



THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES
J-1 INTERN AND TRAINEE PROGRAM

HOST ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

*International Center for Language Studies (ICLS) is designated by the US Department of State as a sponsor of BridgeUSA for the **INTERN and TRAINEE** categories by the administrative regulations issued under the **Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961** (also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act). Its purpose is to build enduring bridges of friendship between peoples and nations, connect global leaders, and create lasting impact through educational and cultural exchanges. Intern/Trainee Private Sector Exchange Program Sponsor since 2003.*

WELCOME

Welcome to the ICLS J-1 Intern & Trainee Program!

Thank you for partnering with ICLS to host international interns and trainees from around the world and helping them to observe and experience American business culture, values, and practices in your workplace.

You give interns the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice and give trainees the opportunity to share their knowledge and enhance their skills. This, in turn, enriches your workplace, improves your services, and helps your company to gain a fresh global perspective. And ultimately, these programs strengthen peace and stability in our world. Your contribution is immense!

From a business perspective, hosting international interns and trainees brings the next generation of business leaders to your workplace, providing new perspectives and helping your company compete internationally.

We have created this handbook to help prepare you for hosting exchange visitors so that you and they can have a meaningful experience. We hope you will find this handbook helpful. To receive a quick introduction to our programs, please watch this [Host Orientation Video](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact ICLS with any questions related to the international participants, J-1 program rules, training guidelines, monitoring and evaluation procedures, or anything else. Thank you again for hosting international interns and trainees and sharing your valuable knowledge and expertise with them.

EMERGENCY AND IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

ICLS Address and Contact Information:

International Center for Language Studies (ICLS), Inc.

1133 15th St NW, Suite 600

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 639-8800

Main Email: internships@icls.edu

J-1 Intern and Trainee Program

Jessica Hines, Director & Responsible Officer (J-1)

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Ricki Schwab, Program Coordinator & Alternate Responsible Officer (J-1)

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For life-threatening or medical emergencies, call 911.

For program-related emergencies, call the ICLS emergency customer service line: 202-964-7242

BRIDGEUSA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the BridgeUSA Program (J-1 Exchange Visitor Program) is for "Educational and Cultural Exchange," not employment. The 1961 Fulbright-Hayes Act created the J-category with the purpose of

“increasing mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.” At the end of the program, Exchange Visitors are expected to return to their home country to utilize the experience and skills they have acquired while in the United States.

The BridgeUSA Program is administered by the Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. You can learn more about this program at <http://j1visa.state.gov/>

U.S. Department of State

Office of Designation
Private Sector Programs Division
ECA/EC/D/PS - SA-5, Floor 5
2200 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

TELEPHONE: (844) 300-1824

FAX: (202) 203-7779

EMAIL ADDRESS: jvisas@state.gov

The Department of State’s BridgeUSA Program Brochure can be found here:

<https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/current/other-resources/>

ICLS J-1 INTERN AND TRAINEE PROGRAM

Intern and Trainee Cultural Exchange Program Purpose

The ICLS J-1 Intern and Trainee Program is designated by the U.S. Department of State as an exchange visitor sponsor in the Intern and Trainee categories (22CFR 62.22). The program contributes to educational and cultural exchange as authorized by the Fulbright-Hayes Act (1961), the objective of which is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, and to assist in the development of peaceful relations between the United States and other nations. The program offers a unique cultural learning experience through work-based guided internship and practical training at US organizations.

The exchange program also enhances understanding of American culture and society and improves knowledge of career and occupational fields through exposure to American business culture, methodologies, and expertise. This goal is best met by ensuring that exchange participants return to their home countries to share the skills and knowledge acquired in the United States, thereby strengthening ties and communications between nations.

INTERN CATEGORY

Under the Intern category, current international students or recent graduates are permitted to enter the United States for a maximum of 12 months on a J-1 visa. During their time in the United States, interns participate in a structured internship program that directly correlates with their studies. The program bridges the gap between formal education and practical work experience. Interns are expected to return home upon completing their program and utilize newly acquired skills in further studies or careers.

