



# PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

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## COVID-19 INFORMATION

As a participant on a cultural exchange program, it is your responsibility to educate yourself and be prepared for the potential impacts of COVID-19. The circumstances in the U.S. and around the world will continue to change, as will guidance from governments and medical experts. Please stay informed and be flexible. Follow the advice of officials, CIEE, your international representative and host employer, and take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and others.

**Vaccines play a key role in ending the pandemic.** Therefore, all participants on CIEE programs are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to their arrival. In addition, we ask that all participants be **informed, safe, smart, and respectful** while on their CIEE BridgeUSA program.

### Stay Informed

- In preparation for your departure, check with your local government, the local U.S. consulate, the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), and your airline to understand the travel restrictions or requirements specific to your circumstances.
- Know the [signs and symptoms](#). We recommend reviewing the latest updates from the [CDC](#) and the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) to understand the latest science behind the impacts of the virus.
- Check in with your host to understand restrictions or cultural norms surrounding COVID-19 in your U.S. community, as well as any health and safety policies related to your job.
- Identify the nearest COVID-19 testing facility in your area.

### Play It Safe

- Practice [healthy habits](#) and preventative measures such as proper hand hygiene, masking, and social distancing whenever possible and appropriate.
- If you feel ill, inform your host and CIEE! Check in with your host for guidance and support on quarantine and testing needed to return to work.

### Be Respectful

- Self-isolate immediately if you begin to feel ill. This critical step may stop the transmission of the virus to a colleague, roommate, friend, or community member.
- Taking preventative measures, such as masking and social distancing, are important even when you are not feeling sick because we know that the virus can be spread even by individuals who do not have symptoms ([asymptomatic transmission](#)).
- Be courteous and respectful towards others' who may ask for social distancing or masking.
- Please be aware people in the U.S. and around the world have varying opinions about the pandemic and conversations may be difficult or emotional. [Research](#) finds that discussions are most productive when we listen, ask others for their perspective, and remain friendly and objective.

### Make Smart Decisions

- Bring extra money in case you should need to quarantine or miss work while on your program.
- Think critically about where you plan to [travel](#) within the U.S. Understand any restrictions and look to attractions within your region, and avoid large crowds when possible.

### COVID-19 Participant Declaration:

In light of the current circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. and around the world, and in order to participate in a CIEE Work & Travel USA, Camp Exchange USA, Internship USA, Career Training USA or Scholar USA program, you must review and commit to the following terms.

I agree to:

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



I understand that:

- There may be disruptions to my program due to COVID-19.
- I may be required to change placements or move locations in the U.S. as instructed by CIEE (not applicable to Scholar USA program).
- I may need to return to my home country immediately if instructed by CIEE, my university, or government (U.S. or home government).
- I must follow CIEE's instructions and respond to outreach as requested.
- I am responsible for supporting myself financially in case of quarantine or a shelter in place order in my community.

## Section 1 – Welcome

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

### International Exchange Programs

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

### Meet Your Sponsor, CIEE

**CIEE – the Council on International Educational Exchange – is YOUR J-1 VISA SPONSOR for your professional exchange program.**

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

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

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

- Call [1-888-268-6245](tel:1-888-268-6245). We're available Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EST. For emergencies, we are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Send an email to [contact@ciee.org](mailto:contact@ciee.org). We'll respond as soon as possible.

**Check your email frequently while you're in the U.S.** so you don't miss important program reminders and other updates.

**Find Us Online**

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

## U.S Department of State

The U.S. Department of State is ultimately responsible for all Exchange Visitor Programs.

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

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

### Private Sector Exchanges

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

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

## Stay Curious

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

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

## Section 2 – Know Your Documents

### Essential Documents

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

Documents provided by your international representative, host employer or CIEE:

- **DS-2019 form:** This form permits you to apply for a J-1 Visa. You will need it at the airport (or border) when entering the U.S.
- **DS-7002 form:** This is your training plan. Most likely, you collaborated with your host organization to work on the details found on this document. Once you are in the U.S., the DS-7002 will serve as the guide for your training.
- **SEVIS receipt:** Your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) receipt confirms that CIEE has paid your registration fee with the U.S. government. You will need this receipt for your J-1 visa interview.
- **Confirmation of Insurance (for holders of CIEE insurance only):** This document serves as confirmation of your CIEE health insurance coverage dates.
- **Insurance ID (Identification Card):** Your proof of travel health insurance. It is located on your confirmation of insurance document
- **Social Security Officer Letter:** This is an optional letter of support that some Social Security offices may request. It is available for download on CIEE's [website](#).

