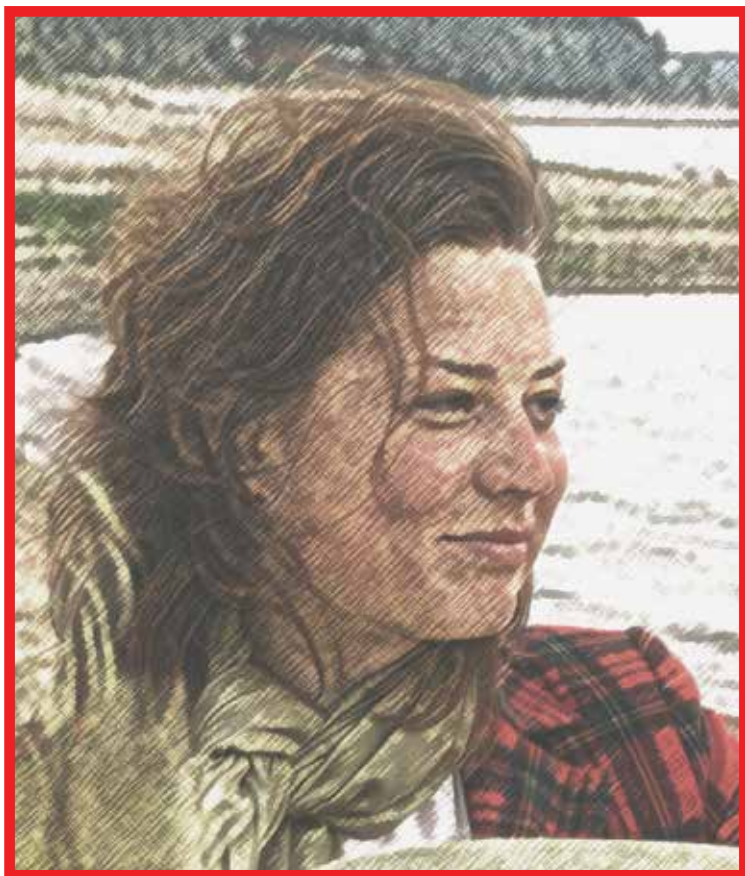




Summer Work Travel



Student Handbook



an ASSE affiliated program

Dear Student,

Welcome to the ASPIRE Worldwide Summer Work Travel Program! We are very pleased that you have selected us to be your program sponsor. We take pride in offering you a program that will allow you to visit the USA, meet people, and learn about the culture while working in an American company. In turn, your participation will enrich the lives of the people you meet by giving them the chance to learn about you, your culture, and your country.

To make your adjustment to the Summer Work Travel Program as easy as possible, we have prepared this handbook for your use throughout the program. Hopefully, it will answer most of your questions and prepare you for your experience in the USA.

Again, we welcome you to the United States and wish you a rewarding work and travel experience during your visit!

Sincerely yours,

The ASPIRE Team

228 N Coast Hwy, Laguna Beach, CA 92651 USA

Tel: 1.888.327.7473 • Fax: 1.949.494.4280

E-mail: info@aspireww.com • Web Site: www.aspireww.com

Important Items to Bring

- Passport**
- Original DS-2019 Form**
- Job Offer**
- Sponsor Letter**
- ASPIRE Identification Card**
- Insurance Card**
- ASPIRE Student Handbook**
- International Driver's License**
- \$1,000 US dollars for initial expenses**
- Credit Card**

Insurance

Insurance Company: GBG - Bulstrad Life

Policy Number: 521440

Toll-Free 24-Hour Assistance: 1.888.258.8597

All insurance information is found on your Insurance Identification Card, also via email before you arrive for your program.

Non-Life Threatening (Emergency) Sickness and Injuries

Always call the insurance company's assistance service, before seeking medical care. Contact details for the insurance company are listed on your Insurance Identification Card. The insurance company can help you to locate approved medical providers (doctors, clinics, urgent care, hospitals, etc) in your area. You can also log onto their website to find a list of medical providers near you.

Where to go? Hospitals, urgent care, walk-in clinics or doctors office?

In non-life threatening situations, choose urgent care clinics, walk-in clinics and doctors' offices

Choose Hospital Emergency Room ONLY in emergency situations. The cost to you for the Emergency Room (ER) treatment for a non-emergency will be much higher.

If you visit a hospital, please first ask the hospital to call the insurance company for authorization of your treatment.

Types of Medical Providers:

• In-Network

This group is always the best option. In-Network medical providers will bill the insurance company directly, so you will only pay the co-pay amount (first \$50). The In-Network medical providers can be found on the insurance company's website at <http://gbg.canmednet.com/ProviderSearch.aspx> or by calling the insurance company directly.

• Out of Network

The out of network providers will not bill the insurance company directly. Therefore, you will need to pay for your entire visit upfront (out of your pocket) at the time of service. This payment will be reimbursed to you by the insurance company once you file a claim. You must submit a Claim Form to the insurance company, for Out of Network medical providers. With the Claim Form you are required to submit the itemized bill, any additional receipts and medical records from your visit.

The Claim Form is on the ASPIRE website: http://aspireww.com/Travel_Claim_Form_ASSE_21.97x27.94.pdf

Social Security

You must apply for your social security number.

If you already have a Social Security Number from previous visit in the USA, you do not need to apply again.

In order to apply for a Social Security number:

1. Complete your arrival check-in
2. Wait at least 24 hours after you have completed your arrival check-in before you can go to the Social Security office to apply.

Purpose of Social Security Number: For the Host Company payroll purposes, and when applying for tax refund.

Where is the Social Security office: visit www.ssa.gov or call toll free: 1.800.772.1213

Documents to take with you to the Social Security office:

- Original DS-2019 Form
- Passport with Your J1 Visa
- I-94 Number (record of admission). Find it at www.cbp.gov/I94
- Sponsor Letter

Make sure that you request an official Certificate/Receipt or an Official Letter from the Social Security Administration confirming your attempt to apply for a Social Security Card. This Certificate/Receipt or Letter should be shown to your Host Company.

You must report your Social Security Number to your Host Company immediately. Otherwise, you will have difficulty filing your tax return documentation. Keep the Social Security Card in a safe place.

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Experience of ASSE ASPIRE Worldwide's Founding Organization ASSE International

ASSE International Student Exchange Programs (ASSE) was founded by the Swedish Ministry of Education. It cooperates closely with the provincial Ministries of Education in Canada. In the United States, ASSE has been designated by the US Department of State as an 'exchange-visitor program' and adheres strictly to all Department of State regulations. ASSE is a full member of the Alliance Exchange, the World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation and GWEA. ASSE is approved for listing by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET).

The history of ASSE goes back to the 1930's when the Swedish Parliament instituted an exchange program for Swedish and German students. In the post World War II era, this was expanded to include England, France, Spain, and Switzerland. The USA entity was added in the 1960's, when the Swedish government's National Department of Education organized in the USA. In 1976, the program was incorporated in

“ The history of ASSE goes back to the 1930's when the Swedish Parliament instituted an exchange program for Swedish and German students.”

