

# AIFS *Trainee*

TRAINEE PARTICIPANT

PRE-ARRIVAL INFO

# AIFS Trainee

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# SECTION 1

## PROGRAM BASICS

## Purpose of the Trainee Program

Training programs are designed to enable foreign professionals to travel to the U.S. and gain exposure to U.S. culture as well as receiving training in their occupational field. The trainee program is both educational and fun. Each trainee program will be unique based on employer, training plan, housing location, and program length.

## Program Activities and Components

This program will give you first-hand experience of the American workplace whilst developing your skills and expertise in your academic/occupational field. You will receive structured and guided training from your organisation through a detailed training plan which will be fully agreed prior to your departure. This will be designed to build upon your existing skills and teach new ones which will enhance your future career in your home country. You will also be working directly with American colleagues so you can fully immerse yourself in American working practices. After you have completed your training plan and time with your host employer, you will have up to 30 days of free time to enjoy some travel and holiday in the U.S.

Ultimately during your AIFS Trainee program you should develop your work-based skills, experience the workplace and lifestyle/culture in the U.S. and actively engage with American's both within your organisation and throughout your time in the country to gain a greater understanding. We are confident that through productive dialogue and interpersonal relationships you will return to your home country to share a positive view of the USA and its citizens.

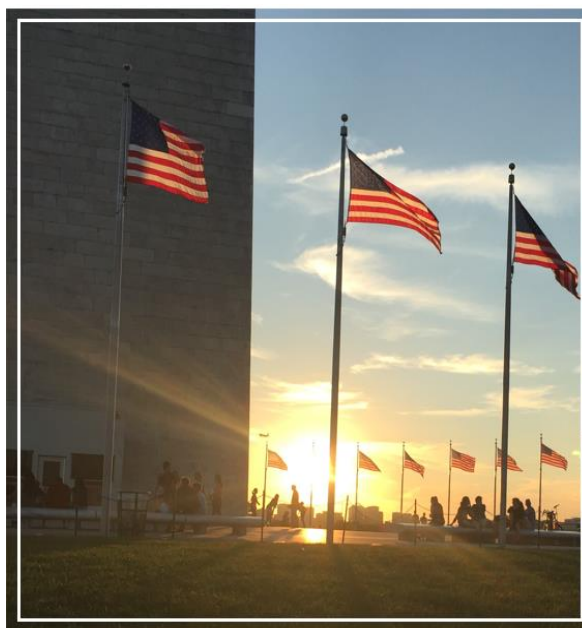
## Cultural Goals

The trainee program is first and foremost a cultural exchange program. We are required by the US Department of State Exchange Visitor Program Regulations to operate in the spirit and intent of the legislation that created the J-1 visa. The primary goals of the program are:

- Mutual understanding
- Personal growth
- Cultural advancement
- Global perspective

Tell us if at any time you feel that the cultural exchange component may be lacking for you. Likewise, as you forge friendships, gain valuable work and life experience, learn about the world and grow personally please let us know about it.

That's what the program is all about! **Email us here: [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com)**



# SECTION 2

## Application Process and Program Fees

## Application Process

By now you are probably well underway with this but please review the timeline below so you know your next steps and what to expect:

- Complete online application form detailing work and education history
- Make your payment and attend a video interview with AIFS to talk about your placement, motivation for the program and applicable work and education experience
- Your Training Plans will now be started by your employer with input from you and guidance from AIFS
- Follow the instructions received from AIFS to submit your documents – Police Check, references and medical form
- Once all of the above are complete it's time to apply for your J1 Visa! You will receive your forms from AIFS and we will help you book into a suitable appointment at the Embassy/Consulate nearest to you
- Prepare for your J1 visa interview and gather all of your supporting documents
- Once complete and your visa has been issued, it's time to book your flights in coordination with employer, then it's time to officially start your Trainee Program in the U.S!



AIFS will be in touch via email and calls with regular updates and check ins, if you have any questions at any stage about your next steps then please do not hesitate to contact us at [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com)

## Fees paid to AIFS

We have been designated a J1 visa sponsor by the US Department of State, and we take the roles and responsibilities of this designation very seriously. We work hard to ensure we maintain the standards of customer service and support that are outlined in the visa regulations, and while we aim to make your placement process as smooth as possible there is a lot going on behind the scenes! Payment is taken by AIFS and you may see deductions for this outlined in any Payment documentation received from your Employer.

