



Council for Educational Travel, USA

Pre-Departure Orientation Guide

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This Guide is intended for interactive use between the person providing the orientation and one or more participants on the Summer Work & Travel Program.

INTRODUCTION

- In 1999, the world population surpassed the 6 billion people mark. Each of you are 1 among 6 billion people. Just think about that for a moment – 1 among 6 **BILLION** persons in the world. Our world is big. It is diverse. It offers endless wonderment. It offers diversity, variety, different perspectives, different attitudes, different beliefs, different ways of doing and thinking.
- The point we want to make is: It is an invaluable experience to get out and see the world, to view for yourself both the similarities and differences among people from different parts of our world.
- You have chosen to visit the United States of America. Let's review for a moment what we know about the United States of America.
- The USA is the third largest country, out of 192 countries in the world, after Russia and Canada. It is roughly 2 ½ times the size of Western Europe. It also has the third largest population with 285 million people. China and India have the largest populations.
- The U.S. became the world's first modern democracy after its break with Great Britain in 1776 and the adoption of a constitution in 1789. During the 19th century, many new states were added to the original 13 as the nation expanded across the North American continent. The two major traumatic experiences in the nation's history were the Civil War in 1861-1865 and the Great Depression of the 1930's. Buoyed by victories in World Wars I and II and the end of the Cold War in 1991, the U.S. remains the world's most powerful nation-state. The economy is marked by steady growth, low unemployment and inflation, and rapid advances in technology.
- 57% of Americans are Protestant; 21% are Catholic, 12% hold non-Christian religious beliefs, 8% do not have religious beliefs.
- The U.S. has a labor force of 139 million people. 30% work in managerial and professional positions; 29% work technical, sales and administrative support positions; 13% work in service positions; 24% work manufacturing, mining, transportation, and crafts positions. 3% work in farming, forestry and fishing. The per capita Gross National Product is \$28,495. 13% of Americans live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is 5%.
- All of this is interesting and worth knowing. We can learn it from a book. But what do you really know once you learn this? What have you experienced for yourself?
- The fact that you have signed up for a work and travel program indicates that you wish to enrich your experience, that you are curious, that you realize the value of travel, the value of seeing with your own eyes, and the value of knowing through experience.
- Our purpose today is to prepare you as best we can to make your experience as productive, as beneficial, and as smooth as possible.
- If there is a single bit of wisdom that you leave here today with, namely that by maintaining a positive and open attitude, and a willingness to adjust, and to apply yourself, this will help ensure that you have a good experience valuable to you throughout your life, then, by and large, we will have accomplished our main objective.
- However, there is important information from the programmatic standpoint that we must pass along to you today as well. Let us start:

ABOUT CETUSA

- As your agent in your home country, I am entrusting you to CETUSA. CETUSA is your official sponsor in the U.S. and they are responsible for your well-being while you are on the program.
- CETUSA is a well-respected, non-profit exchange-visitor organization. It is a small organization offering personalized service and is recognized as one of the most qualitative organizations in the U.S.
- CETUSA provides you with a strong support system. You will have direct access to the CETUSA Program Office for help with questions or concerns.
- You, the work and travel program participant, are CETUSA's primary responsibility. They are there to ensure you have a successful program experience while in the U.S.

CETUSA PROGRAM OFFICE

How to Contact CETUSA:

- You are welcome to contact CETUSA regarding any issue or if you have any questions. We are happy to assist you.
- CETUSA's Washington State Office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.
- Our toll-free number is: **1 (888) 423-8872**. Our e-mail address is: kevin@cetusa.org
- Our address is: **1403 View Avenue
Centralia, WA 98531
USA**
- CETUSA has a 24-hour answering service for calls requiring quick assistance. **(1-888-423-8872)** Please use good judgment regarding the urgency to make contact.
- Our fax number is: **1 (360) 736-6525**
- Our website is: www.cetusa.org

Please visit the website. It is updated periodically to provide you with information that may be important to the success of your program. Additionally, we request that you register on the website so that we may be able to email you important information.

In Case of an Emergency:

- An emergency is defined as:
 - A life or death crisis such as critical injury or illness requiring hospitalization.
 - If you are a victim of a violent crime.
- If you are in an emergency situation and need **immediate** help, please call: **911**. Make sure you answer all questions clearly and carefully - they will want to help you.