ICLS is authorized to enroll interns in the following occupational fields:

Arts and Culture; Education, Social Science, Library Science, Counseling, Social Services; Management, Business, Commerce and Finance; Hospitality and Tourism; International Media and Communications; Public Administration and Law; The Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, Mathematics, and Industrial Occupations.

TRAINEE CATEGORY

Under the Trainee category, young international professionals are permitted to enter the United States for a maximum of 12 or 18 months on a J-1 visa, depending on the occupational field. During their time in the United States, trainees will participate in a structured training program to expand their existing knowledge and enhance their skills that directly correlate with their experience. Trainees are expected to return home upon completing their program and utilize newly acquired skills and methodologies in their occupational positions.

Please note: Hospitality and Tourism training is limited to 12 months

ICLS is authorized to enroll trainees in the following occupational fields:

Arts and Culture; Education, Social Science, Library Science; Health Related Occupations (12 months); Hospitality and Tourism Occupations (12 months); International Media and Communications; Management, Business, Commerce and Finance; Public Administration and Law; The Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, Mathematics, and Industrial Occupations.

INTERN AND TRAINEE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In order to participate in the J-1 exchange visitor program, all applicants must meet the following criteria:

LANGUAGE

English language skills must be at a level that will allow participants to function in an American professional environment. This is assessed through interviews and English test results.

EDUCATION

Trainees		
Trainees must have a degree or a professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution AND a minimum of 1 year of prior related work experience in their occupational field acquired outside the United States.	OR	In the absence of a degree, Trainees must have a minimum of 5 years of work experience in their occupational field outside the United States.
Interns		
Interns must be currently enrolled in a degree or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States.	OR	Interns must have graduated from a degree or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States less than 12 months before their internship program starts.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In addition to program costs, the BridgeUSA program requires J-1 applicants to prove that they have adequate financial resources to cover program fees, travel, living expenses, and medical expenses for the entire period spent in the United States.

HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All exchange participants, both J-1 participants and J-2 dependents, traveling to the US must have health and accident insurance coverage for the duration of the program as outlined in the US Department of State's Code

of Federal Regulations ([§62.14\(b\)](#)). ICLS offers health and accident insurance coverage meeting the US Department of State's requirements.

Willful failure on the part of the J-1 participant and/or any J-2 dependent on maintaining current insurance coverage is grounds for termination from the J-1 BridgeUSA Program. Participants are required to disclose pre-existing, serious, and/or potentially life-threatening conditions at the time of the application. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program. For any other medical or mental health conditions that occur on program without prior symptoms, ICLS will evaluate on a case-by-case basis whether a participant may remain on program.

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

International students and young professionals applying for a J-1 visa must submit a complete application via Hanover CRM with supporting documents including, but not limited to:

- Signed Participant Agreements
- CV
- Diploma and/or school transcripts
- Photocopy of passport
- Proof of Sufficient funds (can be a bank statement, sponsor's letter, or affidavit of support)
- Any applicable prior US visas or exchange program details
- Proof of employment

HOSTING J-1 INTERNS AND TRAINEES

Purpose

This program aims to enhance understanding of American culture and society and improve knowledge of career fields through exposure to American methodologies and expertise. This objective is best met by ensuring that participants return to their home countries to share knowledge and skills they acquired in the United States, thereby strengthening ties between nations.

Opportunity

Host organizations provide structured work-based training to international interns and trainees while promoting the value of cross-cultural exchange. US host organizations benefit from international talent, create a more dynamic workplace, and American employees expand their knowledge of foreign business culture.

THE ROLE OF THE HOST ORGANIZATION

Host organizations are required to provide a structured, practical training experience while abiding by key program regulations. Because the purpose of the program is to foster cultural and skills-based training exchanges, the host organization is expected to ensure that the DS-7002 training plan is followed by the assigned host supervisors. Any changes to the training plan and/or supervisors must be communicated to ICLS.

Interns must receive supervised training in their current field of study, and trainees must receive mid-level to advanced training that expands their existing knowledge and expertise in their professional fields. Thus, upon completing the program, the participant should return to their home country better equipped to meet new challenges at school or the workplace.