## Schedule of Fees to AIFS

### PAY TO AIFS

**Application Fee** It's time for our office to process your application! This includes completing your interview, confirming your references and approving your Police Check and medical form.

<p>\$300*</p> <p><b>*YOU'LL RECEIVE \$100 OFF IF YOU PARTICIPATED IN AN AIFS PROGRAM WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS</b></p>	<p>This instalment gets our team working on your application and confirms your intent for the program!</p>
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INCLUDED

**Group International Accident & Sickness coverage** All participants are included in the mandatory Group International Accident & Sickness coverage arranged for the American Institute for Foreign Study, Inc while they are on the program.

<p>\$0</p>	<p>Please note: Pre-existing conditions are not covered and you may need to purchase additional coverage at your own cost to meet your individual needs.</p>
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**Fees paid to Third Parties**

It's important as you are considering the program to factor in all costs, including those to Third Party entities. This includes:

PAY TO POLICE CHECK AUTHORITY

**Police Check** After you have completed your interview you will be given instructions of how to apply for your Police Check. If you have successfully participated on an AIFS program within the last 12 months and have a Police Check from this, we may be able to accept this.

<p>\$70</p>	<p>This is paid directly to the Police Check Authority after you've passed your interview and is non-refundable! For U.K. participants it is approximately USD 70</p>
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PAY TO YOUR GP

**Medical Form** Everyone is required to submit an AIFS medical form, which needs to be completed by a General Practitioner.

<p>VARIES</p>	<p>This fee is non-refundable! We'd love to tell you exactly how much this is going to cost but it completely depends on your doctor.</p>
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### PAY TO AMERICAN EMBASSY

**Visa** Once you have completed the application process, submitted your documents and your Training Plan has been agreed, you will receive your all-important Sponsorship/Visa Paperwork from AIFS which will include detailed instructions about how to book a suitable visa appointment at an appropriate American Embassy.

\$160	\$160 USD, fee is set by and paid directly to the American Embassy. This fee is subject to change and is non-refundable.
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### PAY TO TRAVEL AGENT

**Your Flights** Once you have your visa, your placement and Training Plan have been confirmed and your start date is agreed, you will need to book your return flights to the USA!

VARIES	Please speak with your Employer to confirm arrival date time and location.
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### Other costs to consider

You are responsible for your living and travel costs while in the US. You may receive some meals while with your host employer and this will have been confirmed with you prior to your arrival. You should expect to cover any social events, trips on days off, food costs and other general living costs and will need to budget accordingly. See your Participant Orientation document for further budget details.

# SECTION 3

Training Plan, Employer  
Responsibilities and Your Rights

## Training Plan and Phases

Your Training Plan (DS-7002 Form) is one of the most important components of your AIFS Trainee Program as it details the training you will undertake whilst with your organisation. This plan is created by you, your employer and AIFS.

This plan details your supervisors, training, evaluations, skills learned and cultural opportunities and must be adhered to throughout your entire program.

It is divided into a number of phases dependent on the duration of your program, each phase will cover a different area of training and it is designed so you have as much exposure to different areas of your organisation.

It is important that you work with your employer to carry out the items on your training plan. AIFS is here with regular check-in's and mid and final evaluations to support you in your training efforts while in the US.

## Your Host Employer

Once you have confirmed your placement with your employer, your Training Plan will start to be designed. This is a collaborative effort and you should make sure that you are in regular contact with your employer to ensure the outcomes and training you hope to achieve are included. You should also confirm your job duties, number of work hours, payment due, other compensation and benefits (transport and accommodation) and any deductions that may be made for this. On completion it is important that you read through your Training Plan and any other documents received by your employer and AIFS in detail so are fully aware of what to expect. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact either AIFS or your host employer.

