



PARTICIPANTS HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – WELCOME.....	3
Introduction	5
International Exchange Programs	5
Meet CIEE (Your Visa Sponsor!)	5
Stay Curious.....	6
SECTION 2 – KNOW YOUR DOCUMENTS	7
Important Documents.....	7
SECTION 3 – BEFORE YOU GO	8
Prepare for a Great Experience	8
Get Your Visa.....	9
Book Your Travel	10
Plan Your Finances	10
Know Your Camp’s Rules.....	10
Visit Your Doctor and Dentist.....	10
Health Requirements for Your Camp	11
SECTION 4 – TRAVELING TO CAMP	11
Packing	11
Before Your Flight.....	12
Airport Arrival	12
Prepare for Travel Challenges	13
Getting to Camp	14
SECTION 5 – FIRST DAYS IN THE UNITED STATES	14
MANDATORY: Register for SEVIS.....	14
MANDATORY: Apply for a Social Security Number	15
Take Care of Paperwork at Camp	15
Manage Your Pocket Money	18
SECTION 6 – LIFE AT CAMP	18
Your Role as a Counselor	18
A Typical day at Camp	19
Adjusting to a New Culture	19
Camper Counselor Contact & Conduct	21
Challenges at Camp.....	21
Homesickness and culture shock:	21
You are considering quitting:	21
You get fired:	22
Issues with campers or co-counselors:	22
Contacting friends and family back home:	22

Extending, Changing, or Ending Your Program Early	22
Program Extensions	23
Ending your program early	23
IMPORTANT: Non-Completion Fee	23
SECTION 7 – LAWS & SAFETY	24
Emergencies	24
MANDATORY: Follow All Program Rules	24
Laws in the United States	25
Your Legal Rights	26
Bicycle Safety	27
Water Safety	28
Extreme Weather	28
Discrimination and Sexual Harassment	28
SECTION 8 – HEALTH AND CIEE INSURANCE	30
CIEE Health Insurance	30
If You Need Medical Attention	31
SECTION 9 – AFTER CAMP	31
Before You Leave Camp	31
SECTION 10 – TRAVELING IN AMERICA, AND RETURNING HOME	32
Regulations for Your J-1 Visa	32
More Sights, More Opportunities for Discovery	33
Taxes	33
Tell Us What You Think	33
Staying Connected with CIEE	34

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

Introduction

Congratulations! You've been accepted to the CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange Camp Exchange USA program. Now it is time to prepare for a successful and exciting summer.

This handbook is designed to guide you through all the stages of participating in CIEE Camp Exchange USA. Please give yourself time and space to read each section carefully.

International Exchange Programs

[CIEE Camp Exchange USA](#) is more than just a summer job. It's an exciting journey of cultural discovery, full of opportunities to engage with new people and explore new places. This [Bridge USA program](#) is a public diplomacy initiative by U.S. Department of State and is a part of a much larger BridgeUSA Program. It is designed to provide a richer, more meaningful experience by bringing foreign nationals to the United States to explore our culture and make lasting connections with our people.

This is a unique opportunity to have an unforgettable summer while making new friends, becoming part of an American tradition, and gaining confidence, independence, and experience.

Meet CIEE (Your Visa Sponsor!)

CIEE (The Council on International Educational Exchange) is your J-1 visa sponsor.

The U.S. Department of State has approved CIEE to sponsor participants like you while you visit the U.S. and oversee program operations for Camp Exchange USA. We are responsible for finding high quality international representatives and hosts (camps), facilitating placements, issuing paperwork for your visa, providing travel insurance, making sure you are aware of and follow program rules, and monitoring your safety and well-being while you are here. We are also here to help you have a great experience!

We are here to help. Please 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-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245)**. We're available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for any emergencies. For any non-urgent matters please call during the business hours (9 am EST to 5 pm EST).
- Send an email to contact@ciee.org. We'll respond as soon as possible.

It's important to check your email frequently while you're in the U.S. for reminders for required tasks and other updates from CIEE.

Connect with us online!

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

Find us on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ciee_camp/

Remember to use hashtag [#cieecamp](#) when you share your stories and your photos online!

Stay Curious

The U.S. is a vast and vibrant country. No matter where you go, it will be different from home. Some things will be positive, while others may seem negative. We encourage you to keep an open mind and respond to each day with curiosity.

We also encourage you to:

- **Be prepared for a period of cultural adjustment.** At first, you will likely feel excited and happy to be in a new place. However, as you begin to adjust, it's normal for that 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 flexible.** To avoid feeling frustrated, misled, or let down, keep your expectations, schedule, and outlook as open and flexible as possible.
- **Be patient with yourself and others.** Don't expect yourself to adapt right away. These things take time.
- **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, learn, grow, and make the most of your program.

Remember That We're Here to Help!

No matter how you are feeling, remember that you are not alone. You can contact CIEE any time by calling 1-888-COUNCIL(1-888-268-6245). We are always here to help.

SECTION 2 – KNOW YOUR DOCUMENTS

Important Documents

You must have certain documents with you to enter the U.S.

Documents from CIEE/International Representative

These documents will be provided by CIEE to your international representative (or directly to you) after your placement is confirmed. Some of these documents will be mailed and others can be downloaded from Beacon:

- **Placement Agreement Form:** This form contains your camp details and program dates. It also indicates that CIEE is your visa sponsor. You may need to provide this form to the U.S. immigration officer upon entry to the U.S. *Download this form from Beacon.*
- **DS-2019 form:** This form permits you to apply for a J-1 visa. You will need it when entering the U.S. *Your international representative will mail this form.*
- **SEVIS receipt:** The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) receipt confirms that CIEE has registered you with the U.S. government as an exchange visitor. You will need this receipt for your J-1 visa interview. *CIEE will email this form.*
- **Confirmation of Insurance:** This document serves as confirmation of your CIEE health insurance coverage for the listed dates. *Your international representative will mail this form.*
- **Insurance ID (Identification Card):** Your insurance ID proves that you have travel health insurance. *Your international representative will mail this form.*
- **Social Security Officer Letter:** CIEE provides you with [this letter](#), which explains your exchange visitor status. Present this letter when submitting your Social Security application.