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

- **Passport:** Your passport must be in good condition and is recommended to be valid for six months beyond the period of your intended stay in the U.S.
- **Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination:** See the [World Health Organization list](#) of accepted vaccines.
- **U.S. J-1 visa:** You will need a valid J-1 visa in order to enter the U.S.
- **Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record Card:** The I-94 number is issued upon entrance to the United States. You may go to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's [I-94 website](#) after you have arrived to download and print a copy of your number.
- **U.S. J-2 visa for dependents (if applicable):** Spouses and unmarried children under age 21 are eligible for J-2 visas. [Learn more](#).

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

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

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

## Section 3 – Before you Travel

### Program Requirements

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

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

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

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

## Plan Your Finances

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

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

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

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

## Health Check

### Take Care of Your Health Before You Depart

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

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

### Now is the time to:

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

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

## Important: Plan Ahead for Housing

It's important to plan ahead for housing. We recommend to:

- **Start your search now.** The more you know about what to expect before you leave your home country, the easier it will be to get settled once you arrive in the U.S. Use the Internet to research housing, transportation, and geography, as well as destinations and activities.
- **Find housing before you come to the U.S.** Most host organizations do not provide housing, but you can still ask them about housing options near your workplace. The internet makes it easier to find apartments but look out for housing scams. Unusually low rent, requests to wire money, or to give cash to people you do not know are warning signs. If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Use your instincts. If you are unsure, talk with your host organization or call CIEE.
- **Have a place to stay when you arrive.** If you are unable to find long-term housing before you leave for the U.S., you should arrange short-term accommodation at a hotel, hostel, or motel. If you will travel by bus or train to your final destination, you may need to arrange accommodations in more than one place.



## Housing Resources

Use this list of online resources to start your search:

- [Craigslist.org](https://www.craigslist.org) – This free classified advertisement website serves many areas of the U.S. There is no cost to place an ad on Craigslist, so here you'll find many listings for affordable housing. Be ware of housing scams and do not send money in advance!
- [Apartmentlist.com](https://www.apartmentlist.com) – Search by neighborhood with many filtering options. Log in with your Facebook account to access special features.
- [Apartments.com](https://www.apartments.com) – Apartment listings by state and city. Sign up and ask for listings to be emailed to you. Includes an iPhone app.
- [Roommates.com](https://www.roommates.com) – Lists apartments where people are looking for roommates. Services like this are often free to join, but often charge fees and may take longer than other options.
- [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) – Offers short-term stays in private apartments and lists monthly rentals.
- [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) – Join CIEE J-1 Professional Exchange Programs on Facebook to connect with other students looking for roommates near you.

Some things to expect:

- Expect a higher cost of living compared to your home country. American cities are very expensive.
- You may find it necessary to share an apartment to maintain lower costs.
- Expect to sign a contract with a landlord.
- Your contract may or may not include utilities (e.g. electricity, hot water, heat, etc.). Please be sure to factor that in when assessing your monthly costs.
- Your apartment may be simply furnished or unfurnished. If it is unfurnished, you will be responsible for purchasing your own furniture (IKEA and yard sales are affordable options).
- You may find it necessary to rent in a neighborhood that is farther from your host company.
- Average commuting time in U.S. cities can be between 1-3 hours per day.

## Section 4 – Traveling to the U.S.

### Have a Plan!

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

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

**Plan how you will get from the airport** to your housing or your temporary accommodation. Search online for bus schedules or other public transportation options.

**Create a travel checklist.** Think through your entire journey – from when you leave your home to when you arrive at your temporary or long-term housing in the U.S. Questions to consider:

- Do you have all important documents, money, prescription drugs, and valuables where you can access them in your carry-on luggage?
- Will you need to spend a night at an airport hotel before traveling to your final destination? Did you make a reservation?
- How will you get from the airport to your housing?
- Do you have the phone numbers for your host employer and CIEE (888-268-6245) as contacts in your phone?

