

Participant Handbook

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE ENTERING THE U.S.

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FINAL THOUGHT

PII would like to welcome all of you to our work and travel program. As your sponsor, we are offering you the opportunity for a DS 2019, therefore, enabling you to apply for a J-1 Visa. Work and Travel (WAT) program allows you to come to the United States as more than a tourist. You are able to participate in our culture, as well as experience our work environment. Since you are working, you will be able to afford to live and travel in the United States for the duration of your J-1 Visa. The program is sponsored by the Philadelphia International Institute. PII has been operating international exchange programs for many years. As your sponsor, PII is here to help you in any way needed. PII hopes this experience is an enjoyable and rewarding one for you! This handbook is for the use foreign exchange students, from all over the world, which comes to the United States to work and travel. Within this guidebook PII has included information useful to students of all nationalities. Any specific information regarding your country will be available from your local PII office or your cooperating office. In order to help you in planning your trip and throughout your stay in the United States, PII has provided you this book containing all essential information and answers to questions on your experience within the WAT program. The guidebook provides program background and tips on getting the most out of your program. There are also guidelines, such as regional directions, information on transportation, how to do things and how not to do things. This source book guides you through the American workplace and culture. PII is here to help you throughout this experience; so do not feel overwhelmed, only excitement for the adventure you are about to embark on! As a participant in the program, you will be able to experience a foreign culture impossible to know as a tourist. WAT allows you the chance to make new friends while internationalizing your resume (CV). As you earn money and travel you will gain a distinct insight into the life and culture of the United States. You will learn how the other side of the world lives from an inside view! It is always challenging beginning a new job, especially when it is in a foreign country! Yet, this work experience will be an exciting one. There may be difficulties in your adventure, but PII is here to help. Through your WAT program you will broaden your horizons. Through this program you will acquire an in-depth knowledge of the American culture, as well as develop skills to help you in your future. You may even gain a totally new perspective of your own culture and abilities. PII is offering you a unique opportunity to find your own possibilities, which may open up many new paths. With an open mind and sense of adventure, this may turn out to be the best

time of your life! We wish you luck on your journey and hope this book is helpful for you along the way! PII Work and Travel

Applying For A DS-2019

Criteria

1. You must be 19 years old by June 1
2. A current full-time student
3. Speak conversational English
4. Have no child abuse records
5. Provide References

How to apply

1. Fill out Work and Travel USA application
2. Read and sign Program Conditions For Work and Travel USA
3. Choose Host Location
4. Pay all necessary fees

Preparing for Departure

It is important to remember to pack light, since you will have to carry your luggage around with everywhere you travel. Also, you will probably bring back more than you came with. Therefore, keep your packing simple and down to the essentials. It is important to know that most airlines allow you to check two bags and have one carry-on piece of luggage. We suggest a backpack may be a better option than a suitcase for traveling around. As for clothing, you should pack according to the season in which you are coming. Yet, remember you may go a week without doing laundry, so pack enough clothes to last you a week. Remember to bring the clothing needed for your particular job. Sometimes when you first arrive your luggage may be temporarily lost. In the event that this happens, it is wise to pack at least one change of clothes in your carry-on bag and include the following:

- Personal valuables (cameras, eyeglasses, jewelry, electronics, money)
- Passport with J-1 Visa and DS 2019. Make copies of these documents as well.
- Flight ticket, other travel tickets (make copies of all travel tickets)
- Traveler's checks (keep the record slip separately)
- Employer's and/or sponsorship letter
- Insurance material (ID card, etc.)
- Home country and international driver's license
- Student card and at least 2 other photo Ids
- PII Work and Travel handbook and other supplements
- Copies of your CV, reference letters, Work and Travel Job Directory, etc.
- Details of financial arrangements you made with your family and bank for emergency funds
- U.S. cash- Small change
- Credit card (if applicable)
- Prescription medication in the original container and a copy of your prescription

For your backpack or suitcase you should pack all clothing, medicine and toiletries, and miscellaneous items that adapt to your needs. Remember to bring clothing suitable for interviews and work. If you do not want to pack all these items, yet find a need for them, they are all available to buy in the United States

ENTERING THE U.S.

I. Entry Documents

A. Immigration Procedure

Welcome! As a guest in the United States, it is important that you cooperate fully with the Immigration officer, and answer all questions clearly and respectfully. The officer may ask for some general details about your visit. You will also show the officer the documents listed below. You are entering the USA as a J-1 Exchange Visitor. You will need to show the following documents to the Immigration officer.

1. Passport
2. DS 2019 Form
3. J-1 Visa (from US Embassy or Consulate in your home country)
4. I card (given to you on the plane by the flight attendant) Make at least two photocopies of all your documents listed above and keep them with you in case your originals are lost or misplaced. We also suggest that you make a list of document numbers, expiration dates, etc., as you may need to refer to this list if you need to replace lost documents. You should keep these copies safely stored away from your originals.