**Working Hours** - each placement is different, but it is important to know what your working hours are expected to be each week. This information can be found by checking your DS-7002 or simply asking your potential host employer during your interview process. Trainee programs must be full-time (minimum of 32 hours a week), this is a requirement set by AIFS and the Department of State and all host employers

U.S. Department of State				OMB APPROVAL NO. 1495-0170 EXPIRATION DATE: 05-31-2024 ESTIMATED BURDEN: 1.5 hours	
<b>TRAINING/INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT PLAN</b>					
<b>SECTION 1: ADDITIONAL EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION</b>					
Trainee/Intern Name (Surname/Primary, Given Name(s) (must match passport name))				E-mail Address	
Trainee		Example		exampletrainee@example.com	
Program Sponsor			Program Category		
American Institute For Foreign Study - Trainee Program			Trainee		
Occupational Category		Current Field of Study/Profession		Experience in Field (number of years)	
Education, Social Sciences, L		Education		5	
Type of Degree or Certificate		Date Awarded (mm-dd-yyyy) or Expected		Training/Internship Dates (mm-dd-yyyy)	
Bachelor's		XX-XX-XXXX		From XX-XX-XXXX To XX-XX-XXXX	
<b>SECTION 2: HOST ORGANIZATION INFORMATION</b>					
Organization Name			Phase Site Address		Suite
Example Company			123 Main St.		
City		State	ZIP Code	Website URL	
City		ST	Zip	www.ExampleCompany.com	
Employer ID Number (EIN)		Exchange Visitor Hours Per Week		Stipend <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, how much? \$200 per week	
X-XXXXXX		20-40		Non-Monetary Compensation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, value? \$300 per week	
Workers' Compensation Policy				Does your Workers' Compensation policy cover exchange visitors? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, exempt <input type="checkbox"/> No, but equivalent coverage	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, Name of Carrier				Example Carrier	
Number of FT Employees Onsite at Location		Annual Revenue			
X-X		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$0 to \$3 Million <input type="checkbox"/> \$3 Million to \$10 Million <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Million to \$25 Million <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Million or More			
<b>SECTION 3: CERTIFICATIONS</b>					
Trainee/Intern - I certify that:					
1. I have reviewed, understand, and will follow this Training/Internship Placement Plan (TIIPP).					
2. I am entering into this Exchange Visitor Program in order to participate as a Trainee or Intern as delineated in this TIIPP and not simply to engage in labor or work within the United States.					
3. I understand that the intent of the Exchange Visitor Program is to allow me to enhance my skills and gain exposure to U.S. culture and business in a way that will be useful to me when I return home upon completion of my program.					
4. I understand that my internship/training will take place only at the organization listed on this TIIPP and that working at another organization while on the Exchange Visitor Program is prohibited.					
5. I will contact the Sponsor at the earliest available opportunity regarding any concerns, changes in, or deviations from this TIIPP.					
6. I will respond in a timely way to all inquiries and monitoring activities of my sponsor.					
7. I will follow all of my sponsor's guidelines required for my participation in my program.					
8. I will contact the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the earliest possible opportunity if I believe that my sponsor or supervisor (as set forth on page 3, section 4), is not providing me with a legitimate internship or training, as delineated on my TIIPP; and					
9. I declare and affirm under penalty of perjury that the statements and information made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. The law provides severe penalties for knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact, or using any false document in the submission of this form.					
Printed Name of Trainee/Intern: Example Trainee				Date (mm-dd-yyyy) XX-XX-XXXX	
Signature of Trainee/Intern: _____					

DS-7002  
12-2020

Page 1 of 5

must follow this. AIFS limit work hours for applicants to a maximum of 55 hours per week. No more than 20% of all duties must be clerical in nature.

**Compensation and Benefits** - just as hours may differ for each participant, so will compensation and benefits. Knowing what your host employer is paying you, how often that is, and any other benefits are crucial to starting your placement off on the right track. Your Training Plan (DS-7002) has the amounts listed for both a stipend and non-monetary compensation. Ask during your employer interview process what is included in both. All host employers must abide by federal, state, and local wage and overtime laws. These laws can vary based on the type of employers and location they are in. Reviewing the DS-7002 and speaking candidly about your compensation to your host employer before accepting a placement is necessary to avoid surprises on your program.