Documents from Camp:

- **Medical Health Form:** Your camp will send you their medical health form and any vaccination requirements for counselors. **You will not be permitted to start your placement without a completed medical form.**
- **Camp Contract/Agreement:** Your camp contract is a job agreement with your camp. The immigration officer may ask for this form upon entry to the U.S.
- **Social Security Application Form SS-5:** CIEE or your camp will provide this form to you upon arrival in the U.S. You can also download it [here](#). You will use it to apply for your Social Security number, which is required for you to work in the U.S.

Documents you must obtain on your own:

- **Passport:** Your passport must be in good condition and be valid for at least six months beyond the period of your intended stay in the U.S. and have at least three blank visa pages.
- **U.S. J-1 Visa:** You will need a valid J-1 visa in order to enter the U.S. Please apply for this visa at your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate.

The documents listed above are important. They serve as your identification while you are in the U.S. and law enforcement authorities might request them at any time. [Learn more](#) about these important documents on our website or through the PDF document attached in this section.

For more information about these essential documents, please review our [website](#). Still confused? Contact your international representative with questions.

TRAVEL TIP: Make two photocopies of each document, then pack each set in a different place in your carry-on luggage. You should also scan and email a copy of each document to your personal email address. You should also leave a copy of each document at home with a parent or friend.

Do not pack any documents in your checked luggage!

SECTION 3 – BEFORE YOU GO

Prepare for a Great Experience

Set yourself up for a rewarding program experience in the U.S. by carefully reading about Camp Exchange USA and researching your camp community. Contact CIEE or your camp director if you have any questions. Make sure you understand your position at camp and your camp director's expectations. If you'd like to speak with someone who has worked at your camp before, reach out to your camp director. You are now a member of your camp's family! Most camps will have a Facebook group where you can chat with old and new staff.

Helpful Information About Your Camp Exchange Program – Download and Print
[U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Welcome brochure \(PDF\)](#)
[Wilberforce pamphlet: Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers](#)

Get Your Visa

After you are accepted to CIEE Camp Exchange USA and have received your camp placement, you will need to apply for the J-1 visa you need to travel. That involves a visa interview at your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate. The visa application process may vary by location; as a result, we recommend that you consult the instructions for your country of residence. Find the list of all U.S. Embassies and U.S. Consulates [here](#).

A general outline of the visa application process:

1. **Visa Application.** Complete the online visa application form and print a copy of the confirmation page to bring to your interview. You will be asked to upload your photo while completing the online form.
2. **Appointment.** You will be instructed to schedule an in-person appointment for your visa interview. Wait times for an interview vary by location, season, and visa category. You can see the estimated appointment wait time in your country [here](#).
3. **Visa Fee.** Pay the non-refundable visa application fee.
4. **Documents.** Gather and prepare the following documents:
 - **Passport** valid for travel to the U.S. Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your period of stay in the U.S.
 - **Nonimmigrant visa application confirmation page**, which you can print after completing the online application.
 - **Application fee payment receipt**, if you are required to pay before your interview.
 - **Your photo**, which you will upload while completing the online application. If the photo upload fails, you must bring one printed photo in the format required by the U.S. Embassy.
 - **Form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status).** You will receive this form from CIEE as explained earlier.
 - **Additional documentation** may be required. Check with your nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate for more information.
5. **Interview.** Attend your visa interview. A consular officer will interview you to determine whether you are qualified to receive an exchange visitor visa. You may be asked to provide evidence about the purpose of your travel, your ability to pay all travel costs, and your intent to depart the U.S. after the program.
6. After your visa is approved, pick up your passport and visa.

Please remember that your international representative is an invaluable resource and will be glad to help you with any additional visa-related questions! You can also find more information online at the U.S. Embassy [website](#) and at the U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor information [page](#).

Book Your Travel

Once your J-1 visa has been approved by the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate, you can book your international travel. Your visa is valid starting **one day prior to your Camp Arrival Date**; it remains valid for **30 days after your Camp Contract End Date**. You may book travel within the U.S. for this duration and no longer.

You must book your flight so that you arrive in the U.S. on the date and airport your camp has designated. You must upload or submit your arrival and departure travel itinerary to your international representative or CIEE. If your itinerary changes for any reason, you are required to inform CIEE, your international representative and your camp of these changes.

Plan Your Finances

When you enter the U.S., you are required to show proof of funds (at least US\$400 but recommended \$1,500) to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer. Only cash, bank statements, and traveler's checks are accepted as proof of funds. CIEE recommends that you bring more money, if possible, in case of emergencies. Make sure that you have enough money to cover all the expenses you will have before you receive your first paycheck. This might include toiletries, snacks, money for activities on your day off, etc.

Know Your Camp's Rules

All summer camps are designed to be safe and healthy environments for youth. Camps have strict policies against smoking, drinking of alcohol, and illegal drug use, as well as use of foul language and inappropriate activity. These policies are in place both before and after campers arrive. You may find some of these policies hard to get used to, but if you do not follow them once you arrive at camp, you will very likely be asked to leave immediately. It is important to prepare for these expectations prior to your arrival in the U.S. Review your camp policies in Beacon under "camp information" section and read your camp's staff handbook before traveling.

Visit Your Doctor and Dentist

Take Care of Your Health Before You Depart

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

Now is the time to:

- Set up and complete medical and dental appointments.

- 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.

Visit our [insurance website](#) for an in-depth explanation of your CIEE travel health insurance benefits.

