, and documents
- Suggestions and recommendations for placement possibilities
- Review and approval of the employment offer
- Final review and acceptance
- Orientation materials
- DS-2019 Form and supporting documents
- Recordkeeping
- Government reporting
- Government liaison
- Consular intervention and support, as needed
- Health insurance enrollment with a Cenet-approved provider
- Ongoing monitoring of the program experience
- Liaison between you and your host company, as needed
- 24-hour emergency support while in the U.S.

PROGRAM DURATION
You may participate for up to four months during your summer vacation. Your authorization is limited to the time period indicated on your DS-2019.

HOME-COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT
Be aware that exchange visitors from certain countries with certain skills must maintain a residency in their home country for at least two years at the conclusion of their programs. Please see Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Rules, Regulations and Expectations

Remain in Lawful, Non-Immigrant Visa Status
The Exchange Visitor status is strictly regulated by the U.S. State Department. As a BridgeUSA Program sponsor, Cenet is obligated to enforce these rules. Cenet is committed to ensuring that participants are aware of these very specific regulations and that they agree to abide by them. While Cenet wishes all program participants a wonderful experience in the United States, Cenet must reject the application or terminate the program of participants who do not follow the rules. If you have questions about any of the rules, please contact Cenet.

The rules and expectations are summarized below.

- Meet all eligibility criteria of the program.
- Demonstrate adequate financial support.
- Maintain adequate health insurance, as arranged by Cenet.
- Contact Cenet upon your arrival in the U.S.
- Keep Cenet informed of your current home address, telephone number, email address and host employer contact information. You must update Cenet within 72 hours if any of this information should change.
- Maintain contact with Cenet. Reply to all Cenet emails.
- Ensure you have at least twice weekly access to the internet during your program.
- Report any issues or concerns you may have during your program. Cenet will communicate with you, but it is your responsibility to self-report any questions, concerns, or difficulties throughout the J-1 program.
- Provide documentation of participation in cultural events.
- Represent your country and Cenet with dignity and professionalism.
- Obtain the necessary endorsements from Cenet before you travel outside the U.S. during your program.
- Report to the host company listed on your DS-2019.
- Attend all orientation and evaluation sessions organized by Cenet, your home country agency, or your host company.
- Know and abide by all host company, Cenet, landlord and government rules, policies, and regulations.
- Abide by all signed agreements with Cenet and your host company.
- Understand that you are responsible for your own social life, entertainment, and transportation.
- Contact your supervisor with any concerns. If you are unable to resolve them, you must contact Cenet about your situation. If you wish to change host companies, you must receive permission from Cenet prior to your relocation. Transfers are only granted on rare occasions, and participants must follow the proper procedure outlined by Cenet.
- Use the 30-day grace period for travel and leisure only.
- Return home at the conclusion of your program in order to continue your studies.
- Possess sufficient English language skills to successfully complete the program.
- Show a maturity level and personality adequate to participate and benefit from this cultural exchange experience.
- Participate only at approved host company sites.
- Do not drive as part of your job duties.
- Understand that the program is not a way to obtain a permanent job in the U.S. or a way to immigrate.
- Follow any health and safety policies issued by your home country's government, the U.S. federal government, the state and local government where you will be residing, your host company, your landlord, and Cenet.

Failure to abide by any of the rules listed above and in the information provided to you with your DS-2019 may result in dismissal from the program and early return to your home country.

Your DS-2019 Form and Program Documents

You will come to the U.S. in Exchange Visitor Visa status (J-1 Visa). Upon acceptance to the program, you will be sent a DS-2019. This form is a "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status." It officially identifies Cultural Exchange Network as your program sponsor, describes the purpose of your program, and lists the exact dates you are permitted to participate. It also indicates your authorized host company in the U.S. and states that you have at

least $1,000 in personal funds available to you in case of emergency. The form is signed by Cenet. You will use this document to apply for the Exchange Visitor J-1 Visa.

Cenet also provides you with other important documents, which you will be able to download from your online Cenet portal. This includes an emergency identification card, insurance information, a description of insurance coverage, an arrival letter, and a program sponsor letter.

Applying for Your Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa

The U.S. Consulate in your home country issues the Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa, which allows you to temporarily enter the U.S. and participate in the program. Each consulate may have a slightly different application process, though in most cases you will have a personal interview. Check with the consulate in your home country or with your home country agency for details. The consulate charges a fee to apply for the visa, and the U.S. Government charges a SEVIS fee.

> **SEVIS:** A U.S. Government database which is used to track such things as your visa application, program progress, and arrival in and departure from the U.S. Cenet also utilizes this database to record terminations, no-shows, or any other unusual activity in your program.

The U.S. consulate in your home country requires certain standard documents:

- DS-2019
- Passport (valid for at least six months beyond the end of your program)
- DS-160 (Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application) confirmation page
- Application fee payment receipt

It is best to take a copy of your job offer, letters of reference, documents supporting your intent to return to your home country, and other required documents to the consulate. If you are approved, the J-1 Visa will be placed in your passport and all of your documents will be returned to you.

Preparing for Your Trip to the U.S.

SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Keep in mind that host employers, colleagues and other stakeholders often review social media profiles, so it's important to ensure your online presence reflects professionalism. While personal content is natural, consider whether your posts, comments, and interactions align with the image you want to present. Avoiding inappropriate content and highlighting achievements can help shape opportunities. In addition, visa officers will likely review your social media so you will need to ensure your privacy settings are “public” prior to your visa interview.

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

Before you leave home you should research the area in which you will be living as well as plan your transportation from the airport to your host company and/or housing. Some host companies will not meet you at the airport, so you will need to arrange transportation from the airport to your host company/housing. Confirm your housing’s check-in requirements before booking travel. Refer to Appendix G for a list of helpful resources.

RESEARCHING YOUR NEW COMMUNITY

Before beginning your program, thoroughly research the community in which you will be living. This should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Housing options
- Transportation options
- Cost of living
- Climate
- Atmosphere, rural/urban
- Local attractions, night life, points of interest, shopping, etc.
- Local events calendar

- Travel opportunities outside of the host community

This community is where you will be spending the majority of your time in the United States so be sure that you have a solid understanding of everything available to you in this location prior to accepting a job offer.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
Make sure that you enter your travel information to your final destination in the 'Flights' section of your Cenet portal. In addition, remember to contact your employer before you leave home and provide them a detailed description of your travel plans.

HOUSING
Housing arrangements must be made before you leave your home country. Some host companies provide housing or housing assistance as part of the program package. Others do not. Be sure you understand the arrangements with your host company before you leave home. If your host company provides housing, it is probably shared with other participants. You will be responsible for paying your rent by a certain date each month (or each week). The cost and location of your housing is your responsibility, even if the terms differ from those quoted to you before your arrival. You are solely responsible for ensuring your rent is paid.

In the U.S., it is customary for rental units to be arranged for a set period of time, and rent is generally not prorated for early departures or partial months. You will be financially responsible for the predetermined period, regardless of the date that you move in or out of your housing unit.

It is also customary in the U.S. to pay a security deposit (typically equivalent to one month's rent) when you move into rental housing. A security deposit is an amount of money that tenants pay to the landlord to cover any damages that they may cause to the property. At the end of the lease, if there are no damages and the housing is clean, the money will generally be returned to the tenant. If there are damages or the housing is dirty, then the tenant may not receive the money back or may receive only a portion. In some cases, a cleaning fee is deducted from the deposit. The terms of the deposit should be included in the housing lease.

You are neither guaranteed a roommate during your stay, nor guaranteed a private room. You are expected to care for your housing in a responsible manner and to keep your rooms clean. Trash should be put in the proper receptacles and dishes should be cleaned immediately. You must not damage the accommodations or the furnishings or remove items from the accommodations. Any damages/incidents or problems (e.g., water leak) at your apartment should be reported to your landlord immediately. You are expected to keep noise at a minimum and to abide by any quiet hour rules. Drunkenness will not be tolerated.

Although signing a lease may be optional, it is strongly recommended that you sign one that includes the terms and conditions of the leasing agreement. It is also recommended that you obtain receipts for your rent payments. This is for both your protection and the landlord's. You should retain a copy of your signed lease so that you can reference it throughout your stay, if needed. Refer to Appendix A for more information about housing and housing considerations. Please refer to Appendix G for a list of helpful websites for short-term accommodations. Please use caution online as some websites may present false leads or scams.

BRINGING ENOUGH MONEY
Your stipend/wage may not be enough to cover all expenses. As a participant, you are responsible for your roundtrip air ticket, food, lodging, U.S. travel, and personal expenses.

Ensure you have access to at least $1,000 in "arrival funds." Some participants find they may need $1,500 or more to begin the program. This money will enable you to pay your expenses until your first paycheck is received. Consider that you must pay for such things as transportation, meals, your first month's rent, and a housing deposit. Please also ensure that you have access to a minimum of $1,500 in "emergency funds" to use throughout the program. These funds are different from your arrival funds and are to be used in case of emergency. Cenet recommends that you bring a credit card, preferably a VISA or MasterCard, as well as a debit/ATM card with you.

COPY YOUR DOCUMENTS
Make two copies of your passport and J-1 Visa. Leave one copy at home with a family member. Pack the other copy in your luggage in a separate location from the originals. If you lose your originals, these copies can aid you in replacing them. You should also save a copy on your phone; this can be very helpful in case of emergencies.

PACKING
Check baggage allowances in advance, as this varies by airline. Remember, you will have to carry everything you pack until you reach your housing. Pack as lightly as possible to still be comfortable during your stay.

PACKING CHECKLIST
Use this checklist when packing your carry-on bag:

- Passport with J-1 Visa
- DS-2019
- Job offer
- Health insurance information
- Program sponsor letter from Cenet (download this from your Cenet online portal)
- At least $1,000 in arrival funds (cash or access to the funds)
- A credit card and an ATM card
- International driver's license, if you have one
- Any necessary clothing/personal items in case your checked luggage is lost or delayed
- Any valuables
- Prescription medications in the original prescription containers
- Phone charger and plug adapter
- Detailed travel plans from the U.S. airport to the company or your housing

Your Arrival in the U.S.

U.S. IMMIGRATION
When you enter the U.S., you will be required to show your:

- DS-2019
- Passport with a valid J-1 Visa

You may be asked questions about the purpose of your visit, the length of your stay, and your U.S. destination. Be courteous and respectful to the immigration officials and answer their questions clearly. If all is in order, an immigration official will validate your DS-2019. Your DS-2019 form and J-1 visa are VERY important.
DO NOT LOSE THEM.