**Deductions** - host employers (and all companies in the US) often are able to make deductions on wages. An employer may only make a deduction that is either: legally authorized; or voluntarily authorized by the employee and for the employee, not the employer's, benefit. Some of the types of deductions which are authorized under federal and state law include: meals, housing and transportation, debts owed the employer, debts owed to third parties (through the process of garnishment); debts owed to the government (such as back taxes and federally-subsidized student loans), child support and alimony. An employer is allowed to deduct certain items from an employee's paycheck if the employee has voluntarily authorized the deduction in writing. Examples of such deductible items are union dues, charitable contributions, or insurance premiums. These deductions are allowed even if the amount received by the employee after deduction falls below the minimum wage. It is important to ask your employer what deductions to expect from your pay. Based on your employment setup and location, deductions can vary greatly.

**Accommodation** - a majority of AIFS participants will have room included on site within their compensation. If room & board is not provided on site, host employers will be required to supplement each participant's income to assist with adequate housing nearby.

For those participants without room & board included, it is important that you secure a safe and suitable location to live for the duration of your stay in the US. Your employer will confirm your accommodation details and if you will need to locate housing. Host employers may be able to suggest local areas to stay. Below are some suggested sites to find housing throughout the US:

- <https://www.nestpick.com/>
- <https://4stay.com/>
- <https://www.airbnb.com/>
- <https://www.apartmentsearch.com/>
- <https://www.homestay.com/>

- [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) - There is usually a local page for Apartments/Rooms to Rent in (Insert City name here)

Housing costs will vary based on your location and type of accommodation. Please keep in mind that all costs for trips, vacations, time off, most meals, sightseeing, insurance co-pays, most transportation, and entertainment will your responsibility. If securing your own accommodation, please consider the extra costs to living in the US.

- Will your landlord require a deposit? Often this could be \$1,000-\$3,000 based on the city.
- How much will utilities be? Electricity, Water, Gas, Internet could easily be up to \$300 per month depending on your location.
- How much will food cost? Again, based on your location in the US, these costs could vary greatly. Budget at least \$100-\$150 per week on meals.
- How will I get to my employer each day? Transportation costs are important to keep in mind. Insuring a car or paying for a monthly bus ticket could easily add \$100-\$300, per month.

It is important that you spend time researching the area that you will be living in to fully understand the potential costs involved. The health, safety, and welfare of AIFS applicants is our priority. Ensuring our participants are staying in adequate housing is a key component to achieving this. Our dedicated team members are always available before and throughout your program to assist you.

### **Employer Responsibilities**

Just as you have signed an agreement with AIFS, your host employer has also agreed to adhere to AIFS and U.S. Department of State regulations governing your program. These include:

- Providing continuous on-site supervision and mentoring of trainees by experienced and knowledgeable staff;
- Complying with all relevant State and local Department of Labor Regulations governing minimum wage and overtime.
- Ensuring that trainees obtain skills, knowledge, and competencies through structured and guided activities such as classroom training, seminars, rotation through several departments, on-the-job training, attendance at conferences, and similar learning activities, as appropriate in specific circumstances;
- Having sufficient resources, plant, equipment, and trained personnel available to provide the specified training program
- Assigning duties to each participant that are consistent with skills and, where possible, with expressed desires. To provide competent supervision of the participant and the performance of duties
- Providing orientation including information about rules, work schedules, time-off policies, regulations and education regarding pertinent cultural differences and the definition of, and penalties for, sexual and physical abuse of children;

- Cooperating with AIFS to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for cultural exchange, visits to places of cultural interest, and engagement with American people both outside and within the Host Employer property.
- Ensuring that all participants regularly work with and alongside Americans;

This Trainee program is intended as a true partnership between you, your host employer, AIFS, and the Department of State. If you do have any issues or concerns whilst participating in your program then please contact AIFS by calling: 1-866-222-2074 or emailing: [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com)

## **Your Rights**

We are confident that you will have a pleasant and rewarding stay while in the US. If you should encounter any problems, however, know that you have rights and can get help. The pamphlet linked below informs you of your rights as a non-immigrant visa holder in certain employment- and education-based categories. The U.S. government created this pamphlet at the prompting of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (Public Law 110-457), which reaffirms and strengthens the U.S. government's commitment to fight human trafficking and labor abuses.