Health Requirements for Your Camp

Camp Health Form

Your camp will share or send a medical health form. This form must be completed and signed by your physician. **Failure to bring the completed medical health form and proof of vaccination to camp may result in either dismissal from your camp or costly out-of-pocket doctor visits in the U.S.**

Immunizations

Certain immunizations are required due to increased health risks in the U.S. These include MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) and a current TB (tuberculosis) test. **We strongly recommend that you ask your camp for their specific immunization requirements and complete these prior to your departure.** Immunizations, x-rays, and other procedures are costly in the U.S. and your CIEE insurance will not cover them.

Please note: The immunizations required in the U.S. may differ from those available in your home country. If your camp's medical health form includes an immunization or vaccination that your doctor cannot provide, please contact your camp. If you are unable to get the immunizations required, you may be required to obtain this at your own expense after you arrive in the U.S. Alternatively, your placement might be cancelled.

SECTION 4 – TRAVELING TO CAMP

Packing

Follow the guidelines below to ensure you have a successful trip. Your camp will send you a packing list specific to your camp. Follow this list, you will have everything you need for a fun summer at camp!

A few important reminders:

- **Pack light.** Remember: There are laundry facilities you can use regularly throughout the summer.
- Pack for different kinds of weather.
- Check with your airline about luggage restrictions before you travel.

- Do not bring articles made from protected species or perishable foods such as cheese, fruit, or nuts.
- Do not bring alcohol. Alcohol is not allowed on any summer camp premises.
- Don't bring valuables. Camp is a communal living environment, so it is recommended that you don't bring items that are special to you.

Pack these items in your carry-on bag:

- All important documents.
- A change of clothes and anything else you might need in case your checked luggage is delayed.
- Any prescriptions medications. All prescription drugs should be clearly marked and accompanied by a prescription from your doctor.

Not sure what to pack? Check out our helpful [packing guide](#)!

Before Your Flight

Before you leave for the airport, make sure that you have your most important documents (a valid passport and your DS-2019) with you in your carry-on luggage. You will not be able to enter the U.S. without these. You will also receive an I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record) and a Customs Declaration Form (CF-6095) during your flight. These forms need to be completed before you land.

Plan how you will get from the airport to your camp or your temporary accommodation. If you are attending Meet & Greet, CIEE will arrange this transportation for you. Returning or direct participants should check to see if their camps arrange transportation. If your camp doesn't arrange transportation, search online for bus schedules or other public transportation options. Let your camp know what your plans are when they are finalized.

Create a travel checklist. Think through your entire journey, starting when you leave home up until your arrival at camp. Questions to consider:

- Do you have all important documents, money, and prescription drugs 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 camp?
- Do you have the phone numbers for your camp director, friends you may be traveling with, and CIEE (1-888-COUNCIL or 1-888-268-6245) with you?

Airport Arrival

Arrival

When arriving in the U.S., you must pass through immigration and customs. At immigration,

there may be one line for U.S. citizens and another for green card holders and other visitors. Make sure you join the line for visitors!

Immigration and Customs

The process of going through the customs and immigration area is straightforward, customary, and required for most people entering the U.S.

1. When you get off the plane, proceed immediately to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) area to gain admission to the U.S.
2. Tell the CBP officer that you are a J-1 exchange visitor and present your relevant travel documents. The CBP officer will ask you a variety of questions. Expect to be asked about the purpose and duration of your stay and your address while in the U.S.
3. It is important that you cooperate fully with the CBP officer by presenting all relevant travel documentation and answering all questions clearly and respectfully. You may be asked questions related to the information provided on your documents as well as questions about your citizenship, your trip, and the items you brought with you to the U.S.
4. All visa holders (with few exceptions) will be required to submit digital finger scans and a digital photograph.
5. Be sure that the CBP officer stamps your passport. This is your record of arrival, as well as a nice travel souvenir.
6. After passing through immigration, follow signs to baggage claim. Check the display board for your flight number and corresponding luggage carousel. Collect your luggage and continue to U.S. Customs.
7. At U.S. Customs, you may be asked to open your luggage and allow an official from U.S. Customs and Border Protection to investigate your belongings. The purpose of this search is to ensure that you have not brought any restricted items with you into the U.S.
8. Finally, you must present Customs Declaration Form (Form 6059B) to the customs official.

Please note: Many airports now have automated passport control, which involves going through many (though not all) of these steps at an electronic kiosk.

Visit the following websites for additional useful travel information:

- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)
- [U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service](#)
- [U.S. Transportation Security Administration](#)

Prepare for Travel Challenges

Travel Challenges

Here are some common travel issues and advice on how to handle them:

- **Missed connecting flight**

If you miss a connecting flight, find an agent with your airline and ask them 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 call or email your camp if you are going to arrive later than expected.

- **Lost luggage**

If your luggage is lost or delayed, go to the airline desk at the airport and file a lost luggage report. If you know the mailing address of where you will be staying in the U.S. that night, provide this address; if you don't, provide your camp's address so your bags can be delivered there. You should also call CIEE the next business day to report that your luggage was lost and file an insurance 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.

Getting to Camp

You will need to get specific travel instructions to get to your camp. These will be available in your Beacon placement under camp arrival information. Connect with your camp to confirm when you should plan to arrive at camp and the best transportation details on getting there.

SECTION 5 – FIRST DAYS IN THE UNITED STATES

MANDATORY: Register for SEVIS

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security keeps track of visitors with a system called SEVIS, or the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. **All J-1 visa holders must register with SEVIS as soon as they arrive in the U.S.** Once you arrive, you have **10 days** after the start date on your DS-2019 form to complete registration. Registering your program has implications on obtaining a social security number so it is important that you only register your program after arriving in the U. S. and not earlier than 10 days prior to your DS-2019 start date. **If you fail to register, you will have to return home immediately.**

To register, login to Beacon. Have the following information ready:

- DS-2019 number
- U.S. address where you will be living while on the program (e.g. your camp address)
- Email address
- U.S. phone number, if applicable

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.