In addition, you will be asked to complete a Customs Declaration Form for entry in the United States.

U.S. CUSTOMS
After you collect your luggage, you will proceed through U.S. Customs. Make sure all of your prescription medications are in the original containers. You will not be allowed to bring in any plants, animals, or perishable foods (e.g., cheese, fruits). You cannot legally possess alcoholic beverages unless you are at least 21 years old. You will only be allowed to bring in a limited number of cigarettes or other tobacco products.

CONNECTING FLIGHTS
If you are connecting onto another flight in the U.S. and you have a boarding pass for that flight, proceed to the information screens to determine your departure gate. Airport staff will be available if you have any questions.

I-94 ADMISSION RECORD
Your I-94 admission record will be created electronically in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection systems. This admissions number, as well as answers to frequently asked questions, can be retrieved at: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home.

You will need to enter the following information to retrieve your I-94 number:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Birth Date
- Passport Number
- Passport Country of Issuance

Your I-94 will show the last day you are allowed to legally remain in the U.S. on this particular program. The abbreviation "D/S" may be used instead of a date. This means "Duration of Status" and indicates that you are allowed to stay until the end date on your DS-2019, plus the optional grace period. (See Your Departure from the U.S. for more information on the grace period.)

YOUR FIRST FEW DAYS

You may need to stay in a hotel or a hostel for a few days upon arrival. Make arrangements for this possibility in advance. Refer to Appendix G for a list of useful websites. Often the first few days or weeks are quite hectic and disorganized for everyone, including your host company. Be prepared to be flexible during this initial time period.

Notifying Cenet of Your Arrival

Notify Cenet within 72 hours of your arrival in the United States. This arrival notification allows Cenet to activate your health insurance as well as to inform the Social Security Administration and the U.S. State Department of your entrance to the country.

> **This is very important.** If Cenet does not hear from you within 10 days of your arrival in the U.S., Cenet is required to report you as a "No-Show" in SEVIS, which has negative effects on your current and future visa status.

To notify Cenet of your arrival and to activate your SEVIS record:

- Login to your Cenet portal at CenetOne.org
- After logging in, click on "I'm Here!" to provide your arrival date and housing address. Please be specific and include your apartment number or room number!

Staying in Contact with Cenet

The U.S. State Department requires Cenet to monitor your location and activity throughout your program. Cenet must know your living address, telephone number, and place of employment at all times. Your program will be terminated in the SEVIS system if you do not follow the rules.

To participate in Cenet's BridgeUSA Program, you must ensure you have access to the internet at least once per week; this is your responsibility. You must maintain contact with Cenet throughout your stay in the U.S.

- **Notify Cenet of your arrival.**
- **Check your email.** Check the email address you provided to Cenet on your application at least twice per week. Cenet will send you important messages and reminders via email. Respond to Cenet messages as soon as possible. You may also want to add Cenet to your address book to avoid missing important emails. If you change your email address, you must notify Cenet.
- **Using your Cenet login, notify Cenet immediately of any:**
    - Changes to your contact information
    - Changes in your living arrangements
- **Notify Cenet of any personal or professional issues that require assistance.** Please remember that Cenet cannot assist you if we are unaware of your issues or concerns.
- **Report all other issues** (e.g., serious health concerns, international travel plans, legal infractions, disciplinary notices from your host company and/or landlord).
- **Notify Cenet of your departure arrangements** and provide your home country representative a copy of your airplane boarding pass once you have returned home.

If you do not have internet access at your housing or host company, it is your responsibility to obtain internet access in order to communicate with Cenet. You may have to visit a café or public library.

Note: If you call Cenet, be prepared to provide your full name and DS-2019 number (located in the upper right corner of your DS-2019). If you leave a message, speak clearly and slowly. Leave a phone number where your call can be returned.

MONTHLY CHECK-IN REQUIREMENT
Every month throughout your program you will receive a reminder from Cenet asking you to check-in electronically. This only takes a moment to complete!

Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that you maintain at least monthly contact with Cenet, even if you do not see the email reminders. Failure to maintain communication with Cenet may result in the termination of your program.

COMMUNICATING YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL EVENTS
The primary purpose of this program is to offer you the opportunity to increase your knowledge and understanding of the U.S. by combining cultural and work experiences. As your sponsor organization, Cenet encourages you to explore your surroundings and participate in local events and activities, such as:

- Attend a party
- Go shopping
- Attend a festival or parade
- Go to a farmer's market
- Attend a sporting event
- Visit a museum, university, or historical monument or site
- Take a class (English, cooking, fitness, etc.)
- Have dinner with American friends
- Attend a concert or performance
- Visit a park or experience the outdoors (camping, hiking, swimming, etc.)
- Travel to another city or state
- Volunteer at a charity event, food bank, or other charitable activity

There are many other activities that you can do based on your own preferences and interests. Please remember that cultural activities include big events such as attending festivals as well as smaller events such as dinner with friends. Throughout your program, we will ask you to share your experiences with us. Please make sure you keep Cenet informed of your participation. Please see Appendix G for a list of helpful websites to find fun events.

Applying for Your Social Security Card

You must apply for a Social Security number, unless you have participated in a previous program and already have one. It is necessary if you are receiving a paycheck or if you apply for a driver's license, and often for identification. There is no fee for this card.

Cenet recommends that you wait 5 business days after you have notified Cenet of your arrival in the U.S. before applying for the card. Cenet has to activate your record in the SEVIS system, and then it may take up to 5 business days for your information to be available to the Social Security office in SEVIS. You may need to book an appointment at the local Social Security Office. Failure to apply for your Social Security Number in a timely manner may result in negative consequences.

Take the following documentation to the Social Security office when you apply for your card:

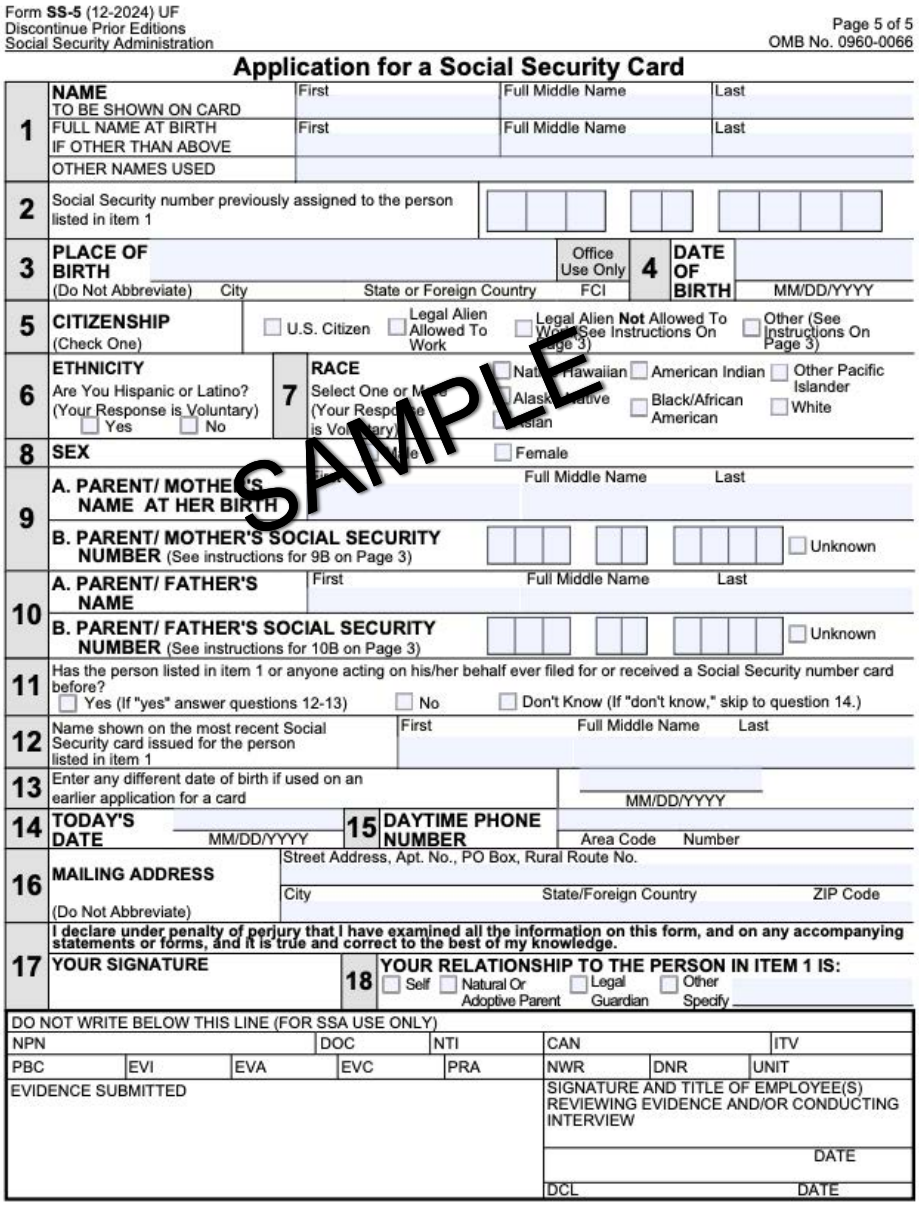
- DS-2019
- I-94 (see Your Arrival in the U.S.)
- Job offer

- Passport (valid for at least six months beyond your program's end)
- Program sponsor letter from Cenet (available in your Cenet portal)

Some host companies assist participants in applying for this card, but others do not. It is essential that you discuss this with your host company before you arrive in the U.S. If your host company does not assist you, make plans for finding the nearest Social Security office on your own. Refer to Appendix G for the Social Security Administration website.

Once you apply for the card, it may take several weeks for it to be issued. There is nothing Cenet or your employer can do to speed the process. You may participate while the card and number are pending. If your employer has a question about this, ask them to contact Cenet.