North America as American Scandinavian Student Exchange (ASSE) to provide student exchange opportunities between the Scandinavian countries and the USA. ASSE has evolved and expanded in size and scope to provide academic year home-stay programs in Canada (English and French-speaking), Australia, the USA, Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland), France, Germany, German-speaking Switzerland, Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, Mexico, Japan, China, Taiwan, Thailand, South Africa, Turkey, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mongolia, the Philippines and India.

ASSE also provides short term homestay language study and campus programs in Europe, as well as 3-month reciprocal exchanges with France, Germany and Spain. ASSE is proud to participate in the prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program between the USA, and Germany, as well as the FLEX program (Future Leaders Exchange Program), a USA government-sponsored program that

brings hundreds of students to the USA from the Independent Republics of the former Soviet Union.

In addition to all the above, ASSE founded in 1989 the EurAupair Program, a not-for-profit, public benefit organization by funding it in its initial stage and applying for the original designation. Most recently, ASSE became a designated sponsor for the Summer Work Travel Program, which provides summer employment opportunities to university students in the USA, and the ASSE ASPIRE Trainee Program, which facilitates recently graduated professionals and specialists to spend up to 18 months training in their field in an American corporation or professional/vocational group, and the ASSE ASPIRE Intern Program, which facilitates current university students or recent graduates to spend up to 12 months participating in an internship with an American business. While the above programs are separate and completely different entities, they share a common mission and philosophy: To improve understanding among people of different countries through cultural exchange.

ASSE maintains its headquarters in Laguna Beach, California, USA, an international coordinating office in Germany, four regional American offices, and one Canadian. In addition, ASSE maintains a network of affiliated organizations throughout the rest of the world with 1500 ASSE Area Representatives throughout the Americas, Europe, Australia, South Africa, and Asia.

In several countries, ASSE has a very active alumni group, which is composed of students that have participated in past programs. The members act as counselors, helpers, interviewers and resource people for students embarking on ASSE programs, or taking part in them. They provide a singularly effective support group when a student, far from home, or about to begin a big adventure, needs preparation help, and assurance.



ASSE's primary goal is to provide exchange programs which enable students to learn about other languages and cultures, while participating in community life and helping to achieve international understanding.

SUMMER WORK TRAVEL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Work Travel Program is to offer international students like you the opportunity to immerse themselves in USA daily life through temporary employment opportunities during their summer holidays. This is accomplished by ongoing interaction with Americans at the host company, as well as other social activities.

Participants will also learn about USA culture and specifically, the values in American business practices. On the other hand, the Americans will increase their cross-cultural knowledge of other parts of the world. The friendships formed will not only last a lifetime but also assist you in your career development upon returning home.

“ ... jobs that will be available... include: amusement park attendant; banquet server; busser; cook; dishwasher; fast food server; front desk clerk; game/ride attendant; host/hostess; housekeeper; park services; bellman; tour guide; waiter/waitress.”

The jobs that will be available are almost always unskilled, or semi-unskilled, and include the following possibilities: amusement park attendant; banquet server; busser; cook; dishwasher; fast food server; front desk clerk; game/ride attendant; host/hostess; housekeeper; park services; bellman; tour guide assistant; waiter/waitress.

How Will You Benefit?

- Improve English proficiency
- Understand the American way of life, and its culture through frequent participation in cultural activities
- Experience the fun of working and traveling in the USA
- Develop entry level skills that could help your future employment. You could also receive a reference from your USA Host Company to include in your CV
- Make new friends from all over the world

WHAT IS INCLUDED AND NOT INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM PRICE?

Included for all students:

- DS-2019 form
- Comprehensive health, accident and liability insurance for the duration of your program stated on your DS-2019 form
- Job placement
- Assistance with locating housing
- Orientation
- Support in the USA

Not Included:

- International and domestic airfares and other transportation (e.g. bus) to the company site
- Daily living expenses, including but not limited to housing, transportation and meals (housing alone will cost a minimum of \$350 per month)

Rules and Regulations

The following rules and regulations for ASSE ASPIRE Work Travel Programs have been established by ASSE ASPIRE Worldwide as minimum standards of participant conduct for its Work Travel Program. Each student must agree in writing to adhere to these rules prior to final program acceptance.

Program Rules and Regulations:

1. Student is between the ages of 18 and 28, in good health, has a valid passport, and is enrolled as a full-time student at a post-secondary level college or university.
2. Student must bring at least \$1,000 with him/her to cover initial costs upon arrival in the USA.
3. Student will obey all USA federal, state and local laws.
4. Any illegal use of drugs or alcohol, abuse of harmful controlled substances or illegal possession of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances will result in the student's immediate repatriation.
5. Student will complete orientation in his/her country.
6. Student will carry out the duties and responsibilities of the position which ASSE ASPIRE has arranged. It is the responsibility of the student to advise ASSE ASPIRE of any significant problems, including but not limited to the health, safety or welfare of the student, adjustment to the job, culture, language, etc.
7. Student agrees to be an active and congenial part of the host company and understands that he/she will receive basic entry-level work experience in addition to gaining cultural experience from the program.
8. Student understands that the assigned host company holds the right to dismiss the student if the student's work performance is not satisfactory and/or the student disobeys the company's employee rules or codes of conduct (including the company's dress code). If the student is dismissed by the host company, the student must contact ASSE ASPIRE immediately. In some cases the student will need to return home immediately at his/her own expense.
9. Student must secure approval for any change in host company prior to commencing work with that host company. Student must allow 3 business days for ASSE ASPIRE to contact the new host company and confirm the eligibility of the host company and suitability of the job. Any student who

Rules and Regulations

begins work with a new host company without gaining approval from ASSE ASPIRE must be terminated from the program.

10. Student will cooperate fully with those supervising the program on behalf of and in correspondence with ASSE ASPIRE.
11. Student understands that the work assignment is temporary and runs for the duration of the work authorization as stated on the DS-2019 form. Student cannot change the visa to a different category.
12. It is understood that there is a minimum of 2 months work commitment required, and student agrees to work the entire period as stated on the Job Offer. Not working through the period indicated constitutes a violation of the agreement with the host company.
13. Student will not accept any form of assignment other than what is authorized by the signed Job Offer.
14. Student will not terminate agreement with host company without consulting with ASSE ASPIRE staff for assistance first. Students must have written authorization from ASSE ASPIRE in order to leave the placement.
15. Student will respect the privacy of information learned during the work experience.
16. Student agrees to complete all evaluations in compliance with the program regulations.
17. Student will pay for any property damages caused by him/her.
18. Student will return home within 30 days of the DS-2019 program end date or immediately if terminated from the program for violation of rules governing the program. Student cannot work during the 30-day grace period.
19. For self-placed students only, it is solely the student's responsibility to ensure that the self-placed Job Offer form is completed clearly and signed by both, he/she and his/her host company. This Job Offer form must be submitted with all other application documentation.
20. If for any reason the student's pre-placed job placement should not work out, through no fault of the student, ASSE ASPIRE will do all possible within its resources to replace him/her in a suitable position. If it is able to do so, but not able to locate a position in the same area, the student would be responsible to provide for his/her own transportation to the new site.
21. Failure to comply with any program rules or giving misleading information may result in program dismissal and repatriation to the home country.