MANDATORY: Apply for a Social Security Number

You Must Have a Social Security Number

Five days after registering with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), all participants must apply for and receive a Social Security number (SSN) by visiting their local Social Security office. Your camp will help you get to the Social Security office and set up an appointment. After you apply, it will take between four to six weeks to receive your Social Security card. You will need the number printed on this card to get paid, open a bank account, and file your tax return.

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.

Application Instructions

1. Apply for a Social Security number at least **five (5) business** days after completing SEVIS registration by visiting a local Social Security office. [Find one here.](#)
2. Bring the following documents with you:
 - a. DS-2019 form
 - b. Passport with J-1 Visa and your U.S. entry stamp
 - c. Your copy of the [“Dear Social Security Officer”](#) Letter
 - d. [SS-5 Application](#) for a Social Security Card
3. You will get a receipt upon completing your application. **Keep this important document safe.**

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. This step ensures your Social Security application is being processed without delay. 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.

Take Care of Paperwork at Camp

During your first day or two at camp, you will meet with your camp director or someone in the camp office to fill out important pay and tax documents. Be sure to take the following

documents with you:

- Passport with J-1 visa
- DS-2019 form
- Social Security application

You can start work and get paid once you submitted your application for Social Security number even if you haven't received your card yet. If your camp has questions, please remind them to get in touch with CIEE.

I-9 Form

An I-9 confirms your employment eligibility in the U.S. To complete:

1. **Only fill out Section 1.**
2. Provide your full name, camp address, date of birth, and Social Security number. If you do not have your Social Security number yet, provide it to your camp once you do.
3. Mark the box indicating that you are a non-resident alien authorized to work in the U.S.
4. Fill in your DS-2019 end date.
5. Sign and date the form.

Federal W-4 Form

This form will determine the federal tax that will be deducted from your paycheck. Your camp will help you make sure that you fill the form out correctly.

While participating in Camp Exchange USA, you are classified as a **non-resident alien**, which means that the standard instructions on the form do not apply.

Use the following instructions when completing the W-4 Form:

- Personal Allowances Worksheet: Ignore this section.
- On the bottom half of the W-4 Form:
 - **Box 1:** Enter your personal information, including U.S. camp address.
 - **Box 2:** Enter your Social Security number (SSN). If you have not been issued an SSN but have applied for one, write "applied for." Give your camp your SSN once you receive it.
 - **Box 3:** Check or fill in withholding as "single," regardless of actual marital status.
 - **Box 4:** Leave blank.
 - **Box 5:** Enter "1." There are no exceptions to this.
 - **Box 6:** Write "NR" to indicate non-resident alien status.
 - **Box 7:** Leave blank. Non-resident aliens cannot claim "exempt."
 - **Boxes 8-10:** Leave blank.
 - Sign and date the form.

State W-4 Form

This form determines the amount of state tax to be deducted from your paycheck. Although it may look different from the Federal W-4 Form, it asks for the same information and you should complete it as above.

Manage Your Pocket Money

Check with your camp to learn how often you will be paid. Some camps will pay you a portion of your pocket money every two weeks during the summer; others may pay all of your pocket money out at the end of the summer (unless you require an advance earlier on). Knowing when you will be paid will help you budget your spending money on days or nights off from camp. Make sure to save the bulk of your pocket money for travel after camp if you intend to stay on for your 30-day travel period. You are not eligible to work anywhere after camp, so budget wisely!

SECTION 6 – LIFE AT CAMP

Your Role as a Counselor

Your job at camp may be the hardest job you've ever had, but you can bet that it will be more than just a job. It will also be a unique personal experience. After all, working at a summer camp is nothing like working in an office.

Despite the personal nature of the camp experience and the friendships you are sure to develop, you are always expected to do your job, to act as a role model for children and fellow counselors and staff, and to do your best to always represent your home country. Because you are working with children in a communal living environment, it is crucial that you are aware of your influence and that you always act appropriately.

Key to Success

Remember that even though the camp environment may be informal, it is still your job. To succeed, you are expected to:

- **Be a Team Player.**
Working at camp is all about teamwork. Help your fellow counselors and staff, be flexible, and don't be afraid to ask for their help when you need it. Your camp may ask you to perform tasks outside of your job description; this is normal and will add to your work experience.
- **Be on Time.**
Although camp is a place filled with fun activities and games, every minute of the day is tightly scheduled. Being on time is essential!
- **Be Enthusiastic**
Have a positive attitude. You are working at camp to engage and empower campers, and to build up their confidence in every activity they do. This can be exhausting at times, so try not to let tiredness affect your mood. Summer will fly by, so make the most of it!

A Typical day at Camp

During your time in the U.S., your camp will be your home away from home—the place you eat, sleep, work, and relax. You will generally have one day off each week, which offers you the chance to leave campgrounds and explore the local community.

Each day at camp will be full of new experiences, challenges, and fun, but you can expect to have a schedule. While schedules vary from camp to camp, here is a sample schedule:

TIME	ACTIVITY
7 a.m.	WAKE UP
7:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST
8:15 a.m.	FLAG RAISING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
9 - 11:30 a.m.	MORNING ACTIVITIES (PAINTING, TENNIS, KAYAKING)
12 p.m.	LUNCH
1 p.m.	REST HOUR (YOU WILL NEED IT!)
2 - 3:15 p.m.	AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES (MUSIC, CANOEING, VOLLEYBALL)
3:15 p.m.	SNACK TIME
3:45 – 5 p.m.	TEAM SPORT ACTIVITY
6 p.m.	DINNER
7:15 p.m.	EVENING ACTIVITY (CAMPFIRE, TALENT SHOW)
9:30 p.m.	LIGHTS OUT

As you can see, days will be long; but they will also be filled with fun activities.