Sample Application for a Social Security Card



Form **SS-5** (12-2024) UF
Discontinue Prior Editions
Social Security Administration

Page 5 of 5
OMB No. 0960-0066

Application for a Social Security Card

1	NAME TO BE SHOWN ON CARD	First	Full Middle Name	Last
	FULL NAME AT BIRTH IF OTHER THAN ABOVE	First	Full Middle Name	Last
	OTHER NAMES USED			
2	Social Security number previously assigned to the person listed in item 1			
3	PLACE OF BIRTH (Do Not Abbreviate) City State or Foreign Country	Office Use Only FCI	4	DATE OF BIRTH MM/DD/YYYY
5	CITIZENSHIP (Check One)	☐ U.S. Citizen ☐ Legal Alien Allowed To Work ☐ Legal Alien **Not** Allowed To Work (See Instructions On Page 3) ☐ Other (See Instructions On Page 3)		
6	ETHNICITY Are You Hispanic or Latino? (Your Response is Voluntary) ☐ Yes ☐ No	7	RACE Select One or More (Your Response is Voluntary) ☐ Native Hawaiian ☐ American Indian ☐ Other Pacific Islander ☐ Alaska Native ☐ Black/African American ☐ White ☐ Asian	
8	SEX	☐ Male ☐ Female		
9	A. PARENT/ MOTHER'S NAME AT HER BIRTH	First	Full Middle Name	Last
	B. PARENT/ MOTHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (See instructions for 9B on Page 3)			☐ Unknown
10	A. PARENT/ FATHER'S NAME	First	Full Middle Name	Last
	B. PARENT/ FATHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (See instructions for 10B on Page 3)			☐ Unknown
11	Has the person listed in item 1 or anyone acting on his/her behalf ever filed for or received a Social Security number card before? ☐ Yes (If "yes" answer questions 12-13) ☐ No ☐ Don't Know (If "don't know," skip to question 14.)			
12	Name shown on the most recent Social Security card issued for the person listed in item 1	First	Full Middle Name	Last
13	Enter any different date of birth if used on an earlier application for a card			MM/DD/YYYY
14	TODAY'S DATE MM/DD/YYYY	15	DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER	Area Code Number
16	MAILING ADDRESS (Do Not Abbreviate)	Street Address, Apt. No., PO Box, Rural Route No.	City State/Foreign Country	ZIP Code
17	**I declare under penalty of perjury that I have examined all the information on this form, and on any accompanying statements or forms, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.** YOUR SIGNATURE	18	YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON IN ITEM 1 IS: ☐ Self ☐ Natural Or Adoptive Parent ☐ Legal Guardian ☐ Other Specify	

SAMPLE

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (FOR SSA USE ONLY)							
NPN		DOC	NTI	CAN		ITV	
PBC	EVI	EVA	EVC	PRA	NWR	DNR	UNIT
EVIDENCE SUBMITTED					SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EMPLOYEE(S) REVIEWING EVIDENCE AND/OR CONDUCTING INTERVIEW DATE		
					DCL DATE		

Reporting to Your Host Company

Once you have signed your acceptance of an offer with a particular company and presented that offer to Cenet for issuance of your DS-2019, you are committed to that site. Your J-1 Visa is issued specifically for participation at the host company stated on your DS-2019. You must report to this host company upon arrival in the U.S. This is the position and host company that was vetted/approved before your arrival, and the position and host company that was presented to the U.S. Consulate during your visa interview. Failure to report may result in the termination of your program.

Remember to take the following documents with you on your first day:

- DS-2019
- Passport with J-1 Visa
- Job offer
- Social Security card or number (if you have it)

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Once you accept a position with a U.S. company, you must honor that agreement and remain with them throughout your program. Ensure that you understand the demands of your position prior to accepting employment with the company. You should arrive on time and be well rested and ready to learn. Enjoy yourself while you are in the U.S., but do so responsibly.

You are expected to be on time, courteous, respectful, responsible, and cooperative. Punctuality, a strong work ethic, adaptability, responsibility, and teamwork are all very important traits in American business. Keep in mind that this is a job, and you must behave professionally and respectfully – just as you would in a job in your home country. Failure to meet employment expectations can result in position and program termination. Refer to Appendices C-F for information that will help you prepare for living in the American culture.

You should know and abide by all of your host company's rules, policies, and regulations. Some host companies may have certain dress codes that you will be expected to follow. Bring required items with you or be prepared to buy them upon arrival. Some companies also have rules about jewelry, body piercing, tattoos, and hair. Inquire directly with your host company about dress and appearance before you arrive in the U.S.

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYMENT FORMS

When you arrive at your host company you will be required to complete a minimum of two forms before you can begin your employment. You must complete an I-9 "Employment Eligibility Verification" Form and a W-4 "Employee Withholding Allowance Certificate" Form.

I-9

When you complete the I-9 you will need to show your DS-2019 and your passport with your J-1 Visa. Be sure to check the box "an alien authorized to work until" and enter the program end date listed on your DS-2019. Use your I-94 card number on the line requesting the Alien # or Admission #.

W-4

Every employee receiving wages in the U.S. is required to complete a W-4. You are subject to all federal, state and local income taxes. This form determines how much tax should be withheld from your paycheck.

Because of the restrictions on a nonresident alien's filing status, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has very specific recommendations on how to complete this form; these instructions differ from the instructions printed on the actual form. All nonresident aliens (including J-1 Visa holders) should complete the form using the following instructions:

- Select "Single or Married filing separately" in Step 1(c)
- Do not complete the Step 2 section unless you already have more than one job at the same time
- Step 3 and Step 4 are generally not completed (if you do, write "NRA" on the space below Step 4(c))

For instructions, refer to Chapter 8 of the IRS Publication 519 “U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens” at: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p519.pdf

Sample I-9



Employment Eligibility Verification

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Form I-9
OMB No.1615-0047
Expires 05/31/2027

START HERE: Employers must ensure the form instructions are available to employees when completing this form. Employers are liable for failing to comply with the requirements for completing this form. See below and the Instructions.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: All employees can choose which acceptable documentation to present for Form I-9. Employers cannot ask employees for documentation to verify information in **Section 1**, or specify which acceptable documentation employees must present for **Section 2** or Supplement B, Reverification and Rehire. Treating employees differently based on their citizenship, immigration status, or national origin may be illegal.

Section 1. Employee Information and Attestation: Employees must complete and sign Section 1 of Form I-9 no later than the **first day of employment**, but not before accepting a job offer.

Last Name (Family Name)	First Name (Given Name)	Middle Initial (if any)	Other Last Names Used (if any)

Address (Street Number and Name)	Apt. Number (if any)	City or Town	State	ZIP Code

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	U.S. Social Security Number	Employee's Email Address	Employee's Telephone Number

I am aware that federal law provides for imprisonment and/or fines for false statements, or the use of false documents, in connection with the completion of this form. I attest, under penalty of perjury, that this information, including my selection of the box attesting to my citizenship or immigration status, is true and correct.

Check one of the following boxes to attest to your citizenship or immigration status (See page 2 and 3 of the instructions.):

- ☐ 1. A citizen of the United States
- ☐ 2. A noncitizen national of the United States (See Instructions.)
- ☐ 3. A lawful permanent resident (Enter USCIS or A-Number.)
- ☐ 4. A noncitizen (other than **Item Numbers 2.** and **3.** above) authorized to work until (exp. date, if any)

If you check **Item Number 4.**, enter one of these:

USCIS A-Number	OR	Form I-94 Admission Number	OR	Foreign Passport Number and Country of Issuance

Signature of Employee	Today's Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

If a preparer and/or translator assisted you in completing Section 1, that person MUST complete the Preparer and/or Translator Certification on Page 3.

Section 2. Employer Review and Verification: Employers or their authorized representative must complete and sign **Section 2** within three business days after the employee's first day of employment, and must physically examine or examine consistent with an alternative procedure authorized by the Secretary of DHS, documentation from List A or a combination of documentation from List B and List C. Enter any additional documentation in the Additional Information box; see Section

	List A	List B	AND	List C
Document Title 1				
Issuing Authority				
Document Number (if any)				
Expiration Date (if any)				
Document Title 2 (if any)		**Additional Information**		
Issuing Authority				
Document Number (if any)				
Expiration Date (if any)				
Document Title 3 (if any)				
Issuing Authority				
Document Number (if any)				
Expiration Date (if any)		☐ Check here if you used an alternative procedure authorized by DHS to examine documents.		

Certification: I attest, under penalty of perjury, that (1) I have examined the documentation presented by the above-named employee, (2) the above-listed documentation appears to be genuine and to relate to the employee named, and (3) to the best of my knowledge, the employee is authorized to work in the United States.

First Day of Employment (mm/dd/yyyy):

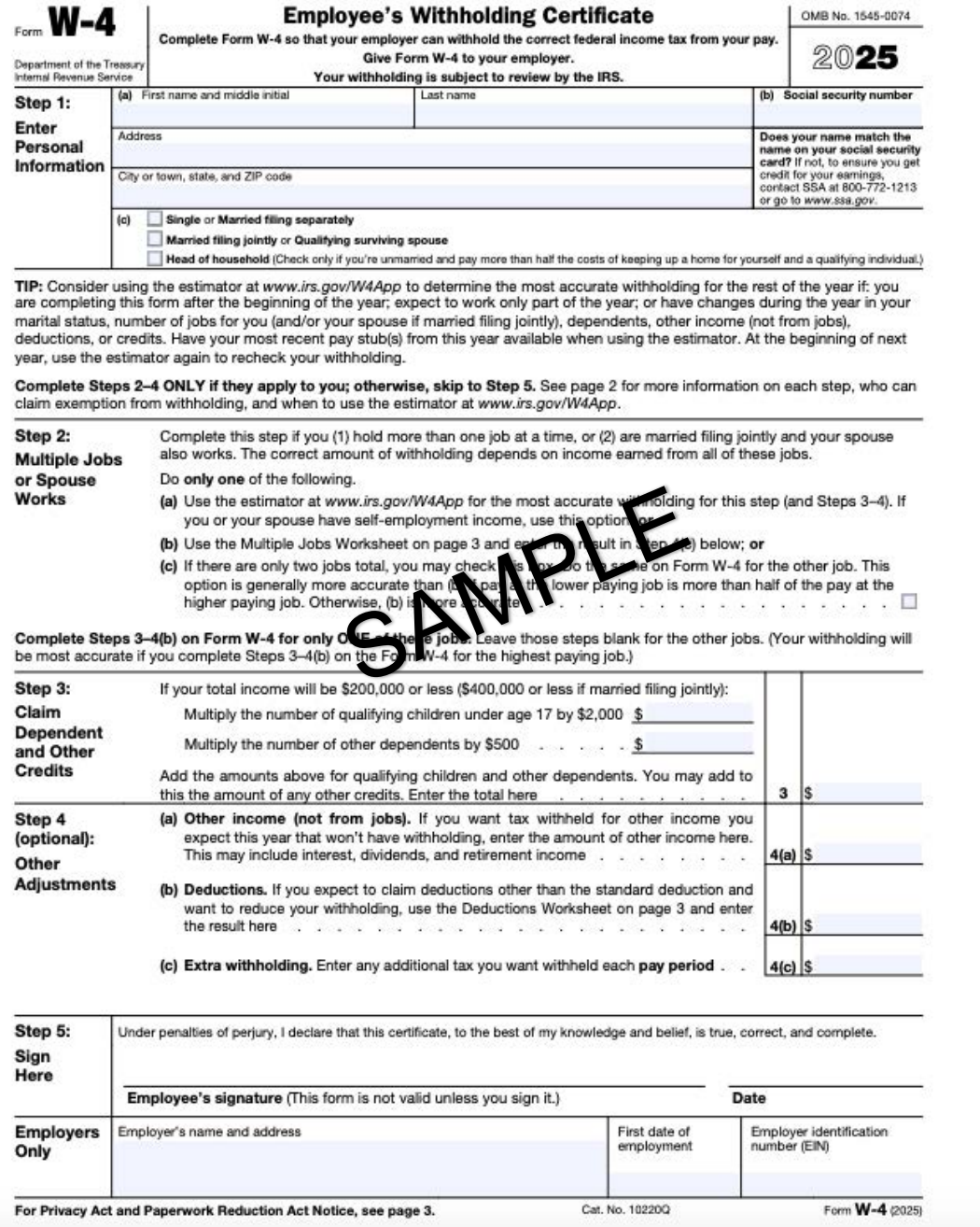
Last Name, First Name and Title of Employer or Authorized Representative	Signature of Employer or Authorized Representative	Today's Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Employer's Business or Organization Name	Employer's Business or Organization Address, City or Town, State, ZIP Code