WORK

- Each of you has accepted a work position in the U.S. and has therefore accepted what should be thought of as serious responsibilities.
- Your employer will depend on you to perform the work you have been hired to do to the best of your ability. It is largely for this reason that they have hired you and will pay you.
- Employers will expect that you arrive on time for work.
- It is necessary to inform your direct supervisor two weeks in advance if you wish to take a vacation. Vacations may only be taken with the pre-approval of your supervisor.
- If you are sick and cannot work you will be required to notify your supervisor as soon as you realize you are sick and will not be able work.
- It is an established custom in the U.S. to provide a written “2-week notice” to your employer informing them of your intention to quit work. This should be done tactfully. It is also a good time to request a “reference letter.” A reference letter is a letter written by an employer informing future potential employers about your work ethics, abilities, character and strengths. It can be very useful in your future to gain increasingly better employment. It also documents your work experience in the U.S. If your employer is satisfied with your job performance he/she is very likely to provide such a letter. However, it is very important to remember that you may not change employers without prior authorization from CETUSA. In the event that you wish to change employers, CETUSA will work with your current employer and determine whether a change is warranted.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

- Housing may have been pre-arranged for you. Safe location, affordable pricing and appropriate living conditions have been of the highest priority for CETUSA. When it has not been possible to find housing within walking distance of your place of work, we have discussed with you affordable transportation options.
- Just as you have accepted responsibilities to your employer, you also are accepting responsibilities as a tenant. You need to understand clearly what your responsibilities are.
- You have the responsibility to respect and take care of the property and its belongings, and to keep things clean and orderly.
- You have the responsibility not to be noisy, inconsiderate or disruptive to neighbors.
- It is in your interest to maintain a good relationship with the property holder or overseer.

CETUSA PROGRAM CONDITIONS

CETUSA has established Program Conditions for participation on the Work and Travel Program. Each of the conditions are important and should be fully understood and must be adhered to. If you do not abide by these conditions, CETUSA may issue you a warning, put you on probation or choose to have you return home at your expense. You and your natural parent(s)/guardian(s) have confirmed your understanding of the Program Conditions contained in the student application, and to abide by them. Now is an excellent opportunity to revisit some of the critical issues.

Suggestions:

- Pass out a copy of the “**Student Agreement to Conditions of Work and Travel Program**” that each participant and their parents signed. After reviewing the section below, “Things You Should Know and Remember,” accept questions from anyone unclear about what the Program Conditions are or what they mean.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW AND REMEMBER

- CETUSA will provide Form DS-2019 to students prepared and able to fulfill the Summer Work and Travel Program requirements, but CETUSA cannot guarantee that those participants for whom it has issued an DS-2019 will receive a J-1 visa from the U.S. Consulate. CETUSA has no influence over decisions made by the U.S. Consular Officers.
- Exchange-Visitor visas are issued with the understanding that the participant will return to their home country at the conclusion of the J-1 visa program. The burden is on the participant to prove to the U.S. Consul clear intention to return home.
- When applying for the J-1 visa and upon entry to the USA, you will need to show proof of having a minimum of \$1000.
- In accordance with United States regulations, Work and Travel Program participants are not authorized to be employed as a domestic employee in a United States household or in a position that requires participant’s investment of participant’s monies to provide participant with inventory for the purpose of door-to-door sales.
- Work and Travel Program participants may not begin work earlier than the date authorized by the J-1 visa and must complete work no later than the date authorized by the J-1 visa. This visa category does not allow for any type of extension.
- All Work and Travel Program participants are required to report either in person or by phone within 48 hours of arrival in the U.S. to the U.S. work site and CETUSA. Failure to do so may result in the termination of employment and the program.
- If an employer terminates a student’s employment, CETUSA will determine, at its discretion, whether to terminate the student’s J-1 visa program or to seek new employment for the student.
- CETUSA is the program sponsor of your J-1 visa program. In addition to government regulations you are also bound by CETUSA conditions to participate in the program. Under the CETUSA sponsorship you are:
 - Not allowed to change jobs or job sites without the consent of CETUSA.
 - Changes are considered ONLY under specific situations determined by CETUSA.
 - If you do change jobs or job sites without the consent of CETUSA you will be immediately terminated from the program and reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.
 - **To notify CETUSA in writing (through the CETUSA website or fax) of any change of resident address within 10 days of an address change.** This is in accordance with US law in an effort to track students and exchange-visitors to the United States to ensure the safety and welfare of Americans and visitors to the United States. Not to contact CETUSA within 10 days of an address change will result in termination of your program making it illegal for you to work in the U.S. Furthermore, you will have 30 days to leave the U.S. or risk further consequences of overstaying your visa.

It is a J-1 visa requirement to participate in cultural activities. CETUSA requires all participants to read all cultural material and participate in activities provided by the recruiter, the host site and CETUSA to enhance knowledge of American culture.