Adjusting to a New Culture

Adjusting to a new culture and way of life will likely take a few days. It can be both exciting and challenging; you're bound to experience both good and bad times during your stay at camp as well as during your travels in the U.S. after camp is finished. During times of difficulty, just remind yourself that cultural differences and new adventures are the reason we all love to travel.

While everyone responds differently to a new culture, there are typically four stages most people experience:

Stage One: Full of Excitement

Once you arrive at camp, you will probably feel excited. The camp atmosphere is special and packed with fun. During this stage, you'll go through camp staff training, which typically lasts around one week. You will also get to know the other American and international staff members. These first days at camp are typically busy; along with excitement, you may also feel

tired. Try to engage and stay involved to the best of your ability. This will help you forge lasting friendships and will ease your transition into life at camp.

Stage Two: The Newness Wears Off

As you adjust to daily life at camp, the sense of adventure may wear off. You may begin to find things different, strange, and even frustrating. The behavior of Americans might seem unusual and unpredictable. Camp activities will certainly be different, and you might not understand all the traditions and activities you are required to participate in. You might begin to dislike the culture, feel anxious, or want to be alone. It is helpful to recognize when this is happening and know that this phase usually doesn't last very long. Do what you can to identify these feelings, but don't put too much emphasis on them. Camp traditions, rituals, songs, skits, and activities are done to create a special environment for the campers; as a counselor, you are there to provide a memorable experience for the kids, which will, in turn, give you a unique understanding of a different culture.

Stage Three: Finding Your Routine

By the third stage, you'll have developed a routine and will feel more confident in dealing with your campers, fellow staff, and American culture, as well as the subculture within camp life. For some participants, this might take place during staff training; for others, it might not come until the campers have arrived. Once the values and characteristics of people in the U.S. become more familiar to you, day-to-day life will become easier. This is your true adjustment to camp life!

Stage Four: Making it Your Own

In the last stage, you will feel at home in the daily regimen at camp. You'll know your daily schedule of activities and function well in it. You might be surprised by your enthusiasm and realize that you prefer certain American cultural traits as well as camp "ways" over your own. Perhaps you'll leave the U.S. and adopt certain behaviors that appeal to you. This is what cultural exchange is all about!

Remember: CIEE Is Always Here to Help!

No matter what stage you are experiencing, remember that you are never alone. You can always talk to other counselors or members of camp staff. You can also contact CIEE at any time to talk about the feelings you are experiencing. We are happy to help you or your Camp Exchange USA friends any time.

Camper Counselor Contact & Conduct

As campers build relationships with their counselors, they may begin to feel more comfortable with physical interaction, such as sitting in laps, climbing on counselors, piggybacks, holding hands, roughhousing, etc. It is important for you and the camper to be aware of the limitations and proper context of these interactions.

When touching campers, the following guidelines should be followed:

- If using physical touch when interacting with a camper, the hand, head, shoulder, or upper back- a side hug or pat on the head/shoulder is often considered appropriate.
- A counselor should not touch a child against their will, unless in the case of clear and present danger of the camper.
- Counselors should never touch a child if discomfort is expressed (verbally or nonverbally)
- Camper counselor contact should only be made in the company of other adults.
- Campers should not be touched in a place on the camper's body that is typically covered by a bathing suit unless for a clear medical necessity and with the supervision of another adult staff member.

Learn more about appropriate interactions with your campers and fellow staff [here](#).

Challenges at Camp

We are confident you will have a great time at camp! However, you will be in a new country and in a new environment; challenges such as homesickness or culture shock may arise. The good news is that most challenges have a solution!

Homesickness and culture shock:

Almost everyone at camp will be adjusting to camp life and being away from home. The first two weeks are the hardest, so give yourself time. Do your best to engage in life at camp. Walk around and become familiar with camp grounds to feel more comfortable with the environment. Speak to other counselors, as they may be experiencing the similar issues. Try to keep yourself busy and involve yourself in activities and camp routines.

You are considering quitting:

You and CIEE have both put much time and effort into getting you to camp; as such, we expect every participant to work hard to fulfill their camp contract. We understand that living in a small community with long days can be a challenge, but we know from experience that if you have an open mind and are willing to work through challenges, you will love camp.

It is difficult to get a second placement during the summer, so quitting means you will likely have to return home early. **Talk to CIEE and your camp director if you are unhappy with your**

placement. That way we can understand the reason and help you and your camp address it. If any issues come up, please reach out to CIEE. We will try to resolve all issues as soon as possible.

You get fired:

If you don't perform your job duties or break camp rules, you will get fired. Common reasons for getting fired include poor performance, alcohol consumption, smoking or use of illegal substances on camp premises, returning to camp drunk, and inappropriate behavior toward children.

If you are fired, you will need to leave camp immediately – often without being able to say goodbye to your friends or co-counselors. While this may seem harsh, camp directors want to avoid disruption and upsetting campers. **Call CIEE immediately** and we will work with you to ensure that you understand the reason for your dismissal, that you have received pro-rated pocket money for the time you have worked, and that you have a plan for transportation to return home.

Depending on the reason for your firing, you may be responsible for paying non-complete fees for not fulfilling your contract obligations. As outlined in Participant Terms & Conditions, the non-completion fee will be assessed at \$15 USD for each day not yet worked (based on a standard 63-day contract).

Issues with campers or co-counselors:

If you have issues with campers or your co-counselors, just remember: Your camp director or manager is there to support you every step of the way. Speak with them. They know and understand that camp counselors (and campers, for that matter!) may experience homesickness; they understand that caring for children that are not your own can be challenging; and they are experienced in helping counselors work through their differences.