22. Cultural Activities

In addition to work-based cultural exposure, it is intended that students should learn about, and experience, American culture firsthand. As a program component, the United States Department of State requires each student to avail themselves of local resources and participate in activities, which would expose them to components of American life or history. Student must take part in at least one cultural activity per month during his/her stay and provide documentation of these activities on a monthly basis. Students who do not take part in and document at least one cultural activity monthly will be terminated from the program. Examples of such activities, sites or events are national, state or county parks, historic sites, sports events, local government visits, family meals or celebrations, museum visits, etc. Please search your local city and chamber of commerce websites in your area as these are great sources to find out about local cultural activities, local events, festivals and parades that you can participate in while on the program.

23. Student must complete the online 'Arrival Check-in' with the program sponsor ASSE ASPIRE within 10 days of arrival. Failure to check-in within 10 days of arrival will result in termination from the program.
24. Student must advise ASSE ASPIRE when they change residence/housing location within 10 days by completing the online "US Address Change" form. Failure to do so within 10 days of the change of residential address may result in termination of the program.
25. Subsequent to the 'Arrival Check-in', student must complete the online 'Monthly Check-in' every 30 days counting from the program begin date. Student who fails to check-in with ASSE ASPIRE every month will be terminated from the program.

During your program you must do the following:

- Check-in within 10 days of your arrival in the USA.**
- Check-in once a month** (every 30 days from your program start date) **with your current address and a cultural activity.**
- Report any change of housing address within 10 days.**
- Report a second job and receive permission from ASSE ASPIRE prior to start working at this second job.**
- Complete at least one cultural activity per month and report it to ASSE ASPIRE in your monthly check-in.**

Otherwise your program will be **TERMINATED** which could prevent you from being granted a visa for the USA for the next 10 years.

Please log onto www.aspireww.com to complete an Arrival Check-In, a Monthly Check-In (including your cultural activity documentation), or a US Address Change. Under the Work & Travel Program you will also find the instructions for a second job application.

The screenshot displays the ASPIRE website interface. At the top, the ASPIRE logo is shown with the tagline "Work in the USA" and "ASSE affiliated program". Below the logo is a banner image featuring a collage of people in various work settings, including a chef, a woman in a hat, and a woman in a red shirt. The main text reads: "ASPIRE gives you the opportunity to live the best experience of your life. Our network of reside companies and partners in students of the world to work or train in the USA and discover the country with all of our programs."

Underneath, a section titled "Choose what is best for you:" offers three program options, each with a corresponding arrow icon:

- Work & Travel Program** (blue arrow): for Candidates for Employers
- Trainee Program** (red arrow): for Candidates for Employers
- Intern Program** (light blue arrow): for Candidates for Employers

Below these options are three columns of text providing details for each program:

- Work & Travel Program:** If you are a current university student interested in working in the USA for 3 to 4 months and travel for up to 1 month within the USA during your summer vacation, we can help you.
- Trainee Program:** You are a young professional seeking opportunities to train for up to 18 months with a US company to further your career development.
- Intern Program:** Be an intern for up to 12 months gain practical experience with company. If you are a current student or a recent graduate, eligible to apply.

At the bottom of the page, there are three buttons with icons and text: "Arrival Check-In" (with a red star icon), "Monthly Check-In" (with a green checkmark icon), and "U.S. Address Change" (with a house icon).

CHECK-IN INFORMATION

For every check-in (arrival and monthly), you must enter your physical living address in the USA. This address must be correct and precise. If you are living in a dorm, apartment or motel, you must give us your room number/dorm name, for example. We do not accept PO Boxes or any mailing address.

Change of address: if for any reason your living address changes during your program (if you move motel rooms, or move to a completely different housing) you must inform ASSE ASPIRE of your new address within 10 days of such a move.

CULTURAL ACTIVITY

When you complete your monthly check-in (at least once every 30 days after your program begin date), you will be asked to inform us of a cultural activity you have taken part in during that month and upload a picture proving this activity took place. Examples of such activities are local events, national, state or county parks, historic sites, sports events, local government visits, family meals or celebrations, museum visits, etc. Your check-in can be disapproved if the picture is considered not valid by ASSE ASPIRE, and you will receive an e-mail asking you to complete a new check-in within 5 days. You must check your e-mails regularly and respond to them within a reasonable timeframe.

EARLY PROGRAM TERMINATION

You must do your best to complete the program. Should you be unwilling to complete the program, your status in SEVIS may be terminated. Should you not return home immediately you must do your best to complete the program in accordance to the commitment you made to your host company. ASSE ASPIRE understands, however, that sometimes unexpected situations arise. Should you find that you are unable to complete the program due to unforeseen circumstances, you must contact ASSE ASPIRE immediately. Your early program termination will affect your SEVIS status. Students who fail to complete the program successfully are not permitted the 30-day grace period to travel in the USA.



PRE-DEPARTURE

Before you leave your country, make sure your flight and travel information has been sent to ASSE ASPIRE and your Host Company.

Make sure you know how to get to your Host Company and to your housing. Your agent and your job offer will provide this information.

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE & PACKING

Check with your airline to find out your baggage allowance. You may want to limit your luggage weight because not only do you have to carry the luggage, but many places may not have elevators. Also, you may want to bring back more than you've taken. Try limiting the luggage to 15 kilos. Most students will be wearing a uniform so clothing needs will be minimal.

- If you plan to do any traveling while in the USA, a backpack will be much easier to manage than a suitcase.
- Pack according to the season and destination.
- You may have to go a week between laundries so bring enough clothing to get through the week during the hot season.
- Do not bring valuables. There may be difficulty finding a secure place for them.

MONEY

• You should not carry large amounts of cash to the USA. However, you should arrive with **at least \$1000** in US currency for emergencies and unexpected costs upon arrival. Please keep in mind that it may take a few weeks before you get your first paycheck, so plan to bring at least enough money to live for a few weeks. Also, some housing may require a deposit.

- Bring enough money to cover those expenses that will not be met by the work

stipend. Having additional money sent from home can take a long time. You should consider the types of expenses that you may have upon arrival, including travel expenses, lodging, food, housing deposit, etc. until receipt of the first paycheck. Housing costs per month could be a minimum of \$350 and might be deducted from your paycheck.

- It is highly recommended that you open a checking account in a local bank. You will want to be given an Automatic Teller Card (ATM or Debit card) to avoid carrying large sums of money. ATM cards can be used at 24-hour automated teller machines. A “PIN” or Personal Identification Number is provided for your Debit card. This number should be a secret that only you know. If someone else has your Debit card and Pin number, they can take money from your account. If you lose this card notify your bank immediately. Most ATM cards can be used extensively throughout the USA. Keep track of all banking records so you don’t forget how much money you have spent.

- If you need money from home in a hurry, contact Western Union (website: www.westernunion.com or phone 1.800.325.6000. This service makes it possible to transfer money from your home country to anywhere in the USA within 15 minutes, on any day of the week. There is a handling charge, which will vary according to the amount of money sent.