For reverification or rehire, complete Supplement B, Reverification and Rehire on Page 4.

SAMPLE

Sample W-4



Form **W-4**

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Employee's Withholding Certificate

Complete Form W-4 so that your employer can withhold the correct federal income tax from your pay.
Give Form W-4 to your employer.
Your withholding is subject to review by the IRS.

OMB No. 1545-0074

2025

Step 1: Enter Personal Information

(a) First name and middle initial | Last name | (b) Social security number

Address | Does your name match the name on your social security card? If not, to ensure you get credit for your earnings, contact SSA at 800-772-1213 or go to www.ssa.gov.

City or town, state, and ZIP code

(c) ☐ **Single** or **Married filing separately**
☐ **Married filing jointly** or **Qualifying surviving spouse**
☐ **Head of household** (Check only if you're unmarried and pay more than half the costs of keeping up a home for yourself and a qualifying individual.)

TIP: Consider using the estimator at *www.irs.gov/W4App* to determine the most accurate withholding for the rest of the year if: you are completing this form after the beginning of the year; expect to work only part of the year; or have changes during the year in your marital status, number of jobs for you (and/or your spouse if married filing jointly), dependents, other income (not from jobs), deductions, or credits. Have your most recent pay stub(s) from this year available when using the estimator. At the beginning of next year, use the estimator again to recheck your withholding.

Complete Steps 2–4 ONLY if they apply to you; otherwise, skip to Step 5. See page 2 for more information on each step, who can claim exemption from withholding, and when to use the estimator at *www.irs.gov/W4App*.

Step 2: Multiple Jobs or Spouse Works

Complete this step if you (1) hold more than one job at a time, or (2) are married filing jointly and your spouse also works. The correct amount of withholding depends on income earned from all of these jobs.

Do **only one** of the following.

(a) Use the estimator at *www.irs.gov/W4App* for the most accurate withholding for this step (and Steps 3–4). If you or your spouse have self-employment income, use this option; or

(b) Use the Multiple Jobs Worksheet on page 3 and enter the result in Step 4(c) below; **or**

(c) If there are only two jobs total, you may check this box. Do the same on Form W-4 for the other job. This option is generally more accurate than (b) if pay at the lower paying job is more than half of the pay at the higher paying job. Otherwise, (b) is more accurate . . . . . ☐

Complete Steps 3–4(b) on Form W-4 for only ONE of these jobs. Leave those steps blank for the other jobs. (Your withholding will be most accurate if you complete Steps 3–4(b) on the Form W-4 for the highest paying job.)

Step 3: Claim Dependent and Other Credits

If your total income will be $200,000 or less ($400,000 or less if married filing jointly):

Multiply the number of qualifying children under age 17 by $2,000 $

Multiply the number of other dependents by $500 . . . . . $

Add the amounts above for qualifying children and other dependents. You may add to this the amount of any other credits. Enter the total here . . . . . 3 $

Step 4 (optional): Other Adjustments

(a) Other income (not from jobs). If you want tax withheld for other income you expect this year that won't have withholding, enter the amount of other income here. This may include interest, dividends, and retirement income . . . . . 4(a) $

(b) Deductions. If you expect to claim deductions other than the standard deduction and want to reduce your withholding, use the Deductions Worksheet on page 3 and enter the result here . . . . . 4(b) $

(c) Extra withholding. Enter any additional tax you want withheld each **pay period** . . 4(c) $

Step 5: Sign Here

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that this certificate, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is true, correct, and complete.

Employee's signature (This form is not valid unless you sign it.) **Date**

Employers Only

Employer's name and address | First date of employment | Employer identification number (EIN)

For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see page 3. Cat. No. 10220Q Form **W-4** (2025)

SAMPLE

Paying Your Taxes

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE TAXES (FICA)

Do not pay. Social Security and Medicare taxes (called "FICA") are automatically withheld from the paychecks of all U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Because you are in nonimmigrant status, these taxes should NOT be withheld from your paycheck. Some U.S. companies are not aware of these special regulations. If your host company has questions, ask them to contact Cenet or direct them to chapter 8 of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 519 "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens" for proof of these exemptions. Refer to Appendix G for this publication's website.

FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT TAX
Do not pay. Exchange visitors are not eligible for federal unemployment benefits; therefore, you are not required to pay federal unemployment tax. You should consult your state tax office to determine if you must pay state unemployment tax.

INCOME TAX
Pay. Everyone who receives a paycheck in the United States is subject to taxation. The government automatically withholds a percentage of your wages for federal income tax.

FILING YOUR INCOME TAXES
In January, your host company will send you an official statement (called a W-2 Form) documenting your earnings and the amount of tax that was withheld during the previous year. They cannot provide that information before January. Before you leave the U.S., make sure your host company has explained how they will provide your W-2 Form to you. You may need to log into a website to get this or they may mail it to you, so please ensure they have an accurate mailing address at home for you.

By April 15, you must file an income tax form. Your company does not supply this form. If you have already returned to your home country, you can obtain this form and the relevant instructions from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country, or you can print the form from the Internal Revenue Service website. Refer to Appendix G for a list of useful websites.

If not enough money was withheld, you are required to pay the balance. In many states, there is a state income tax in addition to the federal income tax. The same general information concerning withholding and payment applies. (Note: The rules pertaining to income taxes are subject to change and should be verified by consulting the tax instruction booklet for that year.)

Keep receipts for all of the expenses incurred during your program (e.g., flight expenses, rent, program fees, insurance). If you are not automatically provided a receipt, you should ask for one at the time a payment is made. It is possible that these expenses can be used as deductions on your tax return. You may be eligible for a refund of your paid income taxes, but this is not a guarantee. You should not plan on receiving an income tax refund.

SALES TAX
Pay. Most cities and states levy a sales tax on all purchases. This tax is added onto the stated price of the item when it is purchased. The sales tax rate varies from city to city and state to state. You can usually expect to pay about 7%-8% more for an item than what is stated on the actual price tag.

Your Employment in the U.S.

AUTHORIZATION
You are authorized to participate only during the dates stated on your DS-2019. If you enter the country a few days early or stay for the optional grace period, you may not be employed during these periods.

WAGES
Do not anticipate earning large amounts of money. The purpose of the program is cultural exchange; the working component of the program serves to offset some of the program costs and living expenses. Work and Travel positions will usually pay the minimum wage or slightly more. Although Cenet tries to ensure that your modest wage will provide enough for lodging, food, and some travel, this may not be enough to cover all expenses. Also, understand that many seasonal jobs are dependent on tourists. If business is slow for some reason (such as bad weather), you will probably not work as many hours during that slow period as estimated on your job offer.

All Cenet participants must create a budget prior to beginning the program. Although Cenet can provide examples of typical expenses and costs, it is essential that you create a personal budget based upon the wage, weekly hours, and cost of living in the specific community in which you will be living. Please see Appendix H for a sample budget that can be utilized during your program.

SCHEDULES
The average number of hours you will work each week is listed on your job offer. However, weather conditions or other factors may affect the scheduling needs of your host company. This means that the number of hours you receive on your schedule may vary slightly from week to week.

Additionally, it is important to remember that in the beginning of your program, your hours may be lower than the average number listed on your job offer. This generally occurs because participants need to be trained prior to being added on the schedule. Your hours may also decrease at the end of the season as it is common for businesses to slow down slightly at this time.

OVERTIME
Many companies will offer participants the opportunity to work overtime hours during their busy season. However, they are not obligated to do so, and overtime hours are not guaranteed. Not all companies are required to pay extra wages for overtime hours; laws regarding overtime vary by state. Ask your supervisor about the availability of overtime hours as well as the overtime rate of pay before you work the extra hours to avoid confusion later.

PAYCHECKS
You will most likely not receive your first paycheck until one or two weeks after your program has begun, or possibly even longer. Be prepared to support yourself financially until you receive your first paycheck.
You will be given a pay stub along with your paycheck that details the number of hours you worked, the amount of taxes withheld, and the total amount you received. Keep this stub for your records.

DEDUCTIONS
Along with state and federal taxes, there can be other deductions included on your pay stub for things like uniforms, transportation, and housing. Note that these items should have been made clear to you prior to your arrival. You should reach out to Cenet if you have any questions about deductions being withheld from your wage.

FINAL PAYCHECK
Make arrangements for your final paycheck well in advance of your departure from the U.S. Some participants remain employed up to a few days before they leave, only to learn that they cannot receive their paychecks before they go. You might consider opening a U.S. bank account that includes an ATM card and request that your final paycheck be deposited directly into your account. You can then use the ATM card to access the funds from any cooperating cash machine in your home country. Discuss this issue with your host company and your local bank before it becomes a problem.