Contacting friends and family back home:

Phone service and internet are not always readily available at camp. If you need to contact someone back home, speak with your camp director. They will help you find an appropriate time to use the camp's office phone or a staff computer.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: You can contact CIEE's support staff any time at 1-888-268-6245.

Extending, Changing, or Ending Your Program Early

Whether you want to extend your program, change your host organization, or end your program early, know that CIEE is here to help.

Program Extensions

If your camp is interested in extending your program it may be possible to adjust your program end date. To qualify for a program extension, you must:

- Remain with your host camp
- Not exceed the maximum program length (4 months)

Please note: It is not possible to extend your program after your DS-2019 expires.

To apply for a program extension:

- Have your camp contact CIEE **at least two weeks before** your DS-2019 end date and **no later than July 30th**.
- Once CIEE receives your extension application, our review will take up to 15 business days.
- If your extension is approved, CIEE will send a new DS-2019 form to your camp.

Ending your program early

If an unexpected circumstance or event requires you to end your position before your program ends, please tell your supervisor at camp as soon as you confirm your plans.

Contact CIEE at 1-888-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245) or contact@cieee.org and provide:

- brief explanation of your reasons for leaving
- the date you will leave the U.S.
- summary of your departure flight details
- your DS-2019 number
- your supervisor's full name and telephone number

Ending your program will involve the following steps:

- The participant and camp must agree to a last day. You should give two weeks' notice (if possible).
- Your DS-2019 will be shortened to reflect your last day at camp.
- CIEE insurance will be canceled one day after you depart from the U.S.

IMPORTANT: Non-Completion Fee

As detailed in terms & conditions of CIEE Camp Exchange USA, should you choose to depart before the contract end date or are fired from camp, CIEE reserves the right to collect a pro-rated portion of the program cost from you. This is called the non-completion fee. The non-completion fee will be assessed at **\$15 USD for each day not yet worked** (based for all counselors on a standard 63-day contract). This amount will be due directly to CIEE or its designated international representative.

Please note that a non-completion fee will not be assessed in the event of an early departure due to illness or family emergency.

SECTION 7 – LAWS & SAFETY

Emergencies

In case of a life-threatening event, call 911 right away. Police, medical, and/or fire crews will come quickly to your location. CIEE is also available 24 hours a day for emergency situations. Call us at 1-888-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245). We can help if:

- You are the victim of a crime.
- You are arrested.
- You are involved in a car accident.
- You have a serious injury or another medical emergency.
- You are in a situation that involves police, immigration, or media coverage.
- You experience emotional distress or need urgent counseling for any reason.

For concerns that are unrelated to medical treatment or medical emergencies, you may contact CIEE during office hours or send us an [email](#).

Example issues include:

- Loss of your DS-2019
- Loss of your passport
- Homesickness
- Social Security and/or tax problems
- You're the victim of theft or a non-violent crime
- You need basic legal information
- Other concerns related to camp

MANDATORY: Follow All Program Rules

If you do not follow CIEE program rules, you are at risk of CIEE **shortening** your Camp Exchange USA program. Shortening your program means that your CIEE sponsorship and insurance will be ended. You will no longer be legally allowed to work. If you stay in the U.S. after your program has been shortened, you will be here at your own risk and will not have insurance.

Your program may be shortened if:

- You fail to respond to CIEE communication (check your email frequently!)
- You change or leave your placement without approval from CIEE
- You break any local, state, or federal laws

For more serious violations, your status may be **terminated**. That means both your sponsorship and insurance will be ended. You will no longer be legally allowed to stay in the U.S. In

addition, you will be required to return home immediately (unless you are being held by officials pending a trial in the U.S. court system). Being terminated will have a negative impact on future attempts to obtain a U.S. visa or enter the United States.

Your status may be terminated if:

- You are arrested for a serious crime in the United States
- You do not register for SEVIS within 10 days of your arrival in the United States
- You work at a job without CIEE approval

CIEE reserves the right to terminate or withdraw program sponsorship in cases of serious crime or visa revocation.

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.

Alcohol and Legal Drinking Age

You must be 21 years old to legally drink alcohol in the U.S. You could be arrested or fined if you are under 21 and found with alcohol. Do not drive if you have been drinking alcohol and do not get in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Please note: Even if you are over 21 years of age, **drinking or being under the influence of alcohol on camp premises, whether you are on duty or off, will result in being fired**. If you are fired from camp, you may be responsible for paying a program non-completion fee and you will be required to leave the U.S. immediately.

Tobacco Products

You must be 21 years old to purchase tobacco products U.S. This includes products like cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, hookah tobacco, cigars, pipe tobacco, and vaping products that contain nicotine. A photo ID will be required to make the purchase of any tobacco products to verify you are 21 years or older.

Drugs

All unlawful use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs is prohibited in the United States. If you are caught with illegal drugs, you could be arrested and charged with a crime. The use or possession of marijuana is a violation of federal law despite being legalized at the state level in some parts of the U.S. The consumption of marijuana in any way (smoking, edibles, etc.) is not legal in the U.S. and accidents or illness that occur under the influence of drugs and alcohol is not covered under your program insurance.

Shoplifting

Stealing things from stores, also known as shoplifting, is illegal and could result in jail time or criminal charges.

Breaking laws or being arrested can affect your employment as well as your ability to participate in CIEE Camp Exchange USA. If you have questions or issues, please contact CIEE immediately.

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


Your Legal Rights

CIEE Camp Exchange USA participants have the same legal rights as U.S. citizens if accused of a crime:

- You have the right to know the crime you are being charged with.
- You have the right to remain silent.
- You have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
- No person accused of a crime may be forced to confess or give evidence against themselves.
- You have the right not to be searched unless the police officer has a warrant.
- You have the right to be represented by a lawyer and to be provided with a lawyer if you cannot afford to hire one.
- You have the right to be released from jail upon posting a bail bond (money paid to ensure that the accused person reports for trial).
- You have the right to a fair trial conducted according to all the rules of evidence and court procedure.