DOCUMENTS AND KEY ITEMS TO BRING

DOCUMENTS TO BRING:

- Passport
- Sponsor Letter
- Return Plane ticket
- International driver’s license
- Original DS-2019 form
- Job Offer
- International student ID card
- Insurance card

(Make sure you have copies of all the above documents)

SOME KEY ITEMS

- Second pair of glasses/contacts
- Electrical current converter plug and adapter
- Medicines are very expensive in the USA so bring an extra supply of any medicine you take
- Credit Card

I-94 ADMISSION NUMBER

Upon arrival at the US port of entry, you will present the passport, visa and DS-2019 form. After reviewing them and updating your SEVIS record with the entry information (date and port of entry), the immigration officer return the documents to you. In order to increase efficiency, reduce operating costs and streamline the admissions process, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has automated Form I-94 at air and sea ports of entry. You will be provided with a CBP admission stamp on your travel document. You will need the I-94 (record of admission) for verification of alien registration, immigration status or employment authorization, the electronic arrival/ departure record can be obtained at www.cbp.gov/I94.



If Your Are Lost

In case of Emergency call:

1-888-327-7473

Social Security Card

You are required to complete your arrival check-in at the ASPIRE website www.aspireww.com before applying for a Social Security Card. You must obtain a **Social Security Card** (SS card) upon arrival in the USA. You can download the application form from www.ssa.gov. The number on the SS card serves as the taxpayer identification number and will be used for the host company's payroll. This number is also needed to open a bank account or obtain a state driver's license. While your Host Company or ASSE ASPIRE Area Representative will assist you in obtaining the SS card, it is ultimately your responsibility to obtain this SS card and provide your number to your Host Company as soon as you receive it.



Social Security Card

The following items will need to be with you upon application for the Social Security Card:

- Original DS- 2019 form
- Passport with the J-1 Visa and a copy of your I-94 (record of admission) that can be obtained at www.cbp.gov/I94.
- Sponsor letter
- If the passport is less than one year old you will need to bring an official document (birth certificate or driver's license with photo) to serve as proof of age.

Read all instructions BEFORE you fill out the application. **A few tips include:**

1. Use your Host Company's address as your mailing address. Address it to the attention of the Human Resources Office.
2. For question #3 (Citizenship), check the box labeled "Legal Alien Allowed To Work."
3. For question #8 (Mother's Maiden Name), write your Mother's family name before she was married.
4. You can leave #8B and #9B blank.

If you lose your Social Security Card, you should be fine, as long as you still have your Social Security number (or a photocopy of the card) in a safe place. The application could take up to 20 working days. Request a temporary certificate (Form SSA-5028) upon application. This temporary certificate doesn't have a number, but is proof that you have applied for the card. The host company should be able to use a provisional number until the Social Security card arrives. To check on the status of your Social Security Card, you may call the USA Social Security Administration without charge 1.800.772.1213 or visit their website at www.ssa.gov.

Please notify your sponsor IMMEDIATELY if your Host Company does not pay you because you have not received your SS card.

International Students And Social Security Numbers



Are you temporarily in the United States to attend a college, language, vocational or nonacademic school with a nonimmigrant F-1, M-1 or J-1 student classification? Your school may ask you for your Social Security number. Some colleges and schools use Social Security numbers as student identification numbers. If you do not have a Social Security number, the college or school should be able to give you another identification number.

Social Security numbers generally are assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security will not assign you a number just to enroll in a college or school.

What do I have to do to work in the United States?

If you want to get a job on campus, you should contact your designated school official for international students. This official can tell you if you are eligible to work on campus and give you information about available jobs. Also, your school may approve certain limited off-campus employment, as permitted under Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations. **If your school has authorized you to work either on or off campus, and you meet Social Security's eligibility requirements described in the next section, you can get a Social Security number.**

How do I apply for a Social Security number?

In general, only noncitizens who have permission to work from DHS can apply for a Social Security number. We suggest you wait until you are in the United States for at least 10 days before you apply for a Social Security number. Also, you should report to your school before applying for a number. Taking

these actions will ensure we can verify your immigration status with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

To apply for a Social Security number:

- Complete an *Application For A Social Security Card* (Form SS-5); and
- Show us original documents proving your:
 - Work-authorized immigration status;
 - Age;
 - Identity; and
- Take your completed application and original documents to your local Social Security office.

Immigration status

To prove your immigration status, you must show us the current U.S. immigration document, I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record*, issued to you when you arrived in the United States. If you are an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show us your I-20, *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status*. If you are a J-1 exchange visitor, you must show us your DS-2019, *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status*.

Work eligibility

If you are an F-1 student and eligible to work on campus, you must provide a letter from your designated school official that:

- Identifies you;
- Confirms your current school status; and
- Identifies your employer and the type of work you are, or will be, doing.

We also need to see evidence of that employment, such as a recent pay slip or a letter from your employer. Your supervisor must sign and date the employment letter. This letter must describe:

- Your job;
- Your employment start date;
- The number of hours you are, or will be, working; and
- Your supervisor's name and telephone number.

Social Security Fact Sheet

If you are an F-1 student authorized to work in curricular practical training (CPT), you must provide us your Form I-20 with the employment page (page 3) completed and signed by your school's designated official.

If you are an F-1 or M-1 student and have a work permit (Form I-766) from DHS, you must present it.

If you are a J-1 student, student intern or international visitor, you must provide a letter from your sponsor. The letter should be on sponsor letterhead with an original signature that authorizes your employment.

We cannot process your application if:

- Your on-campus or CPT work begins more than 30 days from your application date; or
- The employment start date on your work permit from DHS (Form I-766) is a future date.

Age

You must present your foreign birth certificate if you have it or can get it within 10 business days. If not, we can consider other documents, such as your passport or a document issued by DHS, as evidence of your age.

Identity

We can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information and preferably a recent photograph. Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable immigration documents include your:

- Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- Form I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- Form I-766 (work permit from DHS).

All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We also cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, we may use your DHS work permit as proof of both work eligibility and identity. *However, you must provide at least two separate documents.*

Do I need a Social Security number before I start working?

We do not require you to have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service requires employers to report wages using a Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from us stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the United States. Employers can find more information on the Internet at www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm.

Contacting Social Security

For more information and to find copies of our publications, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-772-1213 (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778). We treat all calls confidentially. We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.



STARTING WORK & COMPLETING YOUR W-4 FORM

When you start your job in the USA, your Host Company will provide you with a W-4 form to complete. Please note it is very important for you to take the following steps when completing it:

- Write 1 on line A - this will make sure you are reported as a working individual.
- Write 1 on line H - this is summary line confirming same as above.
- Box 1 - Name and Address write your name and surname with capital letters as you have written it on the Social Security Card application. Write your full home address in your home country. This will ensure that your final payment document W-2 will arrive at your home country, and you will need it to file an income tax return the following year.
- Box 2 - Social Security number please write your SSN only if you already have received your card. If not - leave blank and make sure you provide your Host Company with your Social Security number as soon as you receive your card, so you can use your SSN to file an income tax return.
- Box 3 - Tick “single” box.
- Box 5 - Write 1. This will make sure you are using the correct allowance number for tax purposes.
- Line 6 - Write the words “Non-Resident Alien” in English. This will ensure that you are correctly taxed and do not owe money to the US Tax Authorities.