SECOND JOBS
You must inform Cenet prior to finding a second job. Additional jobs must be approved and verified before you can begin working. Working at another location without Cenet's authorization may result in the termination of your program.

Although you are allowed to have more than one job, your obligation is to the host company listed on your DS-2019. Your second job should NOT interfere with your primary employment. You are not guaranteed a second job, and some areas do not have opportunities for second jobs.

Some host companies are willing to arrange the schedule so that second jobs are possible, but this is not always feasible. Speak with your host company about this before making any decisions. Also, consider how many hours you can comfortably work in a week. You cannot arrive late or tired to your primary job.

You can search for a second job online, by looking for "Help Wanted" signs in the windows of businesses, or in the local newspaper.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE
Workers' compensation insurance, often called "workers comp," is a state-mandated program consisting of payments required by law to be made to an employee who is injured or disabled in connection with work. In most situations, injured employees receive workers' compensation insurance, no matter who was at fault for the injury. Because these

workers comp benefits act as a type of insurance, they preclude the employee from suing his or her employer for the injuries covered.

CONCERNS WITH YOUR HOST COMPANY
In rare cases, problems or conflicts between you and your host company may occur. If this happens, talk with your supervisor first. Outline the problem and your concerns, and try to come to a resolution. Do not yell, threaten or be untruthful. Regardless of your cultural background, Cenet will not support these tactics. Speak in a calm, professional manner when discussing your problem.

If conflict persists, contact Cenet for advice and assistance. Cenet will intervene as much as possible to solve the problem. However, if the problem is due to your misbehavior or poor work habits, Cenet will not assist in finding a new placement and you may be required to return home. This includes such things as poor performance, poor attitude, excessive tardiness, or repeated absences.

In some situations, Cenet may assist in finding a new placement; however, Cenet is ultimately not responsible for keeping you employed or finding a new position for you. You may be required to return home if a new position is not found.

Under NO circumstances may you leave your host company without Cenet's permission. As your sponsor organization, Cenet is responsible for monitoring your program and knowing where you are. Leaving your host company without permission could put your program status and safety at risk.

OTHER CONCERNS
The following concerns must be reported to Cenet:

- Disciplinary warnings
- Health concerns, surgeries, or any serious medical conditions
- Escalated interpersonal disputes
- Legal issues
- Problems or concerns regarding your housing/landlord
- International travel during your program
- Any other issues that require advice or assistance

Using Your Health Insurance

Your insurance includes coverage for medical care and hospitalization as well as coverage for medical evacuation (your return home in case of serious illness or accident). However, routine physicals are not covered. In addition, the authorized policy does not cover most dental work or eye care. Cenet strongly recommends that you have a complete physical examination as well as dental and eye examinations before you leave your home country. In addition, you should consider getting a flu shot.

You can login to your Cenet portal to download your insurance information and description of coverage. Please ensure that you keep your insurance card with you at all times. Read your health insurance policy carefully so you will know what is covered (and what is excluded). If you have questions concerning the coverage, call the free number listed on your insurance card.

DATES OF INSURANCE COVERAGE
Your health insurance coverage begins on the start date noted on your DS-2019, and it expires on the end date noted on your DS-2019. If you decide that you want coverage during your optional grace period, you may arrange for an additional month of coverage at your own expense by contacting Cenet.

INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE
Insurance plans have a "deductible," an amount you have to pay at the time of service for each illness or injury. Please see the description of coverage for your deductible amount.

COPAY FEE
Some medical services have a “copay” fee, a set amount you are required to pay for that service. If you go to a hospital emergency room for an illness, you will be subject to a copay fee, in addition to the deductible.

MEDICAL CARE
Medical care and prescription medication in the U.S. is very expensive. You may be expected to pay for all of the medical expenses at the time of service. You must then file a claim with the insurance provider in order to request reimbursement from them. Complete an insurance claim form, attach a copy of the bill, and send it directly to the insurance provider. If you have questions, refer to the coverage information available by logging in to your Cenet portal or call the free number provided on your insurance card.

Cenet strongly recommends that you check with the insurance provider regarding coverage before you visit the doctor, as Cenet will not be responsible for any medical fees not covered by the policy.

EMERGENCY
If you become seriously ill or are injured and you require emergency medical care, go to the nearest hospital emergency room. You will be asked to show your insurance card. Inform Cenet of your situation as soon as possible.

NON-EMERGENCY
In order to save money, follow this advice:

- Seek medical attention, if necessary; however, time, rest, and over the counter medicines may be sufficient in certain situations.
- If you need medical care (but it is not a TRUE emergency), go to a doctor’s office or to a walk-in medical clinic. It will cost you much less than at the hospital. You will be asked to show your insurance card.
- Do NOT go to the hospital emergency room unless it is a TRUE emergency. Emergency rooms are very expensive, and you will probably have a long wait. In addition, there will be an extra fee imposed by the insurance provider if you visit an emergency room but are not admitted to the hospital.

LOCATE A DOCTOR, MEDICAL CLINIC, OR HOSPITAL
To locate a doctor or hospital in your area, please refer to the instructions available by logging into your Cenet online portal.

Emergencies

911
Dial “911” from any telephone if you need emergency ambulance, police, or fire department assistance. The operator that answers the phone will contact the appropriate emergency service.

ARREST
If you are arrested, call a local contact (friend or host company) and then call Cenet as soon as possible.

Legal issues must be reported to Cenet. It is important that you share honest information with Cenet so that we can provide support and assistance. Failure to share truthful information with Cenet could lead to negative consequences.

Handling Your Money

There are several ways to handle your money while you are in the U.S. Please remember that it is extremely unsafe to keep large amounts of cash in your housing. Plan to open a bank account as soon as possible after your arrival.

BANKING
Banks vary in the services they offer, so you should do some research and ask American colleagues and friends for a suggestion. Some offer free checking accounts, while others charge a monthly fee. Some require a minimum balance, while others do not.

Many banks offer ATM/debit cards that can be used like checks or cash at most stores and restaurants. Many of these cards are sponsored by VISA or MasterCard and can be used anywhere credit cards are accepted. You can also use the card for cash withdrawals from cash machines 24 hours a day. This can be convenient, especially when you are traveling. However, it is important to remember that this is not a credit card. The money will be withdrawn directly from your checking account when you use the ATM card. Often there will be service charges for cash machine withdrawals. Keep careful records of how much you have spent. Remember to deduct any service charges from your records as well.

Choose a bank that has branches all over the country instead of a local bank. National chains will offer more services when you are traveling, and you will find more cash machines that do not charge a fee. You also might be able to deposit your final paycheck in this account and access the money from your home country using the ATM card.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE
Foreign currency cannot be immediately exchanged in smaller cities. Usually, the bank must send the currency to a larger city for processing, and then wait for the equivalent U.S. currency to be returned. That process will take 7-10 days.

CREDIT CARDS
Credit cards can be used to pay for a number of things, including meals and groceries at some markets. It is important that you pay the full bill each month since the interest rate on the unpaid balance is very high. A credit card is very difficult to obtain after you arrive in the U.S. Most companies are reluctant to issue one to any person in nonimmigrant status.

Communication

TELEPHONES
U.S. telephone numbers have 10 digits. The first three digits are called the “area code.” This signifies the area of the country that you are calling. The next three digits are called the “prefix.” This signifies the local area that you are calling. The last four digits signify the individual you are trying to call. These digits will be unique in conjunction with the prefix. If you are calling outside your local area, dial “1 + the area code,” then the rest of the number. If you are calling in your local area, you do not need to dial “1 + the area code.”

MOBILE PHONES
You should check with your mobile phone provider to see what is available in your contract before you leave your home country. It may be easier to leave your phone at home and purchase an inexpensive phone in the U.S.

You may also wish to purchase a U.S. SIM card for your phone. SIM cards can be purchased at any phone carrier physical location as well as electronics stores such as Best Buy. Once you pick out the plan you want, the activation process is fairly simple and should only take a few minutes. Cenet recommends testing your new SIM card/phone service prior to leaving the store so you can ensure that it has been activated properly.

CALLING HOME
If you wish to place a call to your home country, dial “011,” then the country code for your country, then the telephone number. Be cautious, as long distance telephone calls can be expensive. Other options include Skype, Zoom or other free online voice/video calling applications and services.

MAIL
Visit the United States Postal Service (USPS) website or your local post office to find the current rates. Refer to Appendix G for the USPS website.

SHIPPING
There are a variety of shipping companies that will send packages worldwide. Two of the most common are FedEx and UPS. Refer to Appendix G for these companies’ contact information.

EMAIL
If your host company or housing unit does not provide you with internet access, try a local café or public library. Remember, you are responsible for checking your email at least twice weekly and for replying to all Cenet messages. Cenet uses monitoring and updates to keep a line of communication open with our participants. We rely on participants to self-report any issues as well as to share their cultural activities and positive experiences.

Transportation

If your host company provides transportation, there is probably a weekly or monthly charge for this service. If your host company does not provide transportation, they will expect you to find your own, even if your housing is not nearby. This can be a problem in many U.S. cities where public transportation is not available. Be sure you understand the arrangements before you leave home and make plans accordingly. Transportation should be accounted for in the monthly budget you create for your program. Refer to Appendix H for a monthly budget template.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
Larger U.S. cities generally have a bus system and a rail system for inexpensive, convenient travel within that particular metropolitan area. All other areas of the U.S. typically do not. For information about the city where you are staying, visit the city's official website. You can also call the area Chamber of Commerce. Maps and schedules for public transportation are generally available at major stations.

AUTOMOBILES
Smaller U.S. cities usually do not have public transportation, so many people feel they need to buy a car. Some participants buy a used car, and then sell it near the end of their stay. Refer to Appendix G for a list of useful websites, and refer to Appendix B for the answers to some frequently asked questions about automobiles and automobile insurance.

BICYCLES
Some companies offer bicycles for rent. Ask your supervisor if your host company has rental bicycles. If not, contact a bicycle shop or second-hand (used goods) store in your area.

Safety

TRAFFIC & BIKE SAFETY
Every year there are participants who are injured or even killed, often as a result of avoidable accidents. Be mindful that traffic and biking rules may differ from your country.

If you use a bicycle during your program, it is important that you know the rules of the road. Bicycles are considered vehicles, and you are expected to follow the same rules as other vehicles. **Cenet requires you to wear a helmet and carry identification at all times. If you need guidance purchasing a helmet, reflectors, or other bicycle safety items, please contact Cenet for assistance.** Please see Appendix F for a list of helpful websites for bicycle safety.