Before your visa interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad, it is important that you take the time to read this pamphlet carefully. In doing so, you will learn about your rights and protections in the United States, as well as resources available to you if help is needed. Learn more at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html>

# SECTION 4

Applying for your J1 Visa

## Applying for your J-1 Visa

Once you have completed the AIFS application process including submitting all required documents and your Training Plan has been completed and signed, you will receive a welcome packet from AIFS. You will also receive an email with a detailed step-by-step guide on how to apply for your J-1 visa.

### Overview of the Visa Process

Please refer to the emailed visa instructions received from AIFS for further information:

**Step 1:** Check your **Certificate of Eligibility (DS2019) form** which was mailed to you by AIFS to make sure your name, date of birth, and nationality match your passport. If corrections are needed please contact [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com) as soon as possible. Sign, date (US format) and write the city/town (at time of signing) at the bottom of the page.

**Step 2:** Read through your **Training Plan (DS7002) form** and make sure all details are correct including listed dates for the start of your phases.

**Step 3:** Complete the **Non-Immigrant Visa Application (DS-160 Form)**. The DS-160 form is available online at: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> Ensure you answer every section of this form and regularly click the save button

**Step 4:** Once you have completed your DS-160 application, you must **make an appointment for a non-immigrant J1 visa interview** at the Embassy/Consulate you selected at the start of your DS-160 online visa application. Appointments can be made online at: <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/>

**Step 5:** Get your **SEVIS I-901 Form**. You now need to print a receipt to show that AIFS has paid for your visa forms, known as the I-901 SEVIS fee receipt, via the US Consulate website. This will need to be brought to your J1 visa Consulate appointment. You can access this form at: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>

**Step 6:** Attend your embassy Interview with these items:

- Your **Passport**
- **Certificate of Eligibility for J-1 visa** (DS-2019 form) which you will have signed and dated
- **Training Placement Plan** (DS-7002 form) which you will have signed
- **Non-Immigrant Visa Application (DS-160) Confirmation Page**
- A printout of the Embassy's '**Confirmation of Your Appointment**' email (You will have received an automated email from the U.S. Embassy once the booking was confirmed containing two barcodes). You can also print this out from your Visa Appointment booking account through 'Print Instructions'.



- **Receipt that you paid the Visa Appointment Fee** (You will have received this confirmation within an email when you made the appointment booking). You are also able to print this receipt when logged into the U.S. Embassy booking site.
- **1 U.S. style Visa Passport photo** (2x2 inches)
- **I-901 SEVIS fee receipt**
- **Letter of Support** from AIFS Trainee



Please remember to bring all of the above documents with you to your Interview for a smooth time at the embassy.

## Visa Interview

Make sure to bring all the necessary documents with you to your visa interview at the Embassy or Consulate. A Consular Officer will be reviewing your paperwork and make the final determination if you qualify for the J-1 visa. The key to a successful interview is to be honest, be prepared with all documents, and show evidence that you are planning to return to your home country after your program.

Please remember to qualify for this program you must have the below experience and the Consular Officer will ask you questions about this:

- 1) Have a degree or professional certificate from a post-secondary academic institution outside of the US (e.g. Undergraduate Degree, Masters) and at least one year of related work experience outside of the US

OR

- 2) Have at least five years of work experience in a similar area to the one that you are seeking to train in.

Please also be prepared to show documentation of and answer questions on:

- **Education and work history**, if you have your education transcripts and certificates readily available, please take them to your appointment with you.
- **Financial statements** – you must have the funds to be able to support yourself for the entire duration of your stay in the US and the Embassy may request documentation to support this, for example financial statements so please be prepared to show this if requested.
- **Proof of return** – you must show the Embassy that you have reason to return to your home country after your Training Program has ended. Proof of job or enrolment in a study course when you return are the best options. If this is not possible then proof of on-going payments – car, property etc, or confirmation of family members in your home country also show your intent to return.

At this stage you should be very familiar with your Training Plan, however it is likely that the Consular Officer will ask you questions about this so please make sure that you are aware of the different phases and knowledge you will be gaining too.

It seems like a lot of information to remember, but please do be prepared as it will help your interview go as smoothly as possible and really it's only you telling the Consular Officer about your experience, program and future plans.