Very Important- Do not write “exempt” anywhere on the W-4 form, even if you are advised to do so. It is illegal to claim tax exemption in the USA.

For further information on W-4 form - please see example on the following page.

As soon as you receive your Social Security Card - please inform your Host Company of your Social Security number.

Copies of important documents you need to keep for when you return from the USA:

- Your Visa in your passport
- DS-2019 form
- I-94 admission number
- Social Security Card
- Last payslip from all Host Companies you received before you left USA
- W-2 form if you receive it while you are in USA. There is one W-2 form for every calendar year, which your Host Company should give you (or mail to the address you provided on the W-4 form) in the beginning of the next calendar year. (Example your W-2 form for 2014 should be given or mailed to you in January 2015).

W-4 Form

Form W-4 (2014)

Purpose. Complete Form W-4 so that your employer can withhold the correct federal income tax from your pay. Consider completing a new Form W-4 each year and when your personal or financial situation changes.

Exemption from withholding. If you are exempt, complete **only** lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 and sign the form to validate it. Your exemption for 2014 expires February 17, 2015. See Pub. 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax.

Note. If another person can claim you as a dependent on his or her tax return, you cannot claim exemption from withholding if your income exceeds \$1,000 and includes more than \$350 of unearned income (for example, interest and dividends).

Exceptions. An employee may be able to claim exemption from withholding even if the employee is a dependent, if the employee:

- Is age 65 or older.
- Is blind, or
- Will claim adjustments to income; tax credits; or itemized deductions, on his or her tax return.

The exceptions do not apply to supplemental wages greater than \$1,000.00.

Basic instructions. If you are not exempt, complete the **Personal Allowances Worksheet** below. The worksheets on page 2 further adjust your withholding allowances based on itemized deductions, certain credits, adjustments to income, or two-earners/multiple jobs situations.

Complete all worksheets that apply. However, you may claim fewer (or zero) allowances. For regular wages, withholding must be based on allowances you claimed and may not be a flat amount or percentage of wages.

Head of household. Generally, you can claim head of household filing status on your tax return only if you are unmarried and pay more than 50% of the costs of keeping up a home for yourself and your dependent(s) or other qualifying individuals. See Pub. 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction, and Filing Information, for information.

Tax credits. You can take projected tax credits into account in figuring your allowable number of withholding allowances. Credits for child or dependent care expenses and the child tax credit may be claimed using the **Personal Allowances Worksheet** below. See Pub. 505 for information on converting your other credits into withholding allowances.

Nonwage income. If you have a large amount of nonwage income, such as interest or dividends, consider making estimated tax payments using Form 1040-ES, Estimated Tax for Individuals. Otherwise, you may owe additional tax. If you have pension or annuity income, see Pub. 505 to find out if you should adjust your withholding on Form W-4 or W-4e.

Two earners or multiple jobs. If you have a working spouse or more than one job, figure the total number of allowances you are entitled to claim on all jobs using worksheets from only one Form W-4. Your withholding usually will be most accurate when all allowances are claimed on the Form W-4 for the highest paying job and zero allowances are claimed on the others. See Pub. 505 for details.

Nonresident alien. If you are a nonresident alien, see Notice 1392, Supplemental Form W-4 Instructions for Nonresident Aliens, before completing this form.

Check your withholding. After your Form W-4 takes effect, use Pub. 505 to see how the amount you are having withheld compares to your projected total tax for 2014. See Pub. 505, especially if your earnings exceed \$130,000 (Single) or \$180,000 (Married).

Future developments. Information about any future developments affecting Form W-4 (such as legislation enacted after we release it) will be posted at www.irs.gov/w4.

Personal Allowances Worksheet (Keep for your records.)

A	Enter "1" for yourself if no one else can claim you as a dependent	A	
B	Enter "1" if: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">{</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are single and have only one job; or • You are married, have only one job, and your spouse does not work; or • Your wages from a second job or your spouse's wages (or the total of both) are \$1,500 or less. </div>	B	
C	Enter "1" for your spouse . But, you may choose to enter "-0-" if you are married and have either a working spouse or more than one job. (Entering "-0-" may help you avoid having too little tax withheld.)	C	
D	Enter number of dependents (other than your spouse or yourself) you will claim on your tax return	D	
E	Enter "1" if you will file as head of household on your tax return (see conditions under Head of household above)	E	
F	Enter "1" if you have at least \$2,000 of child or dependent care expenses for which you plan to claim a credit (Note. Do not include child support payments. See Pub. 503, Child and Dependent Care Expenses, for details.)	F	
G	Child Tax Credit (including additional child tax credit). See Pub. 972, Child Tax Credit, for more information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your total income will be less than \$65,000 (\$95,000 if married), enter "2" for each eligible child; then less "1" if you have three to six eligible children or less "2" if you have seven or more eligible children. • If your total income will be between \$65,000 and \$84,000 (\$95,000 and \$119,000 if married), enter "1" for each eligible child 	G	
H	Add lines A through G and enter total here. (Note. This may be different from the number of exemptions you claim on your tax return.) ▶ H	H	

For accuracy, complete all worksheets that apply.
 • If you plan to **itemize or claim adjustments to income** and want to reduce your withholding, see the **Deductions and Adjustments Worksheet** on page 2.
 • If you are **single and have more than one job** or are **married and you and your spouse both work** and the combined earnings from all jobs exceed \$50,000 (\$20,000 if married), see the **Two-Earners/Multiple Jobs Worksheet** on page 2 to avoid having too little tax withheld.
 • If **neither** of the above situations applies, **stop here** and enter the number from line H on line 5 of Form W-4 below.

Separate here and give Form W-4 to your employer. Keep the top part for your records.

Form W-4 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	<h3>Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate</h3> <p>▶ Whether you are entitled to claim a certain number of allowances or exemption from withholding is subject to review by the IRS. Your employer may be required to send a copy of this form to the IRS.</p>	OMB No. 1545-0074 <div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2014</div>
1 Your first name and middle initial Last name		2 Your social security number
Home address (number and street or rural route)		3 <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Married, but withhold at higher Single rate. Note. If married, but legally separated, or spouse is a nonresident alien, check the "Single" box.
City or town, state, and ZIP code		4 If your last name differs from that shown on your social security card, check here. You must call 1-800-772-1213 for a replacement card. <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Total number of allowances you are claiming (from line H above or from the applicable worksheet on page 2)	5	
6 Additional amount, if any, you want withheld from each paycheck	6 \$	
7 I claim exemption from withholding for 2014, and I certify that I meet both of the following conditions for exemption. • Last year I had a right to a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I had no tax liability, and • This year I expect a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I expect to have no tax liability. If you meet both conditions, write "Exempt" here ▶ 7		
Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this certificate and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.		
Employee's signature (This form is not valid unless you sign it.) ▶		Date ▶
8 Employer's name and address (Employer: Complete lines 8 and 10 only if sending to the IRS.)	9 Office code (optional)	10 Employer identification number (EIN)



All individuals who earn income in the USA are required to file a tax return the following calendar year, before April 15. Your tax return will reflect your actual earnings for the previous year, the amount of taxes you paid and the total amount of taxes owed or refunded. To file your taxes you will need your W-2 form and 1040NR-EZ tax form.