When riding in a car, always wear your seatbelt. When driving a car, always follow the posted speed limits and all other traffic laws. Never drive a car while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Never ride with a driver who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

WATER SAFETY
If you enjoy swimming, make sure that you take appropriate precautions. Do not swim alone or at night. Be aware of water depth, underwater hazards, water quality, and moving water. Be aware if there is a lifeguard present. If swimming in open water (e.g., ocean), be mindful of weather conditions and currents. Never swim while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you are on a boat, kayak or other water vessel, always wear a lifejacket.

NATURAL DISASTERS
You should be prepared in case an evacuation or other protocol is needed due to a natural disaster. Always follow camp guidelines for handling anything that might occur while at camp.

Floods
Flooding is an overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry. Floods can happen during heavy rains, when ocean waves come on shore, when snow melts quickly, or when dams or levees break. Damaging flooding may happen with only a few inches of water. Floods can occur within minutes or over a long period, and may last days, weeks, or longer. Floods are the most common and widespread of all weather-related natural disasters.

Flash floods are the most dangerous kind of floods because they combine the destructive power of a flood with incredible speed. Flash floods occur when heavy rainfall exceeds the ability of the ground to absorb it. They also occur when water fills normally dry creeks or streams or enough water accumulates for streams to top their banks, causing rapid rises of water in a short amount of time. They can happen within minutes of the causative rainfall, limiting the time available to warn and protect the public.

Find more information on how to stay safe before, during, and after floods at https://www.ready.gov/floods

Hurricanes
Hurricanes, known generically as tropical cyclones, are low-pressure systems with organized thunderstorm activity that form over tropical or subtropical waters. Hurricanes, tropical storms, and tropical depressions pose a variety of threats to people and property. Water hazards — storm surge and inland flooding — have historically been the leading causes of death during hurricanes. Hurricanes can also bring strong winds, tornadoes, rough surf, and rip currents. The time to prepare for a hurricane is before hurricane season begins: June 1 in the Atlantic and Central Pacific and May 15 in the Eastern Pacific.

Find more information on how to prepare for a hurricane at https://www.noaa.gov/hurricane-prep.

Tornados
A tornado is a narrow, violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground. Because wind is invisible, it is hard to see a tornado unless it forms a condensation funnel made up of water droplets, dust and debris. The safest place to be is in an underground shelter, basement or safe room.

Find more information on how to handle a tornado at http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/tornado.

Earthquakes
An earthquake – also called a quake, tremor, or temblor – is the shaking of the Earth's surface resulting from a sudden release of energy in the lithosphere that creates seismic waves. Earthquakes can range in intensity, from those so weak they cannot be felt, to those violent enough to propel objects and people into the air, damage critical infrastructure, and cause destruction across entire cities. Should you encounter an earthquake, drop to the ground, take cover under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture, and hold on until the shaking stops.

Find more information on how to handle an earthquake at http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/preparedness.php.

Wildfires
A wildfire is an uncontrolled fire that burns in wildland vegetation, often in rural areas. Wildfires can burn in forests, grasslands, savannas, and other ecosystems. Droughts and dry conditions throughout various times of the year increase the risk for wildfires.

Find more information on preparing for a wildfire at
https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/wildfire.html.

Legal Matters

AVOIDING TROUBLE
You are responsible for knowing and obeying all federal, state, and local laws while you are visiting the U.S. You are not exempt from any laws on the basis of ignorance. You could be subject to fines, jail, or deportation if you violate the law. Also, do not assume that something is legal just because your U.S. friends are doing it. You can be considered guilty by association if you are with someone who is doing something illegal.

Trouble with the law may result in your dismissal from the program and early return to your home country. Cenet is not responsible for posting bail for participants who are arrested or for any expenses incurred as a result of your illegal activity.

THEFT
Theft refers to the removal of someone's personal property without that person's consent. If you find any items that do not belong to you while you are at work, you should take them to your supervisor immediately and inform them of the situation. Even if it appears as though a customer or another employee has discarded the item, you should not keep it.

SHOPLIFTING
Shoplifting is the act of knowingly taking goods from an establishment in which they are displayed for sale, without paying for them. Shoplifting is considered a form of theft and is subject to prosecution.

PHYSICAL ALTERCATIONS
Physical altercations or fighting will not be tolerated by Cenet. Physically striking another participant, coworker, or person may result in loss of employment, dismissal from the program, and/or criminal charges.

DRUGS
Drugs (or controlled substances) are illegal in the U.S. without a prescription from a doctor. If you have a prescription from a doctor, you are allowed to use the drug only as indicated on the prescription. You are not allowed to give the drug to another person or to use the drug in any way other than as prescribed. It is illegal to purchase a controlled substance, to be in possession of a controlled substance, or to be with anyone illegally in possession of a controlled substance.

ALCOHOL AND MARIJUANA
The legal age for drinking alcohol in the U.S. is 21 years old. If you attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages you will be asked to show some form of identification with a photo and date of birth to prove that you are at least 21 years old. It is illegal to purchase alcohol for someone who is underage.

Some U.S. towns or counties may enact stricter laws pertaining to alcohol than the nationwide laws. Some counties are known as "dry counties" meaning that alcohol is expressly forbidden. Many places prohibit consumption of alcohol in public places (e.g., on the street, in the park, in a parking lot). Some areas permit purchasing or drinking alcoholic beverages only during specific times. Research or inquire when you arrive about the laws pertaining to alcohol in your area of the U.S.

Laws regarding marijuana consumption vary depending on the area in which you live in the U.S.

ALCOHOL AND DRIVING
Due to the numerous traffic accidents involving alcohol (and other drugs), there are strict laws in the U.S. concerning consumption of alcoholic beverages and driving a vehicle. You are forbidden to drink alcohol and then drive any motorized vehicle at any time. There are laws against "Driving While Intoxicated" (DWI) and "Driving Under the Influence" (DUI). These laws are strictly enforced. If you will be drinking alcohol and you need to go somewhere, call a taxi. Alternatively, appoint a "designated driver" when you go out drinking in a group. The designated driver agrees not to consume any alcoholic beverages so that he or she can safely and legally drive the vehicle for the others in the group.

Please be advised that consular officers are required to prudentially revoke (i.e., without making a determination that the individual is inadmissible) non-immigrant visas of individuals arrested for, or convicted of, driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated, or similar arrests/convictions, that occurred within the previous 5 years, as detailed in 9 FAM 403.11-3(A). If an exchange visitor is in the United States, the revocation of the visa does not override the J-1 status granted by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the time of his/her entry or his/her ability to stay in the United States (except in extremely rare instances). However, if the individual departs the U.S. during his/her program, the visa is no longer valid for future travel to the United States. Therefore, after the individual's departure from the United States, sponsors are required to terminate his/her program status in SEVIS.

SEX
Laws concerning sexual relations can vary widely from country to country. In the U.S., it is considered “rape” to force another person to have sexual relations with you and is a serious offense. Both persons involved must agree to the sexual act. If either person says “no” to sexual relations at any time, all sexual advances must stop. Even if a person has agreed to have sexual relations with you, he or she can choose to stop the sexual activity at any time. If you force the other person to continue, you are guilty of rape.

It is illegal to have sexual relations with anyone under the age of 18. Anyone not yet 18 years old is considered to be a “minor” and still under the legal supervision of a parent or guardian. Sexual relations with a minor is called “statutory rape” even if the minor consents to the act. Penalties for violating this law can vary throughout the U.S.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Sexual harassment is bullying or coercion of a sexual nature and can involve the making of unwanted sexual advances or obscene remarks. In the United States, it can be unlawful to harass another person in a sexual nature. Additionally, while not illegal, certain behaviors are unacceptable and may violate Cenet and host company policies. Sexual harassment may take different forms:

- Verbal sexual harassment includes innuendos, suggestive comments, sexual propositions, lewd remarks, and threats. This includes repeated, unwelcome requests for dates.
- Nonverbal sexual harassment includes leering and suggestive or insulting sounds (e.g., whistling, catcalling). It can also include the content of emails, text messages, social media posts, or other forms of communication that is offensive and graphic in nature.
- Physical sexual harassment includes unwelcome physical contact (e.g., touching, tickling, pinching, fondling).

Remember to always treat your supervisors, co-workers, roommates, and friends in a respectful and courteous manner. Cenet has a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment. Contact Cenet immediately if you feel as though you have been harassed at your workplace.

HITCHHIKING
Standing on the side of the road and motioning to a stranger for a free ride is known as hitchhiking. It is dangerous, and in some places illegal, to hitchhike or to offer rides to hitchhikers.

LEGAL STATUS CONCERNS
If anyone takes your passport or other personal documentation or threatens to cancel your visa and deport you, please report this to Cenet immediately.

YOUR RIGHTS
If you are arrested, contact Cenet as soon as possible: 1-866-512-3638. You have the following rights:

- You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to answer any questions, make any statements, or offer a confession if you do not desire. You cannot be forced to provide evidence against yourself.
- You have the right to be free from “unreasonable searches and seizures.” This means that the police need a warrant to conduct a search unless there is an emergency situation. Do not interfere with the police if they insist on conducting a search without a warrant, but be sure to tell your attorney.
- You have the right to an attorney. If you desire legal representation you have a right to request an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, the court will appoint an attorney to represent you.
- You have the right to a fair trial.
- You are presumed innocent until proven guilty. It is the burden of the prosecution to prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

Replacing Lost Documents

DS-2019 Form

- Contact Cenet

Passport

- Contact the nearest consulate of your home country

Social Security card

- Contact the Social Security Administration

Refer to Appendix G for a list of useful contact information.

Miscellaneous

ELECTRICITY

The U.S. electrical system uses 110 volts, 60 hertz (cycles). If you are bringing appliances from home, they probably will not work in U.S. outlets. You can purchase a converter and a plug adapter to make your appliance function in the U.S. However, sometimes these converters do not work well. You might need to purchase inexpensive electrical appliances to use during your stay in the U.S.

TYPICAL PRICES OF COMMON ITEMS

The following prices are approximations only. Prices can vary greatly among areas of the country and between brand names and generic. As a reminder, you must do research and create a budget based on your wage, weekly hours, and cost of living in the specific community in which you will be living.