## Immigration and Customs

- **Arrival:** When arriving in the U.S., you must pass through immigration and customs. There may be separate lines for U.S. citizens and Green Card holders and other visitors. Make sure you join the line for visitors!
- **Immigration:** At immigration, officials will verify your passport, DS-2019 form, I-901 SEVIS Payment Confirmation, and J-1 visa. Officials will take your photograph and fingerprint, then ask questions about your citizenship, your program, and where you will stay. They will also ask about information on your documents. This process is straightforward, customary, and required for most people entering the U.S.  
*Please note: Many airports now have automated passport control, where you go through these steps at an electronic kiosk.*
- **Customs:** Next you will retrieve your luggage and continue to customs. Expect officials to open your luggage for inspection and ask for your customs declaration form, which tells them what you are bringing into the country.

## Preparing for Travel Challenges

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

- **Missed connecting flight:** If you miss a connecting flight due to travel delays, find an agent with your airline and ask him or her to book you on the next flight. You can also call your airline's toll-free number and talk to an agent about a new itinerary. There are often free telephones in major airports. Remember to also call or email your host organization if you will arrive later than expected.
- **Lost luggage:** Check with your airline's lost luggage office at airport baggage claim.
- **Lost documents:** If you lose one or more documents, use your backup photocopies. Report a lost passport to airport security and to CIEE right away. For more tips, check out our useful [arrival](#) guide!

## Section 5 – First Days in the United States

### Mandatory: Register for SEVIS in Beacon

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security keeps track of visitors with a system called SEVIS, or the Student and The U.S. Department of Homeland Security keeps track of visitors with a system called **SEVIS** – the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. **All J-1 Visa holders must register with SEVIS as soon as they arrive in the U.S.**

**If you fail to do this, you will have to immediately return home.**

A few things to keep in mind:

- **You MUST be in the United States to register**
- You have **10 days** after the start date on your DS-2019 form to complete registration.
- **Registering your program is based on your DS-2019 start date** and you can register your program up to 10 days prior to your DS-2019 Start date.
- If you do not have permanent housing or are staying in temporary lodging it is fine to use this temporary address to register your program in SEVIS. Once you obtain permanent housing you must provide us with your new address.

## How to Register

1. Log into your CIEE [Beacon](#) account. You will see the below invitation asking you to start your SEVIS registration. If you do not see the invitation, please check your DS-2019 start date to ensure your dates are valid for registering your program.



2. Provide us with your U.S. address. A Google map icon will assist you with trying to identify your U.S. address. Start by entering your street address, city and state in the address line box. The Google icon should identify and then populate your address in the necessary fields. It is important that you include either an apartment or unit number or, if staying in a motel/hote, a room number.

If you have a U.S. phone number, you can also provide us with that number. Please do not provide us with an international number.

3. Review important program rules and accept them before completing your SEVIS registration.

Once you complete this process CIEE will email you a confirmation within five business days confirming your program has been registered. After receiving this email, you will be eligible to apply for a social security number if needed.

If you have any questions or need assistance in registering your program, you can call CIEE at 1-888-268-6245.

## Your First Day of Training

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Mandatory: Apply for a Social Security Number

**You must have a Social Security Number.** You need a Social Security number (SSN) to get paid, open a bank account, and pay taxes. You might also need to share your SSN with your landlord.

### Application Instructions

1. **After** receiving the SEVIS registration confirmation email from CIEE, you can apply [online](#) or in person by visiting a local Social Security office. Find one [here](#).
2. If you are applying in person, bring the following documents with you:
  - a. DS-2019 form
  - b. Passport with J-1 Visa
  - c. Completed [SSN Application Form](#) (you can also complete this form in the SS office if you do not have a printer)
3. If you apply online, it is very important that you enter your address correctly. The U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver the card if your name is not on the mailbox or the PO Box that you provided. If the applicant is unknown at the address, your card will not be delivered.
4. You will get a receipt upon completing your application. **Keep this important document safe.** You will need to send it to your host organization to prove that you are eligible to train and be paid. You may also need it to open a bank account or rent an apartment.
5. Check the status of your application in seven to ten days by visiting your local Social Security office or by calling the [Social Security Administration](#) at 1-800-772-1213.