Here are some typical questions you may be asked:

- Why do you want to go to the US?
- Tell me about your qualifications? Where did you study? What subject did you study?
- Tell me about your work history, where did you work/where do you currently work?
- What are your future career plans?
- Tell me more about the program you are applying to?
- What will you be doing in the US? How many hours will you be working? What compensation will you be receiving whilst in the US?
- How much was the fee for your program?
- Who is covering your expenses while on this program?
- Where are you staying in the US?
- What cultural activities are you going to participate in?

Once you have completed a successful interview, the Consular Officer will take your Passport to process your visa. They will let you take most of the other documents you have taken to your appointment away with you, please keep these safe as you will need to take some to the U.S. with you. When booking your appointment you will have arranged where to collect your Passport and will be notified by the Embassy/Courier when this is ready for collection. Processing usually takes approximately 5-10 working days, however can take longer.

### **Important Considerations**

**J-2 Information for Spouses & Dependents** - the J-2 Visa is a non-immigrant visa issued by a consular official at a U.S. embassy or consulate for spouses and dependents (unmarried children under the age of 21) of J-1 exchange visitors who accompany or later join the J-1 holder in the United States.

If you are planning to have someone join you that qualifies for the J-2 visa, you must contact AIFS Trainee as we will need further information including:

- An application form, denoting the primary J-1 visa holder and relationship to them.
- A copy of your valid passport
- Biographical details, emergency contact, and email address

If accepted, J-2 visa applicants will need to follow the same steps listed above to receive their J-2 visa through the local embassy or consular office.

**Home Country Physical Presence Requirement** - some exchange visitors (with J-1 visas) are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement. This includes current and former exchange visitors. You are subject to this requirement if one or more of the following applies to you:

- **Government funded Exchange Program** - You participated in a program funded in whole or in part by a U.S. government agency, your home country's government, or an international organization that received funding from the U.S. government or your home country's government.
- **Specialized Knowledge or Skill** – You participated in a program involving an area of study or field of specialized knowledge designated as necessary for further development of your home country and appears on the Exchange Visitor Skills List for your home country.
- **Graduate Medical Education/Training** - You participated in a program to receive graduate medical education or training.

You are **not** prohibited from travelling to the United States. However, **you cannot do any of the following until you fulfil** the two-year home country physical presence requirement:

- Change status in the United States to a non-immigrant temporary worker (H) or intracompany transferee (L);
- Adjust status in the United States to immigrant visa/lawful permanent resident status (LPR);
- Receive an immigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate; or
- Receive a temporary worker (H), intracompany transferee (L), or fiancé (K) visa.

# SECTION 5

Life in the US

## Life in the US

Before you depart for your AIFS Trainee Program you will receive a full orientation booklet with details on what to expect whilst on your program. This covers – travel to the US, your accommodation, what to do when you arrive, common policies, practical tips (Social Security application) and information on taxes and Group Cover. Please read this in detail and let AIFS know if you have any questions.



We have covered some basic details on these areas below:

### Traveling to the US

**Flights** - All participants in the AIFS Trainee program are responsible for booking their own travel to the United States. Before booking any flights, we recommend waiting for your J1 Visa to be issued. Please also make sure to confirm with your employer the appropriate date, time and airport to land into and any onwards travel required.

**Entry and Immigration** - You MUST take Customs & Immigration as seriously as the Immigration Official takes it! You should have the following document in your hand luggage ready to present at check-in and/or at Customs and Immigration:

- Passport with DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility) for J-1 Exchange Visitor Status and SEVIS I-901 receipt (white forms received in your visa mailing).
- Employer Information – full details of your host employer including contact information.
- Signed copy of your DS-7002 (Training Plan) Form
- The address of where you will be living for your customs form.
- Phone number for AIFS **1-800-727-8233**.
- Customs Declaration Form (CF-6059 Blue Form), usually given to you on your flight or can be picked up at Immigration.

Please answer all questions from the Immigration Officer honestly and accurately.

**Arriving at your Accommodation** – this should have been planned prior to your departure to the U.S. Please follow travel instructions received to get to your housing. If you have any issues on your journey then authorised taxi services and Ubers are usually available throughout the U.S.

**Checking in with AIFS** – please check in with AIFS once you have arrived at your accommodation. You can do this through [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com).