This program is not intended to fill a labor need within your organization. The training plan should reflect an understanding of the participant's program goals. As a host organization, you are expected to provide a balanced exchange of skills and knowledge between your organization and the J-1 participant. However, we

understand that certain occupations require familiarity with unskilled and clerical activities as part of the standard procedures. Therefore, participants may engage in limited office support and clerical activities to a maximum of 20% as part of the project activity resulting in learning a set of management skills.

THE DS-7002 TRAINING PLAN

The Training/Internship Placement Plan is sometimes referred to as the T/IPP, the DS-7002, or the “training plan.” The DS-7002 is required per US Department of State regulations. This form is used to outline the proposed training and to serve as an agreement between the host organization and the J-1 participant. It contains information about specific training goals, objectives, and tasks for the program. Hosts should reinforce this learning experience through regular discussions, evaluations, and feedback on completed tasks.

The DS-7002 training plan should establish a correlation between the training program and the participant's background. The training plan should demonstrate a progression of skills in compliance with the J-1 program regulations in [22 CFR 62.22\(i\)](#).

The DS-7002 training plan will be vetted by the sponsor organization (ICLS), the U.S. consular officer, and the State Department's Educational and Cultural Affairs and BridgeUSA Program. **For this reason, it is essential that hosts review the training plan to ensure that the goals, tasks, and outcomes are achievable.**

TAX INFORMATION

If receiving a stipend, J-1 Program participants are required to pay the following taxes:

- Federal Income Tax
- State Income Tax (if applicable)
- Local/City Income Tax (if applicable)

J-1 Program participants are NOT required to pay the following:

- Social Security & Medicare (FICA)
- Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA)

J-1 participants are typically categorized as “nonresident aliens” for tax purposes. However, we recommend you contact your tax professional and/or a payroll expert for specific guidance. [Sprintax](#) may be a useful resource for hosts and Interns/Trainees as they specialize in nonresident taxation. Sprintax is also our recommended tax filing service for Interns and Trainees as Sprintax specializes in nonresident tax returns.

FLSA AND OSHA REGULATIONS

Hosts must observe and follow all applicable local, state, and federal labor laws, including occupational safety and health (OSHA) regulations (<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs>).

Hosts must pay participants according to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>), including minimum wage and overtime pay.

If the Intern or Trainee is participating in an unpaid program or receives a stipend that is less than minimum wage, the host must ensure it meets the Department of Labor’s standards on internship programs as outlined in DOL Fact Sheet #71: (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships>).

HOST ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

We want you to have a great hosting experience and provide your participant(s) with a rewarding cultural and learning experience. To do so, host organizations are required to follow J-1 Intern/Trainee Program regulations as set forth in [22 CFR Part 62 Subpart A](#) and [22 CFR 62.22](#). Hosts must also follow ICLS guidelines. Below is a list of key regulations and requirements.

Host organizations must:

- Sign a Host Agreement and completed Form DS-7002 to verify that all placements are appropriate and consistent with the objectives of the trainees or interns as outlined in their program applications and as set forth in their training plan.
- **Notify ICLS of any concerns, changes, or deviations from the training plan during the program.**
- In the event of an emergency involving your Interns or Trainees, call 911 and then notify ICLS. Our after-hours emergency customer service line is 1-202-964-7242.
- Abide by all federal, state, and local occupational safety and health administration (OSHA) guidelines and laws.
- Abide by all program rules and regulations set forth by ICLS, including the completion of all mandatory program evaluations.
- Have sufficient resources, physical business office, equipment, and trained personnel available.
- **Provide continuous on-site supervision and mentoring by experienced and knowledgeable staff.**
- Ensure that interns and 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.
- Introduce participants to US culture and business practices.
- Abide by all federal, state, and local labor and wage laws, including laws related to withholding applicable taxes. J-1 visa trainees and interns do not pay FICA (Social Security/Medicare) and FUTA (unemployment) and are required to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) to receive a stipend. The host organization agrees to pay participants while they wait for SSN.
- Provide "real life" experience through exposure to various aspects of the field and activities corresponding to the participant's education or career field.
- Provide orientation during their first week of the program to ensure participants are prepared to begin their training; become familiar with host company rules and standard operating procedures, internship schedule, lunch break, monthly stipend, training plan, monitoring, and evaluation procedures.
- Provide full-time (32-40 hrs per week), skill-based, professional training, including lunch break.
- Encourage speaking English in the office and networking with American peers.
- **Meet regularly and provide feedback to interns/trainees and complete the midpoint and final evaluations using this link: <https://form.jotform.com/63403927456965>**
- Notify ICLS of any training discrepancies, interruptions, incidents, and concerns.
- Encourage interns and trainees to return to their home country after the end of their program, per J-1 Visa regulations.