Rent, one bedroom apartment (per month)	$400 – $1,500
Transportation to and from work (per month)	$50 – $250
Burger, fries, and a drink at a fast food restaurant	$5 – $10
Blanket	$15 – $40
Pair of jeans	$30 – $60
Athletic shoes	$40 – $150
Shirt	$20 – $50
Movie admission	$7 – $13
Gasoline (per gallon)	$3 – $5

Remember, most cities and states levy a sales tax, which is typically added onto the stated price of the item when it is purchased.

TIPPING

The standard amount to tip a waitperson in the U.S. is between 15% and 20%. This is not required, but it is considered rude not to leave a tip. Wait staff generally earn less per hour than other American workers, and they depend on tips to help earn a living. It is common practice to tip less than the standard amount if you were unhappy with the service or to tip more than the standard amount if you thought your waitperson did an exceptional job.

Program Concerns

Cenet anticipates that your program experience will be positive. However, should you have concerns that you are unable to resolve yourself, please contact Cenet. In order to best assist you, you will be required to submit your concern by email. You may be asked to supply additional information or documents. Cenet will investigate your concern and will respond to you as soon as possible. Remember, Cenet cannot assist you if you do not report your issues or concerns.

Refund Policy

If you cannot participate due to circumstances BEYOND YOUR CONTROL (such as being unable to secure a visa), fees are refunded with the exception of the non-refundable portion of your application fee, the SEVIS fee (if paid by

Cenet), the placement fee (if secured by Cenet), and any applicable wire fees. There is a non-refundable application fee, even if your application is cancelled or rejected. If you choose not to participate after all arrangements are made and the employer is expecting you, you are not entitled to any refund.

Leaving the U.S. & Returning During Your Program – Travel Validation

Cenet discourages travel outside the U.S. during the program; however, in special cases, Cenet may approve this. If you want to request permission to leave the U.S. for a special reason (e.g., a family emergency) and wish to return on the same program, you will need to obtain a travel validation so that you do not have difficulties re-entering the U.S. If you simply want to leave the country for tourism (e.g., to visit Canada or Mexico), you should plan your trip after your program and return home from that country.

Please note that it is your responsibility to research the visa requirements for any country where you plan to travel. Cenet is not responsible should you be denied admission based on failure to meet necessary entry requirements.

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

Complete the following steps to ensure that you are eligible for multiple entries.

- Check the end date on your DS-2019. If your DS-2019 has expired or will expire before your planned return to the U.S. (i.e., during your grace period), you will not be able to leave the U.S. and return on this program.
- Check the expiration date on your I-94 (refer to section Your Arrival in the U.S.). If your I-94 has expired or will expire before your planned return to the U.S., you will not be able to leave the U.S. and return on this program.
- Check the expiration date on your J-1 visa. If your J-1 visa has expired or will expire before your planned return to the U.S., you will not be able to leave the U.S. and return on this program without obtaining a new visa.
- Check your J-1 visa to make sure you are eligible for multiple entries. This will be indicated by the letter “M” under the word “Entries”. If your J-1 visa does not have an “M” to indicate multiple entries, you cannot leave the U.S. and return on this program without obtaining a new visa.

RECEIVING A TRAVEL VALIDATION

You can contact Cenet to inquire if your desired travel outside the U.S. is permissible. If yes, and once you have determined that you are eligible for multiple entries, ask your supervisor to send Cenet an email confirming their approval and the specific travel dates. This must be received at least 2 weeks before your travel in order to have your DS-2019 form endorsed for re-entry.

Your Departure from the U.S.

If there is no earlier date indicated on your I-94, you are allowed a 30-day grace period after your program end date for the purposes of travel and departure. You can neither be employed during this grace period, nor travel outside the U.S. and then return. You must depart the U.S. by the end of the grace period.
Remember that life at home has continued as usual since you left. You will not necessarily find things just as you left them. Be prepared for another adjustment period as you return to your old life.

As your stay in the U.S. draws to an end, you will likely be very busy with last minute details. Do not forget to attend to the following issues:

- Make arrangements to receive your final paycheck and W-2.
- Reconfirm your travel arrangements.
- If you intend to stay for the optional grace period, contact Cenet to arrange for an additional month of insurance coverage.

BridgeUSA Alumni Network

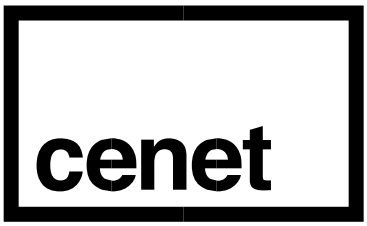
Alumni networks allow you to share experiences, engage in cultural dialogue, and connect within a like-minded global community. To learn more about alumni opportunities, please email alumni@cenet.org.

A Final Note

This program is not for everyone. There will be challenges. However, the challenges you will face represent an opportunity for lifetime learning and personal growth. Having a positive attitude and embracing these challenges as an opportunity will help you get the most out of this cultural exchange and professional experience.

Preparation is the key to your success. Cenet hopes this material is helpful to you during your program in the United States. In addition to developing personally and professionally, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the American culture, language, and customs and to share your own. Remember to keep an open mind, ask questions when necessary, and have a good time.

We wish you the best in the coming months and welcome you to the United States!



APPENDICES

Though Cenet strives to keep the information in this book up-to-date, Cenet is not responsible for changes to the information contained in these appendices as examples.

You may also search online for additional information regarding maps, accommodation, transportation, government offices, and more.

APPENDIX A: HOUSING

At a minimum, be aware of the following housing issues:

- Apartments vary greatly in quality, size, price, and what is included in the price. You may be asked to sign a lease. Before you sign anything, carefully inspect the apartment, know what is included in the price, and completely understand the terms of the lease. You should also research the area and ask local colleagues for advice; always put safety first.
- You will be asked to pay a damage deposit along with the first month's rent; the deposit is usually one month's rent. This deposit will usually be returned to you when you move out only if the landlord feels that you have met the terms of the lease and have left the apartment exactly as it was when you arrived.
- Often short-term leases (less than one year) cost more per month than longer-term leases. It is likely that you will be paying more for your apartment than your American neighbors. This is because they have agreed to stay in the apartment for a year or more.
- Some apartments are unfurnished. Rental of furnishings is an additional cost and is your responsibility.
- Utilities (e.g., water, gas, electricity) may or may not be included in your rent. Be sure you check this.
- You are responsible for knowing and abiding by the rules of your apartment complex.

Discuss your housing carefully with your host company or landlord. Understand the lease or housing agreement before you sign it. Be very clear on the following items:

- Landlord's name, address, and phone number
- Address and description of apartment
- Amount of monthly rent and how it should be paid
- Exact date rent payments are due
- Penalties for late rent
- Provisions for increasing the rent during the term of the lease
- Length of the lease
- Penalties for moving out before the lease expires
- Who pays for utilities (e.g., water, electric, gas)?
- Does the landlord have insurance on the property and will you need renter's insurance?
- How can you get repairs done and who will make them?
- Is the housing shared and if so, how many per bedroom and who are your roommates?
- Are there limitations on parties, noise, and other activities?
- Are you allowed to have overnight guests?
- Does the landlord provide pest (bug) control?

APPENDIX B: TRANSPORTATION

Answers to some commonly asked questions about automobile transportation are provided below.

Can I just rent a car for a few days whenever I want to travel?
Yes, but you must be at least 21 years old and have a valid driver's license and credit card. Agencies vary in types of cars available and in price, so check several companies. Be sure to ask about base cost, mileage rates, insurance, and deposits.

What kind of driver's license do I need?
Anyone driving a car must have a valid driver's license. Regulations vary from state to state. Please consult your local License Bureau for the rules in your region.

Where do I find a good used car?
Used cars are sold at new car dealerships, used car lots, and from private individuals. Many cars are listed in the online or print classified advertisements of newspapers under "Autos for Sale."

What do I need to be aware of when I look for a used car?
An inexpensive car in poor condition can become very expensive because of repair bills. When you look for a car, take a knowledgeable person with you. DO NOT purchase anything before you have a mechanic check the car thoroughly. When you buy, be certain to receive the title to the car. DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, ACCEPT A CAR WITHOUT THE TITLE.

What is vehicle registration?
Vehicles (e.g., cars, trucks, vans, motorcycles) must be registered with the state, and there is a registration fee. The fee will depend upon the make, model, and year of the vehicle. In most cases, you must have the vehicle's title, a state inspection receipt, and proof of paid (or waived) taxes in order to register.

If I own a car, do I have to have insurance coverage?
It is the law in most states that every car be covered by at least liability insurance.
An uninsured driver who causes an accident can be heavily sued by the other driver. Also, the uninsured driver will lose his/her driver's license. Proof of insurance must be carried in the car at all times.

What kinds of insurance are there and what do they cover?

- **Liability:** pays for injuries or damages to someone else if your car hits another person or the property of another person. It does not cover injury to yourself or your property.
- **Uninsured Motorist:** pays for your injuries and car damages if you are in an accident with an uninsured motorist.
- **Personal Injury Protection:** pays for your personal injuries if you are in an accident.
- **Collision:** pays for damages to your car from an accident.
- **Comprehensive:** pays for damage to your car through theft, fire, storm damage, or hitting an animal.

All types of insurance have a "deductible," an amount you have to pay before the insurance provider will pay anything.

If you choose to share a car with others, please note that the insurance may only cover one designated driver. Therefore, if you switch drivers and are involved in an accident, the new driver may not be covered by the insurance. Make sure you understand who is covered by insurance.

APPENDIX C: ADAPTING TO THE CULTURE

You will be living in a culture that is different from yours. You may have thought there would be little to adapt to, but there are differences in attitudes, standards, expectations, and reactions in terms of accommodations, food, time, space, language, and much more. You chose to travel abroad to appreciate and understand the culture; otherwise, you would have chosen to remain at home. You will have a wonderful time if you are flexible and appreciate what you see and experience on its own terms and not demand your own. Remember, you are the one responsible for adapting to the new culture—the host country will not change for you.

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is frequently experienced by people both traveling and living abroad. People are creatures of habit, and living in another country results in a loss of those cues that guide daily actions and decisions. Regardless of your tolerance, broad-mindedness, and empathy for the new culture, the loss of familiar cues will result in some degree of frustration. Recognizing any irritation as a symptom of culture shock will enable you to deal more effectively with the situation. Acknowledge the irritation and ask yourself why this aspect of the culture annoys you but seems perfectly natural and agreeable to the citizens of the host country. Your success in changing the negative aspects of culture shock to the positive side of challenge greatly depends on your developing a new set of attitudes before and during your stay. Check yourself periodically on the following guidelines to assess your progress:

- Maintain an attitude of curiosity and an eagerness to learn.
- Acquire a sense of adventure.
- Be quick to observe and slow to judge.
- Do not be afraid to be corrected but learn to accept “corrections” graciously and learn from your mistakes.
- Be generous and sincere in showing appreciation.
- Be adaptable.
- Maintain a sense of humor, especially about yourself.
- Go to learn, not to teach.
- Show sincere consideration for others.
- Be cooperative and willing to compromise.
- Enjoy yourself.