At the beginning of the year following your summer work program, the host company will send you a W-2 form (required by law to mail it to you by February 15). Before the end of your program, provide the host company with a self-addressed envelope so that he/she can mail you your W-2 form. This form summarizes your earnings and amount of taxes withheld from you the previous calendar year. A W-2 form is usually composed of four copies: Federal copy, State copy, Local/City copy and Employee copy.

Upon receiving your W-2 form, you will fill out a 1040NR-EZ (Non-Resident Aliens with no Dependents) tax form. You can obtain this form (with instructions – don't forget those) at the United States Embassy in your home country or on the Internet at <http://www.irs.gov>.

Once you have completed the form, mail it to:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215 USA

If you overpaid the government, they will issue you a check. However, if you did not pay enough taxes, you must pay the government the balance. ***You must file your tax return no later than April 15.***

If you have difficulties filing your 1040NR-EZ tax form, you can contact taxback.com. Taxback.com is a multi-national corporation specializing on tax returns with assistance in 22 languages.

If a tax refund is due to you, taxback.com will take a percentage of your refund for processing your taxes. taxback.com can be reached at:

Tax Refunds

taxback.com

333 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 2415, Chicago, IL 60601

www.taxback.com

To speak with a TAXBACK representative simply call:

1.888.203.8900 (free in the United States) or

1.353.1.887.1999 (outside the USA)

Sales Tax

When making purchases, please keep in mind that what you see on the price tag is not always what you will pay at the sales register. States (and some counties and cities) will have sales taxes that are added onto the price of the purchases. Sales taxes will differ from state to state. The items that are taxed will also differ from state to state. For example, some states place a tax on clothes while others do not. The USA does not refund sales taxes.

SUPPORT NETWORK

For the Summer Work Travel Program, ASSE ASPIRE Worldwide will draw on ASSE's long history of offering student exchange programs, and its belief that strong local support leads to successful participant experiences. For ASSE ASPIRE self-placed students, please first contact the ASSE ASPIRE office and we will assign you a contact. Area Representatives are only for the ASSE ASPIRE pre-placed students and will be responsible for the Summer Work Travel students in his/her area. The Area Representative is the most important link in the chain connecting all the individuals who make up the ASSE ASPIRE community. He/she is not only the most visible to the students and companies, but his/her judgment is the most critical to the success of the program. Given that these individuals work from home and live in the area where you will be placed, their proximity brings needed support and structure to the program. Minimal requirements for these volunteer ASSE ASPIRE Area Representatives will include, but are not limited to:

- Provide post arrival orientation meeting for the student.
- Be the key local contact for the company.
- Provide a liaison role between the company and the student.
- Visit the students at the host company.
- Provide student with support and resources as needed.
- Conduct evaluations to measure quality and areas needing improvement.

NOTE:

In order for the ASSE ASPIRE Area Representative to contact you, it is your responsibility to make sure he/she as well as ASSE ASPIRE has your updated contact information.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

911

Call 911 for the police, fire department or an ambulance. Make sure you answer all questions clearly and carefully. Do not be afraid to approach the police at any time. If you are lost and see a policeman nearby, ask for directions. They will more than likely be able to assist you.

When dealing with the authorities, ASSE ASPIRE will provide verification of your status to law enforcement officials, but you will be expected to pay any fines or face any charges you have incurred. To avoid problems, take the time to learn the state and local laws of the city in which you are residing: e.g. minimum drinking age, traffic regulation, and drug enforcement policies. If you are accused of having committed a crime, the best advice in most circumstances is to talk to ASSE ASPIRE or a lawyer before you answer any questions.

PROBLEMS – WHO TO CONTACT?

You should always speak with your company supervisors first to solve work related problems that may arise. Because these individuals are busy, make an appointment to speak with him/her. If your supervisor is not responsive, speak with the manager or Human Resource Director. If this fails, and/or if you are unable to resolve your problems contact the ASSE ASPIRE Office at 1.888.3ASPIRE (1.888.327.7473).

What is not an emergency?

- General information about jobs and housing
- Social Security and tax problems
- Employee/Host Company concerns
- Loss of DS-2019 form
- Loss of passport
- Basic legal information
- Change of flight – contact airline directly
- Homesickness
- Disliking job

“ Always speak with your company supervisors first to solve work related problems that may arise.”

What is an emergency?

- Death
- Medical Mental Health emergency
- Victim of a crime
- An arrest

SAFETY & HEALTH REMINDERS

- Bike Safety. If using a bicycle, remember to learn the laws of the area, respect all road users, and always wear a HELMET. For more information on bike safety please refer to www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles.
- Never carry large amounts of money.
- Do not go out alone at night.
- Make sure that you learn which areas to avoid at night.
- Make sure someone always knows where you are.
- Always lock the doors in the housing that has been arranged.
- Do not leave valuables around.
- The drinking age in the USA is 21. If you are under 21 years of age beware. The laws in America are very strict concerning the drinking age. Most bars require that you show identification (ID) before you can enter. You will need to carry some form of photo ID. It is also illegal to drink alcohol on the street whether, you are 21 or not.
- There are many regulations prohibiting smoking in public places. Smoking is banned on all domestic air flights, most office buildings, restaurants and public transportation. Look around before you light a cigarette. In recent years, it has become customary to avoid smoking at home or when visiting someone's home.
- Do not use drugs or associate with people using drugs. It is illegal, and students will be arrested when caught. It is cause for immediate dismissal from the program.
- Even though Marijuana use is legal in certain states, under state law, it is still ILLEGAL under federal law. You should not consider that you are safe from law enforcement, just because you are in Colorado, or any other state where Marijuana has been legalized, nor are you exempt from work place drug testing – which could cost you your job and program.
- Always keep emergency numbers for the police, fire department, hospital, ASSE ASPIRE, etc. next to the phone and in purses or wallets.
- Avoid risky situations.
- Do not get into a car with somebody not known and trusted.
- Avoid areas where there is a feeling of unease.
- Avoid confrontation – do everything possible to defuse a potentially violent situation.

Each student will receive an insurance brochure with their personalized insurance information via e-mail a few days before the program start date. Information regarding the insurance coverage can be found in these materials. Also further information may be found on our website: <http://www.aspireww.com>. Please be aware that some costs may be at your charge (if you see a doctor not part of the network) and there might be some deductibles. Read the insurance coverage carefully. Avoid going to the Emergency Room unless you have a true emergency as there are high costs linked to ER visits.

Make sure you carry your insurance card with you at all times (store it safely in your wallet or purse). You never know when an emergency happens and you will have to show it in the medical facility, or call the insurance provider to check which medical facility you can go to.

Under certain circumstances you might have to pay medical expenses in advance and then contact the insurance company to submit a claim form and get the expenses covered reimbursed to you. Claim forms can be found on the insurance company's website.

If you have any questions about your insurance coverage, claims, preferred providers in your area please call the insurance company directly for assistance.