Collecting Your Bags

After passing through Immigration, you will go to the baggage claim area, where your bags will arrive in the carousel. If you bags have been damaged or lost, report it immediately to the airline and get a property Irregularity Report, as you will need this for insurance purposes.

Protecting Yourself and Your Property

Always keep your property close to you, especially in crowded areas like airports, bus terminals, and train stations. Make sure that you keep all valuables ; cameras, wallets, passports and other documents, money, etc., with you at all times. You must stay alert by being aware of your surroundings and avoiding uncomfortable situations. Listen to your PII representative at orientation for sensible advice pertaining to your safety.

Safety Tips in the United States

You have to remember that are a foreigner in a new country. Until you get used to where you are living you will be giving off clear signs of this. In every large city worldwide there are people who can try to take advantage of others through some sort of theft, swindle or trick. There is little chance that you may encounter someone like this, yet you should always take precautions. Once you arrive in the U.S. you will be given an orientation about your city by a PII representative. Feel free to ask questions about where to go and where not to go. At orientation, we will advice you about overall safety, specifically about the general area where you will be living. If we can help you in any other way let us know!

Embassies

Argentina
1600 New Hampshire Avenue,
N. W.Washington, D. C. 20009
#202-939-6400

N. W.Washington, D. C. 20008
#202-274-9100

Czech Republic
3900 Spring of Freedom Street,

France
4101 Reservoir Road,
N. W.Washington, D. C. 20007
#202-944-6000

Germany
4645 Reservoir Road,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20007-1998
#202-298-4000

Ireland
2234 Massachusetts Avenue,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20008
#202-462-3939

Italy
1601 Fuller Street,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20009
#202-328-5500

Jamaica
1520 New Hampshire,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20036
#202-452-0660

Latvia
4325 17th Street,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20011
#202-726-8213

Lithuania
2622 16th Street,

While these are the primary embassies located in Washington, D. C. there may be consulates in major cities, located closer to your location of employment in the United States. You can find the closest embassy to you by calling these numbers in Washington, D. C. or looking in your local United States phone book.

Employment

PII may provide you with pre-arranged employment. Having a pre-arranged job may relieve anxiety before you travel to the United States.

Resume (C.V.) and Cover Letter (Job Inquiry)

When you are applying for a job within United States there are two essential forms to enclose.

1. Resume (C.V.) explaining your past work experience
2. A cover letter explaining that you will have a valid work permit and a social security/insurance number when you come to the United States of America.

Remember to put the correct postage on your envelope and send it by AIRMAIL. The objective of our Work and Travel program is to offer you the chance to take an active part in the American Experience. In order to archive this, we need your help. You need to be flexible to travel anywhere throughout United States, as well as be willing to accept any form of employment. You may not make a fortune,

N. W. Washington, D. C. 20009
#202-234-5860

Poland
2224 Wyoming Avenue,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20008
#202-232-4517

South Africa
3051 Massachusetts Avenue,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20068
#202-232-4400

Spain
2375 Pennsylvania Avenue,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20001
#202-452-010

Russia
1825 Phelps Place,
N. W. Washington, D. C. 20008
#202-298-5700

but you will be taking a job where you meet many new people. This will, therefore, allow the social aspect of your job to be as rewarding as your wage.

Employee Responsibilities

As an employee there are certain expectations you are required to meet. Your employers have a business to run and as their employee you are an important part of that operation. Accepting any job means you are taking on a certain amount of responsibility as well as making a commitment. Therefore, there are a few things to keep in mind as you take on the role of employee.

1. Work up to the date you promised. When you accept a job, give you employer the date can work until and do your best to stay until that date. Since you will be working through the summer or winter, these are times of heavy tourism. Therefore, leaving your job earlier than you promised will cause inconvenience to your employer. They may refuse to employ other WAT participants. However, if you are unhappy with your job, or if you have problems there, please contact PII for advice.
2. Have a positive attitude and be enthusiastic. You should have a positive attitude towards the job you accept. Employers are looking for enthusiastic, willing workers. They are easily irritated by those who arrive with the wrong expectations. Flexibility, enthusiasm, and teamwork are very important in the U.S. workplace. Anything less risks losing your job.

Finances

A. Traveler's Checks

The best option is to bring all your money in Traveler's Checks. Since money may be lost or stolen, traveler's checks can be replaced whereas money cannot! Make a separate list of check numbers, and buy small denominations. Remember to bring enough money needed before your first paycheck arrives. It takes a long time to have money sent from home. You may want to bring emergency backup en route to your job site.

B. Bank Accounts

It is wise to open a bank account as soon as possible. Banks differ in their services and fees, so make sure to look around to find the one that best suits your needs. In order to get a bank account you need to bring with you various forms of identification. The most important documents are your passport and your social security number. If you have any credit cards, and proof of where you are living, you should bring these as well. Banks hours vary, check with the bank you choose for any specifics.