## Administration

**Obtaining a Social Security Card** – if you do not already have one, you are required to obtain a Social Security Number by applying in-person in the U.S to an official of the Social Security Administration. To apply you must have been confirmed as arrived in the U.S. by your employer, which updates the SEVIS (online visa record) and authorises your entry. We recommend waiting at least 2 days after your employer has validated you on the system to apply, although it can take longer. Please follow the detailed instructions in our Orientation booklet to help prepare for your appointment.

**Opening a bank account** – this is one of the first things you should consider doing while in the US. Many banks offer free accounts, and it will save you money in international fees! When considering a bank, look for a bank that has branches or fee-free cash machines (known as ATMs) close to your location. Fees vary from bank to bank, so ask for a list of charges associated with the accounts you plan to open.

**Applying for a driver's licence** – J-1 non-immigrants are eligible to apply for a driver's license. Each state's Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) issues driver's license, with varying regulations. A link to your state's DMV page can be found at: <https://www.usa.gov/motor-vehicle-services>

**Taxes** - Due to changes to the tax laws in the U.S. income tax system, and the elimination of personal exemptions (which was \$4,050 per individual in 2017), participants who hold J-1 visas will now have taxes deducted from any payment received and will be required to file a U.S. Federal income tax return and in certain cases, a State income tax return to satisfy their U.S. income tax liability. Follow our guide in your Orientation Booklet when it's time to file your tax return.

## Important Considerations

**Group International Accident and Sickness Coverage** - All participants are enrolled in Group International Accident & Sickness coverage arranged for the American Institute for Foreign Study, Inc. This meets (and exceeds) the mandatory minimum requirements set by the Department of State, which are:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000
- Expenses associated with medical evacuation to the exchange visitor's home country in the amount of \$50,000
- Deductibles cannot exceed \$500 per accident or illness

Full details on coverage period, levels of cover and exclusions and endorsements are detailed in your policy document which will be sent to you by AIFS before your program start date.

**Workman's Compensation** - commonly referred to as "workers comp," is a government-mandated program that provides benefits to workers who become

injured or ill on the job or as a result of the job. It is effectively a disability insurance program for workers, providing cash benefits, healthcare benefits, or both to workers who suffer injury or illness as a direct result of their jobs. Workers' compensation is handled primarily by the individual states. The required benefits vary greatly state by state.

As an exchange visitor that is employed by your host employer, you will be entitled to workman's compensation if you get injured on the job. This insurance is separate from your AIFS sponsored coverage, but AIFS' coverage also serves as a backup if there is a dispute on whether your injury was a workplace or non-workplace injury.

**How to Remain Lawful Non-Immigrant Status** – to remain compliant with the U.S Government regulations, you are required to adhere to the following rules:

- AIFS (as your sponsor) must be notified of your arrival in the U.S within ten days. Your Host Employer will need to notify us so that we can validate you as safely arrived at camp in the SEVIS system. This 'Student and Exchange Visitor Information System' is the web-based system used by the Department of Homeland Security for maintaining information on international non-immigrant students and exchange visitors in the United States.
- You must remain on your Training Plan with your agreed host employer, our sponsorship is only valid for the employer that we have placed you on.
- You must report to AIFS within ten days any changes in your phone number, email address and U.S. address. **US Office 24/7 Contact Number: 1-866-222-2074**

Please bear in mind that as your sponsor we will have to terminate the program of participants who fail to comply with the regulations. Note that failure to maintain health/medical cover, conviction of a crime, disciplinary action, engaging in unauthorized employment, violating sponsor rules or regulations and involuntary suspension from the most recent exchange program are also ground for termination of your program.

# SECTION 6

## CONCLUSION



Remember, you are taking part in a cultural exchange and will be following detailed training with your employer to develop your professional skills. Prepare accordingly and show America what you and your country have to offer and what they can learn from you, as well as what you can learn from them!

This Pre-Arrival Information Handbook is your start to understanding your AIFS Trainee Program and introduction to life in the U.S. Please now also take the time to review our detailed Orientation Handbook for further tips and advice and to help prepare you for your program. We recommend downloading and saving this document so you can refer to it at a later date if needed. If you have any questions about any of the content in this booklet then please contact us at [trainee@aifs.com](mailto:trainee@aifs.com).