Make sure you carry your insurance card with you at all times (store it safely in your wallet or purse)

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Your English proficiency needs to be high enough to ensure that you can speak conversational English so well that you have a good experience, and the company is also happy. Practice is the key, if your English is inadequate, you will not have the same growth potential as those with good English. Many companies will promote students who perform well and are articulate. No promises but it does and will happen for some.

DRESS & GROOMING

As a representative of your place of employment, appearance will matter. You will have ongoing contact with the public, and companies tend to be more conservative about the image of their employees. High standards of grooming must be observed. A daily shower or bath and use of deodorant/antiperspirant are required. You must have clean and neat hair, in natural color (or close to it). Hair that is dyed may have to be changed, which can be quite expensive in the USA. Male workers must shave daily, and female workers should not wear a lot of jewelry, or pierced jewelry in excess of earrings as determined by the site supervisor. Pierced jewelry in the tongue, nose, eyebrows, etc. may not be permitted. Uniforms will likely be provided for you. However, some Host Companies have specific requirements for items that students may be required to provide. For example, generally, a certain type and color shoe will be required to be worn with uniforms. You should be prepared to purchase shoes in the USA, if necessary. Many jobs require employees to wear soft-soled shoes, e.g., tennis/running shoes. Because the company image is so important, you should be prepared to accept advice about how to meet the Host Company standards, as they will vary from company to company. Details about the dress code at the Host Company site is contained in your job offer.

OVERTIME

For covered, nonexempt employees, the federal law requires Host Companies to pay ‘overtime pay’, which is to be at least one and one-half times an employee’s regular rate of pay after 40 hours of work in a workweek. Some exceptions apply under special circumstances, and some states also have overtime laws. In cases where an employee is subject to both the state and federal overtime laws, the employee is entitled to overtime according to the higher standard (i.e., the standard that will provide the higher overtime pay).

Students should ask their Host Company regarding overtime if they are interested in working more than 40 hours per week.

More information about overtime laws can be found at this link: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs23.pdf>

SECOND JOB

If your primary Host Company agrees for you to have a second job you must first check the ASSE ASPIRE website to see the regulations for a second job: http://swt.aspireww.com/student_second_job.php

- √ There are certain types of jobs that are prohibited on the Summer Work Travel program.
- In positions that could bring notoriety or disrepute to the Exchange Visitor Program.
 - In sales positions that require participants to purchase inventory that they must sell in order to support themselves.
 - In domestic help positions in private homes (e.g., child care, elder care, gardener, chauffeur).
 - As pedi-cab or rolling chair drivers or operators.
 - As operators or drivers of vehicles or vessels for which drivers’ licenses are required regardless of whether they carry passengers or not.
 - In positions related to clinical care that involves patient contact.
 - In any position in the adult entertainment industry.

- In any position in a cleaning company or removal company
- In positions requiring work hours that fall predominantly between 10pm and 6am.
- In positions declared hazardous to youth by the Secretary of Labor at Subpart E of 29 CFR part 570.
- In positions that require sustained physical contact with other people (e.g., body piercing, tattooing, massage, manicure).
- In positions that are substantially commission-based and thus do not guarantee that participants will be paid minimum wage in accordance with federal and state standards.
- In positions involved in gaming and gambling that include direct participation in wagering and/or betting.
- In positions in chemical pest control, warehousing, catalogue/online order distribution centers, manufacturing and processing (including fishery jobs).
- In positions with travelling fairs or itinerant concessionaires.
- In positions for which there is another specific J category (e.g., camp counselor, intern, trainee).
- In positions in the North American Industry Classification System's Goods-Producing Industries occupations categories industry sectors 11, 21, 23, 31-33 numbers.

√ There are 4 documents that you must submit to ASSE ASPIRE for your second job verification.

- Self-placed Job Offer completed and signed by the Host Company and yourself
- Host Company Agreement completed and signed by the Host Company
- Copy of Host Company's Business License
- Copy of Host Company's valid Workers Compensation Policy Cover Sheet

√ You are not allowed to start working for a second Host Company until ASSE ASPIRE has verified AND approved your second job (you will receive an e-mail notification once you have uploaded all documents necessary on the link above).

LAYOFFS/FIRING

Layoffs are usually because of financial problems within the company. You will usually be given notice before this happens, and you should contact ASSE ASPIRE immediately. If you are fired, it is usually because the company is unhappy with your performance, which could include inconsistency, not being cooperative, being frequently late or absent from work, or poor attitude. You will usually be given notice before a firing, and you should contact ASSE ASPIRE for assistance. In these situations, students must return home immediately.

The law says that you must be paid wages to date if you quit work, usually on the next scheduled pay day. The law also regulates the minimum amount of money you can be paid. Where Federal and state law have different minimum wage rate, the higher standard applies. For more information visit www.dol.gov.

CHANGING JOBS

If you want to change jobs you must contact ASSE ASPIRE immediately to discuss your situation. You cannot change jobs without getting ASSE ASPIRE's prior authorization, or your program will have to be terminated. You cannot start working with another Host Company unless ASSE ASPIRE has approved the new Host Company and has given you authorization. If you begin working at another Host Company that has not been approved your program may be TERMINATED.

TIPPED EMPLOYEES



A tipped employee engages in an occupation in which he or she customarily and regularly receives more than \$30 per month in tips. An employer of a tipped employee is only required to pay \$2.13 per hour in direct wages if that amount combined with the tips received at least equals the federal minimum wage (\$7.25). If the employee's tips combined with the employer's direct wages of at least \$2.13 per hour do not equal the federal minimum hourly wage, the employer must make up the difference. Many states, however, require higher direct wage amounts for tipped employees.

More information about state laws regarding tipped employees can be found at this link: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/tipped.htm>

HOUSING/TRANSPORTATION

Some Host Companies will provide the student housing and it will vary from dormitory style to shared apartments. In other cases you will need to secure your own housing and you will need to be sure that you know your living address before arriving into the USA.

The details of the housing will vary from Host Company to Host Company. In most cases, a housing deposit is required, and the subsequent rent payments may be deducted directly from your paycheck through the Host Company. You should plan on paying a minimum of \$350 per month for housing. Make sure you get a receipt from your landlord showing the amount you paid for your deposit and each time you pay. Some Host Companies provide linens, and some do not. Some have laundry facilities on-site, and some do not. The cooking facilities may vary from site to site. Questions regarding housing should be addressed prior to arrival in the USA so that you are prepared.

We do not recommend buying a car while in the USA. The ASSE ASPIRE insurance does not cover driving a car in the USA. If you drive an automobile in the USA, it is a mandatory law that you have to secure automobile insurance. Public transportation, and the transportation provided by the Host Company should be used. Hitchhiking is very dangerous in the USA, so should never be done.

However, if you intend to buy a car while in the USA, please understand that it is an expensive proposition that requires expenditures beyond the price of the car and gasoline, e.g., buying insurance.

TRAVEL & EXCURSIONS

Students on the Summer Work Travel Program may have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ongoing cross-cultural, sports and social activities available for the various exchange program participants in local areas that fall under the ASSE umbrella. ASSE ASPIRE will provide you with lists of local social, sports, and cultural activities that will help you assimilate into the American community.