C. Automatic Teller Machines (ATM)

Most banks provide bank cards that can be used at 24 hour automated teller machines (ATM). The ATM machines are used for withdrawing money and/or depositing checks. The ATM are located across the USA. Most ATM charge a fee for using their machines, if it is not an ATM from your specific bank. Check with your bank before leaving home to verify if you are able to use your bank card from home at some of these machines.

D. Currency

The basic unit of currency is the dollar (\$ 1). Coins are in the value of the 1 cent or a penny, 5 cents or a nickel, 10 cents or a dime, 25 cents or a quarter, 50 cents or a half dollar, and 1 dollar coins. Bills (notes) are printed in the value of \$ 1, \$ 5, \$ 10, \$ 20, \$ 50, \$ 100.

E. Credit Cards

Most Americans have credit cards. They are a convenient, safe way to make large purchases, or get cash advances from banks. Be careful about overspending; you will have to pay your debts eventually.

F. Western Union

This service makes it possible to transfer money from your home country to anywhere in the United States within one hour on any day of the week. There is a handling charge, which will vary according to the total amount sent. You can call 1.800.325.6000 to find the Western Union office nearest to you and nearest to the person sending money to you, and to see if your money has arrived.

G. Telegraphic Transfer

This allows you to transfer money from a bank in your home country to a bank in the U.S. This can often take a week or longer. The charge varies from bank to bank, and you may be charged by both receiving and sending bank. Not all banks offer this service; check in advance.

H. Banker's Drafts

These can be bought from your country and then mailed to you by the Post Office Express Service. This usually takes between three and seven days, and participants sometimes have difficulty cashing them in small towns. Designate an emergency contact in your home country.

I. Sales Tax

Visitors to the United States are surprised when a shopping bill costs more than the marked price. This is because sales tax is added on when you pay. Sales taxes vary from state to state and from region to region.

J. Tipping Americans

Generally tip the waiter/ waitress 15 to 20 percent of the price of the meal. Similar practices apply to bartenders, taxi drivers, hair stylists, and various service industry individuals. If you enjoyed the waiter or waitress service, show it by paying a bigger tip. Tip less if you did not like the service.

LEGAL INFORMATION

EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A VISITOR, THE LAW STILL APPLIES TO YOU. YOU MUST RESPECT LOCAL LAWS, JUST AS YOU DO AT HOME. THE U.S. POLICE CAN BE VERY STRICT. A NIGHT IN JAIL OR A LARGE FINE ARE NOT APPROPRIATE SOUVENIRS FOR WAT PARTICIPANTS. ANY LEGAL TROUBLE IS YOUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY. PII WILL TRY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT THROUGH YOUR CONSULATE OR OTHERS IN THE UNITED STATES. INFORM US INSTANTLY IF NECESSARY. IF YOU ARE ARRESTED:

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

1. You have the right to remain silent and to refuse to answer any questions if you so choose.
2. No person accused of a crime may be forced to confess or give evidence against themselves
3. You also have the right not to be searched unless the police officer has a warrant.
4. Most importantly, you have the right to be represented by a lawyer, and to be provided with a lawyer to represent you if you cannot afford to hire one.
5. Furthermore, you are entitled to be released from jail upon posting of a bail bond (money paid to ensure that the person reports for trial) set by the court while you await trial
6. You are entitled to a fair trial conducted according to all the rules of evidence and court procedures.

7. Above all, you are presumed innocent until proven guilty. You do not have to prove your innocence, but rather the prosecution must prove your guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

POSSIBLE POLICE PROCEDURES IF YOU ARE DETAINED

1. Charged or finger printed, paperwork, etc...
2. Held in jail until ball bond is posted
3. See a court judge who hears preliminary details and drops charges or sets a court date within the next 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 USA until the end of your J-1 visa (summer and winter participants).
4. Depending on the severity of the charges, you might not be able to leave the area before your court date.

POSSIBLE RESULTS OF BEING FOUND GUILTY OF CHARGES

(Fines and penalties are subject to local laws, therefore the degree of penalties and amount of fines, etc., differ from town to town and may also differ from violations of state or federal laws.)

1. Monetary fine (varies for charge)
2. Community service
3. Jail time
4. Deportation

Taxes

W4 Form

When you begin your job, employer will ask you to complete a W4 form (Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate) to ensure that you are not over-taxed. Your employer will keep this form while you are working there, and will use the information on this form to determine how much tax should be withheld from your paycheck. If you do not fill out your W4 form properly, you may have to pay more tax in the future. The following instructions on filling out your W4 form are from IRS Publication 515 (rev. 11; 96); Withholding of tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Corporations. Please note that you are classified as a non resident alien. Therefore, the instructions shown on the W4 form do not apply. Please follow the instructions below when completing the W4 form.