Treat your Social Security number as confidential information; avoid giving it out unnecessarily. Once you receive your Social Security card, keep it in a safe place. Don't carry it with you unless you need to show it your host organization or service provider.

### If You Already Have a Social Security Number

If you already have a Social Security number, you do not need to apply for another one. If you do not have your Social Security card or do not remember your number, you can visit any Social Security office to replace your card for free.

## Your First Paycheck

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

When you receive your paycheck, review it carefully to make sure it is correct and that you are not paying either Social Security or Medicare taxes. You *are* required to pay federal, state, and any applicable local income tax, which should be deducted from your pay. If you ever have a question about your paycheck, speak with your supervisor as soon as possible.

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

## Section 6 – Living in the United States

### MANDATORY: Follow All Program Rules

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

### Your program may be shortened if:

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

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

## Extending, Changing, or Ending Your Program Early

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

### Program Extensions:

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

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

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

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

### Changing Host Organizations

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

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

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

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

## Ending Your Program Early

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

Ending your program will involve the following steps:

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

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

## CIEE Evaluations

Program evaluations serve as way for both CIEE and the U.S. Department of State to ensure that BridgeUSA exchange programs meet the needs of participants and host organizations.

- You will receive a survey every month via email.
- Check your account regularly and respond to surveys as soon as you receive them.
- Your host organization supervisor will receive a mandatory mid-point and final evaluation.

**Please note: Program evaluations are required by CIEE and the U.S. Department of State. Failure to complete these evaluations could jeopardize your program status.**

## Laws in the United States

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

### Alcohol and Legal Drinking Age

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

### Drugs

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

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

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

### If You Are Arrested

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

Breaking laws or being arrested can affect your employment, as well as your ability to continue participation on your CIEE program. Please contact CIEE immediately to report any arrests or violations. [Learn more about U.S. laws and program rules.](#)

## Transportation Safety

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

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

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

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

## Water Safety

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

- **Swim in designated areas.**  
Always swim in designated swimming areas supervised by lifeguards. Watch for flags posted at many beach access sites signifying water conditions.
- **Daytime is the safest time for swimming.**
- **Never swim alone.** Bring a friend and always let someone know where you are going.
- **Stay close to the shore and swim parallel to the beach.**
- **Remember that swimming and alcohol can be a deadly combination.**

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

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

## Extreme Weather

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Emergencies

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

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

### Call CIEE Anytime

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

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

For all other concerns, call CIEE Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EST and at **888-268-6245** or send us an email anytime at [contact@ciee.org](mailto:contact@ciee.org).

## Human Trafficking

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

### Working in the American Culture

As you are about to join a work culture that is different from your own, it is important for you to understand the key professional traits that are valued by your new team members.

- Punctuality
- Teamwork
- Working on your own (it is really important to demonstrate initiative)
- Being open to feedback and new ideas
- Open-mindedness
- Positivity (thinking in the negative is a turn-off to other colleagues)
- Being proactive and taking initiative (demonstrate that you have the drive to be a strong employee)
- Professionalism and respect of your colleagues

Here is how you can make your program more successful:

- You must first earn the trust of your team before you can receive important projects.
- Your approach to small tasks and projects will dictate your work responsibilities.
- Be proactive. If something is unclear, ask questions.
- Be communicative with your supervisor. If you have concerns about your placement direction, schedule a meeting with your supervisor.
- Do not hesitate to propose some new but practical project ideas. You would be surprised at how open employers are to your developmental propositions.

### Company Culture

As you begin working at your new American company, you will immediately start to notice elements of its unique company culture. "Company culture is the personality of a company. It defines the environment in which employees work. Company culture includes a variety of elements, including work environment, company mission, value, ethics, expectations, and goals" (Doyle, May 04, 2019). Your company culture may differ from what your vision of a typical company culture was prior to arriving.

Here are some differences in company culture that you should be on watch for:

1. Depending on the company's location, it could be faster-paced or slower-paced culture.
2. The company may be more hierarchical or have a flat organizational structure
3. Casual vs formal
4. Hourly-based vs salary-based (some of you may find yourself working more than 40 hours at times)
5. More structured system of responsibilities vs multidisciplinary
6. Benefits (you will find that each company may provide its employees particular perks that differ from those that other interns have at another company. Please do not put expectations on your Host Company to provide perks that others may offer. Keep your mind set on the benefits that your employer offers you, a be grateful for those.)