Please note: In the U.S., you are presumed innocent until proven guilty. You do not have to prove your innocence; rather, the prosecution must prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ARRESTED:

It is important to cooperate with police officers and be respectful at all times. Never attempt to flee, resist, or argue with the police. If you are arrested, call CIEE as soon as possible: 1-888-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245 ). If you are not allowed a call, request that your legal counsel contact CIEE on your behalf.

Let us know the name and contact information of the jail where you are being held, what the charges are against you, and the date of your court hearing. CIEE will then be in contact with your camp, your international representative, and other parties as necessary. Depending on the situation, this may include your family and/or your embassy.

If you are arrested, the following may happen:

- You may fill out paperwork.

- You could be charged with a crime and fingerprinted.
- You could be held in jail until bail is posted.
- You could see a court judge who hears preliminary details and either drops the charges against you or sets a court date within the following 30 days. Sometimes court dates can be set sooner, especially if you remind the judge that you are only legally able to stay in the U.S. until your expected date of departure (program end date).
- Depending on the severity of the charge(s), you may have to stay in the area in order to attend your court date.

IF YOU ARE FOUND GUILTY OF A CRIME:

Possible penalties include:

- Monetary fine
- Community service
- Jail time
- Deportation

Breaking a U.S. law or being arrested may result in the end of your camp placement as well as your CIEE Camp Exchange USA program. It is important to follow our safety tips and it is imperative that you abide by all U.S. and local laws while you are on the program.

If you have questions or issues, please [contact CIEE](#) immediately.

Bicycle Safety

Biking can be dangerous. 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.

For information on bicycle safety, proper hand signals, and more, check out the following websites:

www.BicycleSafe.com

www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles

Water Safety

Open water swimming is different from swimming in a pool. Your camp will provide thorough training on waterfront safety but here are some general 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.**

Find more information on water and beach safety, visit this [link](#).

Extreme Weather

During the summer months, many parts of the country experience extreme weather. This can include severe hot weather, flash floods, lightning, or fierce winds that can be dangerous if you do not take safe measures to protect yourself. If your camp is in an area with extreme weather, it is important to practice common sense. Here are some helpful tips.

Hot weather: Always apply sunscreen when outside and do not forget to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

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

For more information on how to stay safe in extreme weather, visit this [link](#). Also 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. Responding to CIEE's emails in cases of extreme weather is required.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

CIEE works with America's best summer camps. Still, problems may arise at work. For example, you may think a camp director, or a supervisor treats you unfairly. If this happens, talk with your supervisor calmly, professionally, and constructively. If you need advice or guidance, know that CIEE is always here to help.

Call CIEE immediately at 1-888-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245) if you experience any of the following:

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination is when you are treated unfairly because of your race. Race discrimination does not need to be deliberate. Someone may be discriminating against you without realizing it or meaning to, but this might still count as discrimination. This is a serious matter in the United States and there are laws in place to protect you.

Racial harassment can include any unwanted conduct related to an employee's race, especially when it violates their dignity or creates an offensive environment.

Racial discrimination may include:

- Treating an employee or coworker differently based on race
- Making inappropriate comments or jokes about an employee's race
- Referring to employees of a certain race in slang terms or code words
- Unfairly disciplining certain employees on the basis of race

By no means is this an exhaustive list. Talk to your camp director and call CIEE if you think you have suffered race discrimination!

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 either a woman or a man or could be of the same sex.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Sexually suggestive notes or emails
- 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 always treat people with

respect and dignity. Expect the same treatment in return. For more facts about sexual harassment, please click [here](#).

IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL OR RACIAL HARASSMENT

If you are being harassed, the first thing you should do is tell your harasser that their behavior is unwelcome. If their behavior does not stop immediately, contact your supervisor or your camp director. You may feel afraid or ashamed that reporting a harassment incident will put your placement at risk. It is illegal to punish anyone who reports sexual harassment, and your employer does not have the authority to cancel your visa.

In either case, you should always contact CIEE at 1-888-COUNCIL (1-888-268-6245). We will work to resolve the situation.

SECTION 8 – HEALTH AND CIEE INSURANCE

CIEE Health Insurance

Health insurance is included as a Camp Exchange USA program benefit. When you see a doctor, you will be asked for your insurance identification (ID) card. Please note: When visiting a doctor in the U.S., you may have to pay a small fee called a copayment or copay. To see the approximate costs of copays, review your [Summary of Benefits](#).

What's Not Covered by CIEE Health Insurance

Your CIEE insurance does not cover:

- Routine examinations, vaccinations, regular dental treatment, or vision services. (Take care of these needs before you travel!)
- Expenses related to pre-existing conditions. If you have a chronic disease such as asthma or diabetes, make sure your health insurance at home covers you for costs related to these conditions while you're in the U.S.

If you require medical attention that is not emergency care, contact CIEE as soon as possible. We can help you find a doctor who accepts your insurance. You can also use our [online doctor locator](#).

Have a question about insurance?

Call: 1-888-COUNCIL(1-888-268-6245)

Email: insurance@cieee.org

Visit Online: www.cieee.org/insurance

If You Need Medical Attention

If you are at camp, seek out the camp nurse or doctor first. Your camp will have emergency procedures and can help if you need treatment.

If you are not at camp and experience a non-emergency medical situation, the best place to go is a walk-in clinic or urgent care center. The benefits of such facilities include:

- Convenient hours. They are usually open in the evenings and on weekends.
- The wait is usually much shorter than in emergency rooms.
- The cost is usually less than visiting an emergency room.
- You do not have to make an appointment or have a relationship with the doctor to be seen and treated.
- Please note: If you go to the emergency room for a non-emergency medical situation, you will most likely have to wait several hours to be seen and could incur a high cost – much higher than a co-payment at a walk-in clinic or urgent care center.