THE INTERCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT CYCLE

As you move from one society to another and begin to deal with the cultural differences you see, there are some specific stages you will encounter. It would be amazing if everyone could leave home and go abroad for a period of time without feeling some anxiety. Naturally, the severity and length of adjustment and the number of adjustment phases that you will go through depends upon the length of time that you are away from home and the support you are given. Nevertheless, you can be fairly certain that you will feel many of the emotions outlined in the intercultural adjustment cycle. Anticipate having these experiences:

- **Application Anxiety:** While waiting to go abroad, you may experience anxiety over your ability to handle this new opportunity. During this time, you may anticipate cultural differences but probably have only a superficial awareness of potential adjustment problems.
- **Selection/Arrival Fascination:** When the plans are definite that you will indeed be going abroad, you will probably experience a tremendous amount of elation. This excitement will probably continue (except for just before departure, when anxiety may arise again) until sometime after you arrive in the foreign country. During this period, expectations are high and pre-departure proceedings, as well as the arrival introductions, are overwhelming and blissful in their newness. Especially when you arrive, you will tend to be the focus of attention and activity. You will be shown respect and concern that you probably seldom receive at home.
- **Initial Culture Shock:** The initial fascination will sooner or later fade, and you may go into a decline, which is sometimes called culture shock. You may notice changes in sleeping habits, disorientation about how to work with and relate to others, and a lot of mental fatigue from listening to a foreign language all day.
- **Surface Adjustment:** After this initial “down,” which usually does not last more than a few days, you will settle into the situation.

- **Mental Isolation:** Next, the novelty may wear off completely and frustration may increase with a pervasive sense of isolation.
- **Integration/Acceptance:** Finally, you will be at ease and able to more carefully examine the new society. You will begin to understand the differences and find ways to deal with them. You will enjoy yourself, fit in, and have fun with the people around you.
- **Return Anxiety:** As you think about going home, you may begin feeling the same anxieties you felt during the first stage.
- **Shock/Reintegration:** Once you are home, the contrast between old and new may come as a shock. Just like you were the center of attention in another country for a short period, you will be the center again. That will soon fade as you find that few people are as interested in the details of your experience as you think they should be. After a short while, you will adjust to being one of the crowd again.

The end result is a shift in perspective and a better understanding of yourself and your own cultural heritage. (Adapted from *Bring Home the World* by Stephen H. Rhinesmith)

APPENDIX D: SOME COMMON AMERICAN TRAITS

You may have spent time around Americans or seen “American culture” in movies and television, but it is still helpful to be reminded of some commonalities in the American culture:

- **Equality:** Americans work better when they are in an atmosphere in which all are considered equal and things are “fair.” While equality includes the equal right to seek the “good life,” it does not guarantee equality of talent or ability.
- **Confrontation:** Discussing issues or ideas openly with other people is considered not only proper but often a responsibility as well. Americans may bring up issues which are sensitive or embarrassing to others. In addition, Americans, particularly in a business situation, do not spend the time on polite social talk that many other nationalities do. They often go right to the point of the discussion.
- **Informality and Formality:** In most cases Americans avoid elaborate social rituals. Most of the time, they tend to treat everyone in a similar way with little concern for titles or status.
- **Competition:** Because Americans tend to value achievement and equality, they often compete with each other. You will find both friendly and not-so-friendly competition everywhere. Although this behavior is natural for Americans, it may seem quite overbearing to others.
- **Cooperation:** Although Americans are competitive, they also engage in cooperative behavior. Though cooperation often comes from liking and wishing to help others, it may also be a way to help the entire group accomplish its task. While this may appear opportunistic, the goal is to get things done and to learn in the process so that in the future the individual may achieve a goal on his own.
- **Time and Promptness:** Time is very important in American society, and it is essential that you be on time for work, appointments, meetings, or social engagements. If you cannot keep an appointment, or are going to be late, it is extremely important for you to call and explain. In most situations, the time you are asked to be someplace is exactly the time you are expected to be there.
- **Conversation:** For most Americans silence is uncomfortable. Small talk and superficial conversations are usually preferable to quiet. People will commonly talk about the weather, sports, parties, food, clothing, anything. Americans tend to stand no less than eighteen inches apart while talking; standing too close will make them uncomfortable.
- **Invitations:** You should reply to an invitation by telephone or email. An invitation should not be accepted unless you have every intention of going. It is acceptable to refuse an invitation by explaining that you have other plans or no free time. If the plans must be changed after they are made because of illness or another unavoidable problem, inform your host as soon as possible before the event.
- **Cultural Diversity:** You should realize that the United States is not a homogenous society but rather a diverse one, rich in a multitude of cultures. You will have the opportunity to meet people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, each with unique traditions, behaviors, customs, and dialects.

APPENDIX E: SOME COMMON AMERICAN EXPRESSIONS

The informal language that Americans use on a daily basis can often cause confusion and miscommunication. Native English speakers tend to use the language creatively in such a way that non-native speakers can have a difficult time understanding them. In fact, Americans from different areas of the country can often have a difficult time understanding one another.

The most important thing to remember is that it is perfectly acceptable to ASK someone what they meant. Do not just nod and pretend to understand, particularly at your host company. Americans use expressions so often that they do not even realize they are doing it. However, if politely asked, most Americans are happy to explain.

Below are a few expressions that you might hear in everyday conversation:

Bring something up / Bring up something: Mention something
Crack someone up: Make someone laugh
Cut it out: Stop it
Drop the ball: Fail at something
Funny business / Monkey business: Silliness; horseplay
Get it together: Organize yourself; prepare yourself mentally Get the message / Get the picture?: Do you understand?
Get with it: Hurry; busy yourself
Go Dutch / Dutch treat: Split the cost of something; each buys his/her own
Go with the flow: Accept things as they are; be the same as everyone else Goof off / Goof around: Waste time I beg your pardon: Excuse me.
I owe you one: Thank you. I owe you a favor.
Keep your cool: Remain calm and in control
Keep your head on straight: Think clearly; remain calm and collected
Knuckle down: Be serious and busy yourself
No big deal / No biggie: Not difficult; not a problem
Play it by ear: Wait and see what develops before making a decision
Same difference: The same; no difference at all
See you later / See ya / Later: Goodbye
Stick around: Remain nearby; stay here
Take a load off: Sit; relax; be comfortable
Take a shot (or a whack) at something: Try something
Take it easy: Relax; be gentle; also: goodbye
Throw a fit: Have a display of bad temper
Touch base: Briefly make or renew contact with someone
Up and at 'em: Awake and be ready for the day ahead
Use your head: Think

APPENDIX F: SOME COMMON AMERICAN GESTURES

Expressions are not the only thing that can cause misunderstanding and confusion. Here are some common U.S. gestures that can create communication gaps:

Thumbs up: Good job
Thumbs down: Bad
Thumb and forefinger create a circle with other fingers up: Okay; affirmation
Head nod (up and down): Yes
Head shake (side to side): No
Palm out with fingers up: Stop
Shoulder shrug: I do not know
Hand wave away from self: Never mind; forget it, it was nothing
Cup hand behind ear: Speak louder; I cannot hear you; what did you say?
Shoulder pat: Well done!
Palm slap (high-five): Congratulations; shared victory

APPENDIX G: REFERENCE INFORMATION

CENET
www.cenet.org
CenetOne.org
1 (866) 512-3638

CITY INFORMATION
www.citysearch.com

EMBASSIES
www.embassy.org

USCIS
www.uscis.gov
1 (800) 375-5283

IRS
www.irs.gov
1 (800) 829-1040
Publication 519
www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p519.pdf
Form 1040 NR
https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040nr.pdf

I-94
https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home

SOCIAL SECURITY
https://www.ssa.gov/locator/
1 (800) 772-1213
Office locator
https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp

ACCOMMODATION
www.airbnb.com
www.hiusa.org
www.hostels.com
www.studentuniverse.com

LOCAL EVENTS & CULTURAL INFORMATION
www.meetup.com
www.livingsocial.com
www.lifeintheUSA.com

MAPS AND DIRECTIONS
maps.google.com

MASTERCARD – ATM LOCATOR
https://www.mastercard.us/en-us/personal/get-support/find-nearest-atm.html

MENTAL HEALTH
Disaster Distress Helpline
1 (800) 985-5990

National Sexual Assault Online Hotline
https://rainn.org/
1 (800) 656-4673
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
1 (800) 662-4357
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
https://988lifeline.org/
988
The Trevor Project
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/
1 (866) 488-7386

SAFETY
Bicycle Safety
www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicyclists
Polaris Project
https://polarisproject.org/
Rights & Protections
https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html

SHIPPING
U.S. Postal Service
www.usps.com
FedEx
www.fedex.com
UPS
www.ups.com

TRANSPORTATION
BUSES, TRAINS, TAXIS, AND AIRPLANES
Greyhound
www.greyhound.com
Amtrak
www.amtrak.com
Lyft
www.lyft.com
Uber
www.uber.com
Airplane Tickets
www.travelocity.com
www.priceline.com
www.kayak.com

AUTOMOBILES (INSURANCE)
Allstate
www.allstate.com
GEICO
www.geico.com
Progressive
www.progressive.com
State Farm
www.statefarm.com

AUTOMOBILES (RENT)

AVIS
www.avis.com
Dollar Car
www.dollar.com
Enterprise
www.enterprise.com
Hertz
www.hertz.com
National Car
www.nationalcar.com
Thrifty
www.thrifty.com

VISA – ATM LOCATOR
https://www.visa.com/atmlocator/

APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT MONTHLY BUDGET TEMPLATE

Your Stipend/Wage May Not Be Enough to Cover All Expenses

INCOME

Average Income Per Month (based on your job offer), less taxes: _____

EXPENSES

Housing: _____

Transportation: _____

Food: _____

Wifi/International Phone Plan: _____

Activities/Entertainment: _____

Miscellaneous: _____

TOTAL EXPENSES: _____

REMAINING FUNDS (INCOME MINUS EXPENSES): _____