This same advice applies to your team culture, specifically the expectations of your supervisor:

1. Some supervisors monitor their employees more, others give greater space to allow employees to experiment with their problem-solving and creative skills.
2. Some supervisors provide frequent feedback, other supervisors have communication challenges (personal or schedule-based), so you will need to solicit feedback frequently (don't worry about scheduling meetings to talk to your supervisor on a weekly or bimonthly basis).
3. Some supervisors have a big-picture approach to company operations, while others are focused on the details of workflow.
4. Introvert vs Extrovert; Hierarchical vs. Egalitarian
5. Regimented vs flexible

How do you know what your company culture will be like? During the first couple of months of your placement, give yourself time to observe and explore your company's unique culture. Be open-minded to the varieties that you will not expect. Remember that you are on a cultural exchange program, so you will experience not only national or regional differences, but also corporate and interpersonal.

## CIEE Recommended Reading List

Here are some recommended titles selected by CIEE to help equip you with new perspectives to tackle your professional and exchange endeavor head on.

- **Deep Work** by Cal Newport : In *Deep Work*, author and professor Cal Newport flips the narrative on impact in a connected age. Instead of arguing distraction is bad, he instead celebrates the power of its opposite. Dividing this book into two parts, he first makes the case that in almost any profession, cultivating a deep work ethic will produce massive benefits. He then presents a rigorous training regimen, presented as a series of four “rules,” for transforming your mind and habits to support this skill.
- **Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most** by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen : We attempt or avoid difficult conversations every day—whether dealing with an underperforming employee, disagreeing with a spouse, or negotiating with a client. From the Harvard Negotiation Project, the organization that brought you *Getting to Yes*, *Difficult Conversations* provides a step-by-step approach to having those tough conversations with less stress and more success.
- **Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance** by Angela Duckworth : Why do some people succeed and others fail? Sharing new insights from her landmark research, Angela explains why talent is hardly a guarantor of success. Angela has found that grit—a combination of passion and perseverance for a singularly important goal—is the hallmark of high achievers in every domain. She's also found scientific evidence that grit can grow
- **How to Win Friends and Influence People** by Dale Carnegie : Dale Carnegie's rock-solid, time-tested advice has carried countless people up the ladder of success in their business and personal lives. One of the most groundbreaking and timeless bestsellers of all time, *How to Win Friends & Influence People* will teach you six ways to make people like you, twelve ways to win people to your way of thinking, nine ways to change people without arousing resentment
- **Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking** by Susan Cain : In *Quiet*, Susan Cain argues that we dramatically undervalue introverts and shows how much we lose in doing so. She charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal throughout the twentieth century and explores how deeply it has come to permeate our culture. She also introduces us to successful introverts—from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Passionately argued, superbly researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how they see themselves.
- **Reverse Culture Shock** by H.E. Rybol : Feeling like a collection of loose puzzle pieces? This book of adapted blog posts will help you feel like beautiful patchwork, strong seams and all! You'll read about code-switching, contextualizing, mirroring, giving meaning to experiences, connecting, finding a sense of community and more. Dealing with reverse culture shock is a continuously evolving process that requires constant adjustments, reflection and introspection. Here, you'll find comfort, food for thought and a little nudge, should you need one, to ease a difficult transition.
- **The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right** by Atul Gawande : The modern world has given us stupendous know-how. Yet avoidable failures continue to plague us in health care, government, the law, the

financial industry—in almost every realm of organized activity. And the reason is simple: the volume and complexity of knowledge today has exceeded our ability as individuals to properly deliver it to people—consistently, correctly, safely. We train longer, specialize more, use ever-advancing technologies, and still we fail. Atul Gawande makes a compelling argument that we can do better, using the simplest of methods: the checklist. In riveting stories, he reveals what checklists can do, what they can't, and how they could bring about striking improvements in a variety of fields, from medicine and disaster recovery to professions and businesses of all kinds.