Exclusions

- Interns and Trainees cannot work in unskilled or casual labor positions, in positions that require or involve childcare or elder care, or in any kind of position that involves medical patient care or contact.
- Host organizations must not place trainees in positions that require more than 20 percent clerical or office support work.
- Use of the J-1 BridgeUSA Program for ordinary employment or work purposes is strictly prohibited.

- Interns and Trainees must not be placed in positions filled or would be filled by full-time or part-time American employees.
- Training plan cannot duplicate a trainee's prior work experience or training. Training plans must provide training and tasks that develop new skills and expand knowledge.
- Interns/Trainees should not regularly train remotely. Likewise, Interns/Trainees should not be isolated during training while all other employees work remotely.

Please do not revise the training plan without the approval of ICLS or offer employment at the end of their program.

ORIENTATION FOR INTERNS AND TRAINEES

To make the internship experience more beneficial for you and your Intern or Trainee, we suggest you discuss the following topics with your Intern or Trainee during the first week of the internship program.

1. Office policies/culture. This might include information about:

- a. Your organization's mission, goals, objectives, standard operating procedures, work, business ethics, safety
- b. Participant's benefits and responsibilities as an intern or trainee
- c. Use of office equipment
- d. Dress code
- e. How to request time off

2. Schedule

- a. What are the regular business hours for your office? Please note that the J-1 participant's internship and training hours should not exceed 32-40 hours per week so that they have time for cultural activities.
- b. Do you have regular staff meetings that the participant will be expected to attend?
- c. What special events are on the calendar that the participant should be aware of? Is the participant expected to assist? To attend?
- d. Which holidays does your office observe? What cultural activities does your office provide to participants?

3. Internship tasks – Training/Internship Placement Plan (DS-7002)

- a. Discuss the training plan and critical functions for which the participant will be responsible.
- b. What projects do you expect the participant to complete within the first 4-8 weeks, 3-6 months, 9-12 months, etc.? By the end of the internship/training?
- c. Discuss possible new projects or areas of research with which the participant might assist.
- d. Discuss the supervisory roles of each supervisor with which the participant will train.
- e. Describe opportunities and procedures for observations and shadowing of the supervisor and staff.
- f. Discuss monitoring/evaluation procedures, completion of the tasks, submitting reports.
- g. Discuss training conditions and work safety environment, work culture shock, expectations, different communication styles (high vs. low context.)

4. Neighborhood orientation

- a. Life and customs in the United States
- b. Local community resources - public transportation, schools, libraries, banks, recreation centers, post offices, grocery stores, dry cleaners, shopping malls, arts, and cultural centers.

- c. Local medical facilities, emergency clinics, pharmacies, police stations, safety information.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

All ICLS exchange participants and hosts should follow the Training/Internship Placement Plans (DS-7002) to maintain their status and complete their programs successfully.

Host organizations monitor participants to ensure that their activities are consistent with those listed on their DS-7002 Training/Internship Placement Plans. This plan should be the primary guide to participants' training. **If there are any plans to alter training activities significantly, ICLS should be notified immediately.**

Any changes to host supervisors should be reported to ICLS right away so that ICLS can ensure all hosts are qualified, adequately oriented to the program, SEVIS records are updated, and amended DS-2019 and DS-7002 forms are provided.