- If no earlier departure date is indicated on my I-94 card adjudicated by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, Work and Travel Program participants may remain in the United States as a tourist only for a maximum of thirty (30) additional days.
- Work and Travel Program participants are solely responsible for their personal expenses, any and all expenses incurred after the completion of the work assignment, until they have returned home.
- It is compulsory that all Work and Travel Program participants attend all orientation meetings, both in their home country before departure to, and after arrival in, the United States.
- A Work and Travel Program participant who violates a federal, state, or local law and/or regulation, or who breaks established rules set by their employer or CETUSA may be dismissed from the program.

ACCIDENT AND HEALTH INSURANCE

- Insurance coverage provided by CETUSA to Work and Travel Program participants expires at the conclusion of the authorized date to work by the J-1 visa. Work and Travel Program participants are responsible for arranging their own insurance coverage for any additional period of time in which they remain on U.S. territory.
- For your own protection you must reveal in your medical form any health disorders and medication presently being taken – (diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc.) For your own protection you should carry with you a copy of the medical form to present to doctors in case of emergencies.
- While CETUSA provides accident and health insurance, the policy does not cover pre-existing illness. Should you have a pre-existing condition additional coverage may be required.

Suggestions:

- Review the specific terms and conditions of the insurance policy and process for making a claim.

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA)

- As an employee working in the United States you should be aware of certain laws known as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The FLSA basic requirements are:
 - Payment of the minimum wage
 - Overtime pay for time worked over 40 hours in a workweek
 - Restrictions on the employment of children
 - Record-keeping
- Unless an employee works in a state that has its own mandated minimum wage which is higher than the federal minimum wage, workers covered by the FLSA are entitled to the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour and overtime pay at a rate of not less than one and one-half times their regular rate of pay after 40 hours of work in a workweek. Various minimum wage exceptions apply under specific circumstances to disabled workers, full-time students, youth under age 20 in their first 90 days of employment, tipped employees and student-learners. It should be noted, though, that some kinds of summer employment, categorized as seasonal or temporary employment, are exempt from minimum wage requirements.
- Employers are required to keep records on wages, hours, and other items that are generally maintained as an ordinary business practice.
- Wages required by the FLSA are due on the regular payday for the pay period covered. Deductions made from wages for such items as cash or merchandise shortages, employer-required uniforms,

and tools of the trade, are not legal if they reduce the wages of employees below the minimum wage or reduce the amount of overtime pay due under the FLSA.

- In order for the FLSA to apply, there must be an employment relationship between an employer and an employee. The FLSA also contains some exemptions from these basic rules. Some apply to specific types of businesses and others to specific kinds of work.

EXPECTATIONS

- Much of what you think you know about the U.S. is probably inaccurate. Not only what you may have seen on TV, which is certainly highly misleading, but even the images that you have formed through media and other means is bound to be sketchy and/or deficient. Unless you have been there before, expect things to be different from what you expect. It is usually wise to suspend judgments about these differences until you understand them at a deeper level. One possible outlook to adopt during your visit may be, “the cultural differences that I am witnessing are neither better or worse than what I am accustomed to, they are simply different.”

Suggestions:

- Have participants write down their expectations of their employer, their work environment, their community, the Americans they meet, etc.
- Discuss the possibility of expectations not being met and how to handle the situation.
- On a poster board or a large sheet of paper, list common expectations. Ask participants which expectations they feel are realistic and which ones are unrealistic. Have them state reasons for their choices. Discuss participants' responses. Where appropriate, discuss what participants can do to bring about some of their “wished for” expectations.

CHALLENGES

- Often Americans will not approach you. You will need to make the effort to establish relationships. Get involved in clubs and activities, and don't be afraid to extend invitations to people with whom you wish to make friends.

Suggestions:

- Assign each student or pair of students a challenge/difficulty and ask them to devise a strategy to overcome this challenge/difficulty. Use this as a basis for a group discussion.
- You may wish to use this section as an opportunity for mini role-plays using pairs of participants. Present the student with a challenging situation, e.g. “You are having difficulties getting along with one of your co-workers.” Have the student role-play a conversation with his/her supervisor.

MONEY

- You will have to budget your spending money carefully.
- Telephone bills should be paid promptly.
- If you run short of money it is your responsibility to ask your natural parents to send you more. Under no circumstances are participants to borrow money from co-workers or friends. Likewise, you should not lend out money either.
- It is essential that you open a separate bank account for your money. Do not leave money lying around your apartment and do not keep it in somebody else's bank account.