We hope you won't experience a medical emergency in the U.S., but we're here to help if you do. Please call **1-888-COUNCIL** as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. You may also want to review our [healthcare and insurance guide](#).

SECTION 9 – AFTER CAMP

Before You Leave Camp

Before your last day at camp, give your contact information (address, email, phone number, etc.) to your camp so they can mail you your **W-2 Form** for tax purposes. A W-2 Form is the form that your employer sends to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at the end of the year, showing how much they paid you and the amount, if any, in taxes that were withheld.

Other important reminders:

- Request your **final paycheck** before returning home. If this is not possible, ask your camp when you can expect to receive it and how you will receive payment (paycheck, direct deposit, etc.).
- If you do not have your **Social Security number** one month before your DS-2019 ends, visit a local Social Security office and check the status of your application. It does not have to be the same office where you originally applied for your Social Security number.
- Keep **your camp's information** (company name, address, camp director's name, phone number, email, etc.) in case there is any reason to contact them from your home country after your program is over.
- If you want to return to the same camp next year, **speak to your camp director about returning**. Talking in person is one of the best ways to make future plans.

- Ask your camp to write a letter of recommendation for you. When you start to look for jobs in your home country or elsewhere, this letter is a great way to confirm your qualifications.

SECTION 10 – TRAVELING IN AMERICA, AND RETURNING HOME

Regulations for Your J-1 Visa

A few words of wisdom about U.S. visas

Please remember that the J-1 visa programs are designed to foster global understanding through cultural exchange. All J-1 visa exchange visitors are expected to return to their home country upon completion of their program in order to share their exchange experiences.

It might seem enticing to extend your stay or try to switch to a different visa. But remember that if you do not go home on time, you run the risk of being barred from entry to the U.S. in the future. Don't ruin your credibility with the U.S. authorities.

What Is 'Unlawful Presence'? And Why You Need to Know!

'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. This can severely limit your ability to return to the U.S. in the future.

Unlawful Presence Policy

USCIS policy states that unlawful presence will automatically begin to accrue if you stay longer than your 30-day grace period. You will not necessarily receive notice that you have violated your status or started to accrue unlawful presence.

With this in mind, here are a few tips to ensure you don't overstay your grace period.

Know Your Program End Date

You are permitted to stay in the U.S. for up to 30 days after the program end date listed on your DS-2019 form. As such, every J-1 exchange visitor should **confirm this date and plan to leave no later than 30 days afterward**. If you fail to do so, you will start accruing unlawful presence.

Follow the Rules and Avoid Prohibited Activities

Unlawful presence will also begin to accrue the day after a participant leaves their program early or engages in an unauthorized activity. Please review the CIEE website, the online orientation, and your program application terms and conditions for a full list of unauthorized activities.

More Sights, More Opportunities for Discovery

Planning Your Adventures

One of the great things about CIEE Camp Exchange USA is the opportunity to explore this amazing country on your own. Go anywhere you like! Your only limits are your imagination, your budget, and the date you need to return to your home country.

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

Please note: If you are a student, you must go home in time to start school.

Check out these [CIEE travel tips](#).

Taxes

Filing Your Tax Return

You are required to pay federal, state, and sometimes local taxes. You are considered **non-resident aliens** for the purposes of US taxes and you will need to [file a Form 1040NR](#), which you can e-file or mail.

A few important notes on filing your tax return:

- **Use a reputable company.** There are many tax service providers. Some are designed for J-1 visa holders, and some are not. The cheapest option is not always the best. Be sure to check the provider's credentials carefully. Tax forms are complicated, and you should only trust a qualified professional to complete your forms. If they make a mistake or file the forms incorrectly, you could be held responsible. You must file as a nonresident.
- [Sprintax](#) is a company that specializes in online U.S. tax preparation solutions for J-1 visa exchange visitors like you.
- **DO NOT** use online tax preparation software such as TurboTax. These products are generally not designed for your situation and using them could cause you to file your tax return incorrectly.
- Be cautious of individuals or companies offering to file your tax returns. Read the information provided by the IRS on warning signs of “[ghost preparers](#)” (individuals who file the returns but refuse to sign as the tax preparer). Also review the IRS information on [common tax scams and how to report them](#).

Talk to your international representative to get more information and read information on our website about [filing a U.S. tax return](#).

Tell Us What You Think

Shortly after you return home, you will receive an email from CIEE asking you to complete an online evaluation of your CIEE Camp Exchange USA program experience. Participant evaluations are used by CIEE to update and improve the CIEE Camp Exchange USA program and the services we offer.

In your evaluation, we ask you to tell us about your job as a counselor, your accommodations, and your experience with CIEE as your sponsor. We will also give you the chance to tell us your camp counselor story. There are some great prizes for the participants who submit the most interesting stories!

In order to make sure you receive this evaluation, be sure CIEE has your correct email address. Please also add contact@cieee.org to your email account's "safe sender" list.

Staying Connected with CIEE

Join the CIEE Alumni Global Network

When you complete your CIEE Camp Exchange USA program, you'll be one of more than 300,000 students who have enriched their lives by experiencing a different culture. Make the most of that fact by joining the [CIEE Alumni Global Network](#), a diverse and dynamic community that makes it easy to connect with active alumni in nearly every country on Earth.

You should also keep in touch with us by following CIEE on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)! Tag your photos #cieecamp so that we can see your adventures this summer!

Please note: CIEE is also looking for guest bloggers to share their favorite camp stories and experiences throughout the summer months and beyond. We would love to hear from you. If you're interested in participating, please direct message us on Instagram.