Both participants and host supervisors must submit evaluation reports to ICLS at the midpoint and end of the program. Links to the evaluations are below:

- Intern/Trainee's Evaluation Form: <https://form.jotform.com/70363391284154>
- Host's Evaluation Form: <https://form.jotform.com/63403927456965>

Evaluations are a US Department of State requirement for the program. These evaluations will help you to track the progress of your Intern or Trainee and keep ICLS informed of any issues that may arise.

OBSTACLES

Obstacles may arise when hosting a J-1 Intern or Trainee. Although the training plan can often appear clear on paper, some issues can occur unexpectedly. **Communication is the key to understanding and resolving issues.**

CULTURE SHOCK

One common issue for J-1 Interns and Trainees is culture shock. Culture shock is the physical and emotional discomfort one feels in a new country and/or culture. You can help your J-1 Intern or Trainee by checking in regularly to offer support. Notify ICLS so we can provide timely support, advice, and counseling as well.

DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS

Sometimes Interns and Trainees have different expectations than their hosts. It is critical that you discuss the DS-7002 training plan with your participant during the orientation phase and make sure they fully understand policies and have realistic expectations.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE ARE ISSUES

1. Contact ICLS so that we are informed, aware, and able to help.
2. Document the issues and provide written warnings. In the written warnings, describe what happened, the policy they broke, and what the expectation is moving forward.
3. Set expectations and consequences. For example, "If you receive 3 written warnings, you will be fired," "If this happens again, we will have to end your internship with us."
4. If a participant must be fired, contact ICLS as soon as possible so we can plan for next steps. Issue the participant a written internship termination notice.

Thank you for hosting international participants and sharing your experience with them. Your contribution to their development is immense!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please contact ICLS at internships@icls.edu or visit our website at www.icls.edu for additional resources.

LINKS TO IMPORTANT WORKPLACE AND SAFETY INFORMATION

For important workplace rights and safety information, please visit ICLS' Knowledge Base here: <https://learning.icls.edu/knowledge/j1-workplace-rights-and-protections>

- Non-Immigrant Rights Pamphlet
- Sexual Harassment & Retaliation Information
- Protecting Personal Information
- Human Trafficking Information
- Social Security Information for Non-Citizens
- DOS Exchange Program Brochure
- Employee Rights
- DOL Fact Sheet #71

LIST OF PROHIBITED UNSKILLED OCCUPATIONS

Appendix E to Part 62; 22 CFR (c) (1) – Excerpt from the Exchange Visitor Program, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State: Internships and Traineeships are not allowed by the Exchange Visitor Program under the following “**unskilled occupations:**”

Assemblers	Attendants, Parking Lot
Automobile Service Station Attendants	Bartenders
Attendant (Personal Service)	Attendant (Recreation Service)
Attendant (Amusement)	Ushers, Recreation, and Amusement
Basic Accounting and Bookkeepers	Caretakers
Cashiers	Charworkers and Cleaners
Cleaners, Hotel, and Motel	Chauffeurs and Taxicab Drivers
Clerks, Hotel, Restaurant	Clerks, General
Clerks and Checkers, Grocery Stores	Clerk Typist
Cooks, Short Order	Counter and Fountain Workers
Dining Room Attendants	Electric Truck Operators
Elevator Operators	Floor workers
Groundskeepers	Guards
Helpers, any industry	Material Handlers
Hotel Cleaners	Nurses' Aides and Orderlies
Household Domestic Service Workers	Packers, Markers, Bottlers, and Related
Hotel Housekeepers, Room Service, Guest Service	Laborers, Farm
Janitors	Laborers, Mine
Key Punch Operators	Loopers and Toppers
Kitchen Workers	Porters
Laborers, Common	Receptionists
Sales Clerks, General	Sailors and Deck Hands
Sewing Machine Operators & Hemstitchers	Streetcar and Bus Conductors

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Stock Room and Warehouse Workers	Telephone Operators
Truck, Yacht Drivers	Yard Workers
Typist, Lesser Skilled	Restaurant Cleaners, Kitchen Workers, Food/Beverage Delivery, Valley Parking, Hostess
Spa Massage/Nail Technician	