- **The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business** by Erin Meyer : In *The Culture Map*, INSEAD professor Erin Meyer is your guide through this subtle, sometimes treacherous terrain in which people from starkly different backgrounds are expected to work harmoniously together. She provides a field-tested model for decoding how cultural differences impact international business, and combines a smart analytical framework with practical, actionable advice.
- **The Happiness Project** by Gretchen Rubin : *The Happiness Project* describes one person's year-long attempt to discover what leads to true contentment. Drawing at once on cutting-edge science, classical philosophy, and real-world applicability, Rubin has written an engaging, eminently relatable chronicle of transformation.
- **The Impostor Phenomenon: Overcoming The Fear That Haunts Your Success** by Dr. Pauline Rose Clance : Many highly successful people in the world doubt their success is real. Despite outstanding accomplishments and repeated praise, they believe the only reason they've gotten ahead is good timing, connections, hard work, or just plain luck - never their own abilities and intelligence. And they live with the constant fear that sooner or later someone will tear away their mask of success and discover the truth. These people sincerely believe they have fooled the world, that they can't possibly be smart enough or talented enough to deserve all they've achieved. They suffer from The Impostor Phenomenon. Finally there is help for these intelligent, creative people - a plan for overcoming the fear that haunts their success.
- **Thinking Fast and Slow** by Daniel Kahneman : Kahneman takes us on a groundbreaking tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. The impact of overconfidence on corporate strategies, the difficulties of predicting what will make us happy in the future, the profound effect of cognitive biases on everything from playing the stock market to planning our next vacation—each of these can be understood only by knowing how the two systems shape our judgments and decisions.
- **What it Takes: Lessons in the Pursuit of Excellence** by Stephen A. Schwarzman : Schwarzman's story is an empowering, entertaining, and informative guide for anyone striving for greater personal impact. From deal making to investing, leadership to entrepreneurship, philanthropy to diplomacy, Schwarzman has lessons for how to think about ambition and scale, risk and opportunities, and how to achieve success through the relentless pursuit of excellence. Schwarzman not only offers readers a thoughtful reflection on all his own experiences, but in doing so provides a practical blueprint for success.
- **Who Moved My Cheese** by S. Johnson : Most people are fearful of change, both personal and professional, because they don't have any control over how or when it happens to them. Since change happens either to the individual or by the individual, Johnson uses a deceptively simple story to show that when it comes to living in a rapidly changing world, what matters most is your attitude. Exploring a simple way to take the fear and anxiety out of managing the future, *Who Moved My Cheese?* can help you discover how to anticipate, acknowledge, and accept change in order to have a positive impact on your job, your relationships, and every aspect of your life.

## The U.S. Workplace Rights

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

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

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

- Seek justice in U.S. courts.

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

## Sexual Harassment and Racial Discrimination

### Race/Color Discrimination

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

### Examples of Race/Color Discrimination and Harassment

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

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

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

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

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

### Sexual Harassment

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

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

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

### Examples of sexual harassment

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

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

### IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

## Workplace Safety

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

### Drug Testing

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

## Coping with Problems

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

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

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

# Section 8 – Traveling in America and Returning Home

## Planning Your Adventures

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

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

## Before Leaving Your Host Organization

1. If applicable, request your final paycheck or agree on payment arrangements with your host organization.
2. Make sure your host organization has your contact information, so it can mail you your W-2 form (for tax purposes).

3. Make note of your host organization's contact information – you may need it later.
4. Ask your supervisor to write a letter of recommendation for you; this will be useful when applying for jobs in the future.

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

## Before Leaving the U.S.

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

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

## How Do Taxes Work

As a foreign visitor receiving paid training on a J-1 visa, you are required to pay some (but not all) of the same taxes U.S. citizens pay. Roughly 10% to 15% of your salary will be withheld for federal income tax. Some states and cities also charge income tax, which could be an additional 5% to 8%. While your host organization should withhold the correct taxes, it is wise to review your first paycheck to make sure there are no errors, and the tax withholding is correct.

**What you must pay:**

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

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

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

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

## Filing a Tax Return

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

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

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

## Unlawful Presence

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

As a participant of the Internship USA or the Professional Career Training Program, you are eligible to travel and spend time in your adopted community during your travel period/grace period at the conclusion of your training. **Your travel period is the time between your DS end date and program end date but cannot exceed 30 days.** Please note, that you need to have purchased insurance for the entire time that you are in the U.S., including the travel/grace period.

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

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

## Staying Connected With CIEE

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

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

### Member benefits:

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

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

**Best of luck and we hope your training experience in the U.S is a great success!**