1. Check only Single; marital status on line 3 (even if you are married or divorced).
2. Claim only one withholding allowance on line 5, unless a resident of Canada, Mexico, Japan, or South Korea, or a U.S. National.
3. Do not claim Exempt withholding status on line 7.

EXEMPT

Social Security Tax

Medicare

Federal Unemployment Tax

NOT EXEMPT

Federal Income Tax

State Income Tax

City Income Tax

Social Security Tax---You Don't Pay

You must have the Social Security card and number, but you are EXEMPTING from paying Social Security tax and Medicare tax. Sometimes, employers make a mistake and withhold these taxes. You can tell if this happened by looking at your paycheck (the paper with your wage details). If you do see any deductions under the world FICA, the employer has made a mistake. Please show your boss the Dear Employer letter or call PII to resolve the problem.

Income Tax--- You Do Pay

In the U.S., the federal, state, and local governments impose income taxes. The Internal Revenue Services (IRS) collects personal income taxes, usually on a pay-as-you-go basis. This means that your employer generally withholds income tax from your salary and pays it directly to the government. You must pay U.S. income tax. Failure to pay any taxes you owe could cause problems for you in the future if you apply for any visas to return to the U.S.

Federal Income Tax ---You Do Pay

All income-earning individuals pay income tax to the federal (national) government. It is paid on income from salaries, wages, and tips. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of your salary will be withheld for federal income tax, a portion of which you may be able to claim back as a refund at the end of the year. (Refer to Tax Return Forms and Tax Refunds).

State and City Income Tax--- You May Pay

States and cities may charge extra income tax according to local laws. State income taxes are approximately 5 to 8 percent. At the interview, ask your employer about the local tax situation. Like federal income tax, state and local income taxes will be withheld from your paycheck. You may be able to claim a refund for a portion of these taxes at the end of the year.

W2 Forms

The employer will send the W2 to your address in your home country. You must receive a W2 form from each of your employers, since you will be required to submit copies of the form with your tax returns. Be sure that you give yours home address to all employers so they can send you this form.

Tax Return Forms and Tax Refunds

When you receive your W2 at the end of January 2001, you will have to fill out a tax return form. If you have not received your W2 forms by February 15, 2001, you should contact your employer(s) for replacement(s). There are separate forms for federal, state, and city taxes. All forms are available from banks and post offices in the U.S., and federal tax return forms are also available from U.S. embassies in your home country and from the Internal Revenue Service website. Request state and city forms from your employer. You must complete tax form 1040NR-EZ for non-resident aliens. The federal tax form you will have to complete is the 1040NR-EZ, which is specifically for non-resident aliens (the category in which you should file). The deadline for filing 2000 tax return is April 15, 2001. Use the charts sent with the tax return forms to determine the amount of tax you owe. If too little was withheld from your paychecks, you must pay the balance to the U.S. government. If too much was withheld by the U.S. government, you qualify for a refund. The earlier you file, the sooner you will receive any refund.

Sample Forms

I- 9 Employment Eligibility Form
SS - 5 Social Security Card Form
W - 4 Form

http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org/form_i9.html
www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf
www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf

Transportation in the United States

A. Bus

Bus travel is a popular and inexpensive way to travel in the United States. The major bus companies can help you connect to local bus transportation to reach even remote towns. Greyhound Bus Company is the major bus company in the U.S.

B. Train

Amtrak, the national railroad (railway), offers a rail pass similar to Europe's Inter-rail pass. The USA RailPass is valid for either 15 or 30 days. The nationwide pass costs \$260 for 15 days and \$ 350 for 30 days. Amtrak has divided the country into sections for regional travel. A pass for travel in the Eastern Region is \$190 for 15 days and \$250 for 30 days. A pass for travel in the Northeast Region is \$165 for 15 days and \$205 for 30 days. A pass for the Western Region is \$180 for 15 days for \$230 for 30 days.

C. Car

You must have a valid drivers license from your home country to drive in the U.S... along with an International Drivers License, available in your home country from motoring organizations. To rent a car, most companies require that you be at least 21 years of age and have at least one major credit card.

D. Hitchhiking

This is not recommended. It is illegal to hitchhike on any interstate highways and on any other type of heavily traveled road, but is permitted on smaller roads. If you do hitchhike, never do so alone. Beware of drivers with drugs or alcohol in the car, as it is an offense to have these items in a car in most states (you are just as liable for punishment as the driver if you are stopped by a police officer).

Final Thoughts

PII would like to thank you for choosing us as your sponsor for Work and Travel or your Internship Program in the United States. We hope your experience is an enjoyable and productive one. We are here to help you in any way we can along the way. Enjoy and have the time of your life!!!!

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