SAFETY

While the large majority of Americans are friendly, open, and willing to help, be aware that there are a small percentage of people who may want to take advantage of visitors. At your orientation in the USA, your supervisor and employer will give you information concerning the specific area where you will be living and working. You should exercise caution and use common sense during your stay and travels:

- In crowded areas like airports and bus and train stations, always keep your property close to you or in a concealed place.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash and do not expose it in crowded places.
- Travel with a friend as much as possible.
- Do not use ATM machines in the dark, especially if you are alone.
- When possible, take copies of needed documents with you, and keep your originals in a safe place.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Do not behave in ways that may bring attention of thieves or someone who might try and take advantage of you.

LAW AND ORDER

- You are a visitor to the USA, but the law still applies to you. You need to be aware of and respect all the U.S. federal, state, and local laws just as you would do at home. You are fully responsible for any crimes or violations you commit. This means you are fully responsible for any and all expenses involved with defending yourself if you have been arrested, and any penalties, prison or monetary, should you be convicted.
- The U.S. has strict laws regarding drinking (a person must be over 21 and may not drive a motorized vehicle under even the slightest influence of alcohol), partying and making excessive noise, child abuse (a child may not be spanked or physically punished), stealing and driving (not obeying traffic laws), just to name a few. People breaking the law are often caught and the consequences can be devastating. Work and Travel Program participants are expected to obey all laws at all times.

EXERCISES

Questions for Discussion

Consider using these questions as a basis for discussion with participants to help them think through their expectations.

1. What would you like to know about CETUSA?
2. What would you like to know about the Work and Travel Program?
3. How would you describe a typical American?
4. What do you expect of your housing accommodations?
5. What do you think your employer expects of you?
6. What do your natural parents expect of you?
7. How do you expect to benefit from the program?
8. How do you think you will change this year?
9. What are the things you want most in the next year?
10. How do you think you will make friends?
11. What concerns do you have about living abroad?
12. What kinds of challenges do you think you may encounter this year?
13. Other...

Role-play

You may wish to use some of these ideas for role-playing during the orientation.

- ◆ Inviting a friend to dinner or other event.
- ◆ Offering to pay for a meal.
- ◆ Discussing a challenge with your supervisor.
- ◆ Saying “no” to drugs or sex.
- ◆ Complimenting the cook.
- ◆ Asking a co-worker for help.
- ◆ Offering an opinion about America.
- ◆ Saying “thank you” the “American” way.
- ◆ Expressing a desire to have a talk.

What would you do if?

Consider this activity to explore ways in which participants may handle challenges during the program.

1. Your supervisor is all business and any attempts to form a more friendly or warmer relationship fail?
2. Your supervisor is critical of the work you perform?
3. You have a co-worker who you feel doesn't like you?
4. You start feeling bored and lonely?
5. You have a disagreement or an argument with someone and later regret it?
6. You have a co-worker who has great difficulty understanding your English?
7. There are aspects of your job that you do not understand clearly?
8. You want to get out and explore your surroundings but do not have a car?
9. You spend more money than you anticipated and think that you are going to run short?
10. You are invited to visit a church service one Sunday?

HOW ARE OUR CULTURES DIFFERENT?

How is life in America different from life in your home country? Complete the chart below by yourself, with a partner or in a small group and then share your ideas with others. Naturally not everyone is the same, so the chart will represent only one possible set of habits. Keep in mind that although your habits at home may be different, you have chosen to live as an American guest visitor and you will need to face the challenges of handling differences in behavior, lifestyle and habits. It is your responsibility as a visitor to adapt to the American way of life.

	In the United States	In your Home Country
<p>Work ethics</p> <p>Company Rules</p> <p>Ways to address your employer</p> <p>Co-worker relations</p> <p>Worker's role</p> <p>Social etiquette</p> <p>Maintaining friendships</p> <p>Ways to make friends</p> <p>Kinds of social activities</p> <p>Dating protocol</p> <p>Ways to invite</p> <p>Eating Habits</p> <p>Typical meals</p> <p>Meal-time conversations</p> <p>Cleaning up after the meal</p> <p>Complimenting the cook</p> <p>Use of Money</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>How to offer to pay</p> <p>"Dutch treat"</p> <p>Transportation</p> <p>Asking for rides</p> <p>Equality of men and women</p> <p>Daily schedules</p> <p>Hygiene</p> <p>Frequency of bathing</p> <p>Frequency of shampooing hair</p> <p>Frequency of laundering clothes</p> <p>Girl's hair removal</p> <p>Use of deodorant</p>		