During your time off, we do not recommend leaving the USA given the short time frame of the program and commitments that have been made to the Host Company. Therefore, ASSE ASPIRE will only permit students to leave and re-enter the USA if there is an urgent situation or emergency at home which requires travel. If granted permission from ASSE ASPIRE, you may leave and re-enter the USA without obtaining a new visa, provided the visa and DS-2019 form have not expired, the passport is still valid, and you have the copy of the DS-2019 form in your possession. Before you leave the United States, however, ASSE ASPIRE must approve your international travel and provide a signature on the DS-2019 form to show that you are still in good standing with the work program. ASSE ASPIRE staff will coordinate this signature of the DS-2019 form if:

- Your supervisor approves of the leave in writing to ASSE ASPIRE indicating the exact date of departure and return, the reason for the leave, and that you are in good standing.
- The above is sent to ASSE ASPIRE along with the copy of the DS-2019 form at least 15 days before the planned departure.
- You send it in a self-addressed, prepaid Federal Express (FedEx) envelope to return signed DS-2019 form.

All extended travel must take place at the completion of your work experience. If you wish to go by car, you must have a valid driver's license from your home country in order to drive in the USA. To rent a car, most companies require that the driver be at least 21 years of age (many require you to be 25) and have at least one major credit card. For more information contact: www.aaa.com

The prices of different companies will vary, so make sure you ask about the following costs:

- 1) daily/weekly/weekend rates
- 2) unlimited free mileage vs. limited mileage with an extra charge per mile
- 3) drop off costs if returning to a location other than that of origin
- 4) insurance rates
- 5) fees for a second driver

Reliable companies include: Hertz, Avis, Budget, Alamo and Enterprise. For driving long distances, you might want to consider a “drive-away”, which arranges the transportation of cars from one part of the country to the other. The car owner usually pays for the tolls and some fuel, and you, as the driver, are given a certain amount of time to drive it to the final destination. You must also pay a deposit that is returned when you safely deliver the car.

Search on-line under the heading “Automobile Transport and Drive-A-Way Companies.” You can also call the following drive-a-way companies:

Auto Driveaway Co. 1.800.346.2277

Autolog 1.800.432.5182

Travel by bus is a good and economical way to see the country. Greyhound is a nationwide bus company 1.800.231.2222; website: www.greyhound.com) with an extensive network giving you access to many cities. You can buy tickets individually from one city to another, or you can purchase special passes.

Amtrak Train Service can also be a good option. For example, the Amtrak Northeast Rail Pass allows foreign travelers to use the rail system throughout the northeast corridor from Virginia Beach north all the way to Montreal, or Niagara Falls. The purchaser can use this for unlimited stops along the way for as low as \$99 for three consecutive days of travel.

LIFE & CUSTOMS

The USA is a large country with people from many different economic, social, ethnic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. Since the founding of the USA, over 60 million people have immigrated. Thus, stereotypes for Americans are difficult because there will always be segments of the population that do not fit

the stereotype. However, there are a few characteristics that seem fairly common for most Americans:

- Time Conscious – High value on “being on time.” Being late is not viewed as positive. Come to work on time.
- Assertive – Those who take initiative are respected. Take the initiative to meet people.
- Respectful – A strong respect for personal property and the expectation that one will be asked before using another’s personal belongings.
- Informality – Social status does not impact how people are treated.
- Roles – Men and women have the same basic jobs. There is less of a separation based upon gender than in some other countries.

It is important to know that culture in the USA varies according to region, and how rural an area is. We recommend traveling to another part of the country to experience the difference in regional culture. The top 5 topics for American conversation are: 1) hobbies; 2) movies and TV; 3) weather; 4) food; and 5) sports. These are good conversation openers.

TIPPING

Americans generally tip the server in the restaurant 15-20% of the restaurant bill (unless the service is poor). The same practice applies to other service providers such as taxi drivers, bartenders and hair stylists. Tipping charts are often available in drug stores or card shops to assist you in knowing what is appropriate. In many cases, people make most of their income from tips so please respect this practice.

ADJUSTING TO LIFE & CUSTOMS

Like all special experiences, you will have times that are easy and times that are difficult. All exchange students have ups and downs. These come from the excitement and the confusion of living in a new culture. Both obvious and subtle differences confront students, creating what is referred to as “culture shock.”

The term, culture shock, was introduced for the first time in 1958 to describe the anxiety produced when a person moves to a completely new environment. This term expresses the lack of direction, the feeling of not knowing what to do or how to do things in a new environment, and not knowing what is appropriate

or inappropriate. The feeling of culture shock generally sets in after the first few weeks of coming to a new place.

Symptoms:

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Crying easily
- Preoccupation with health
- Aches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Eating too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country
- Loss of identity
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Unable to solve simple problems
- Lack of confidence
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- Developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness
- Longing for family
- Feelings of being lost, overlooked

Culture shock has many stages. The following stages can be ongoing or appear only at certain times. These stages are present at different times, and each person has his/her own way of reacting in the stages of culture shock. As a consequence, some stages will be longer and more difficult than others. Many factors contribute to the duration and effects of culture shock. Including: an individual's state of mental health, type of personality, previous experiences, socio-economic conditions, familiarity with the language, family and/or social support systems, and level of education.

Stage 1: Everything is new and fascinating. In this first stage, the new arrival may feel euphoric and be pleased by all the new things encountered. This time is called the "honeymoon" stage, as everything encountered is new and exciting.

Stage 2: This is hard work. It is not so exciting anymore. A person may encounter some difficult times and crises in daily life. For example, communication difficulties may occur such as not being understood. In this stage, there may be feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness, and incompetence. This happens when a

person is trying to adapt to a new culture that is very different from the culture of origin. Transition between the old methods and those of the new country is a difficult process and takes time to complete. During the transition, there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction.

Stage 3: *Adapting is easier.* This is characterized by gaining some understanding of the new culture. A new feeling of pleasure and sense of humor may be experienced. One may start to feel a certain psychological balance. The new arrival may not feel as lost and starts to have a feeling of direction. The individual is more familiar with the environment and wants to belong. This initiates an evaluation of the old ways versus those of the new.

Stage 4: *A sense of belonging.* The person realizes that the new culture has good and bad things to offer. This stage can be one of double integration or triple integration depending on the number of cultures that the person has to process. This integration is accompanied by a more solid feeling of belonging. The person starts to define him/herself and establish goals for living.

Stage 5: *Mixed feelings about going home.* Called the “re-entry shock.” This occurs when a return to the country of origin is made. One may find that things are no longer the same. For example, some of the newly acquired customs are not in use in the old culture.

Remember, the above feelings are natural, and if you recognize that you are experiencing culture shock, you’ve already won half the battle. For more information on “Culture Shock” visit, the following websites:

<http://www.esl-lab.com/shock1/shock1.htm>

<http://sistergoldenhair.com/uponarrival/shock.html>

TIPS FOR ADJUSTING

- Get enough sleep and eat a healthy diet.
- Take care of your personal hygiene and dress neatly.
- Lower expectations.
- Learn to laugh at mistakes, which is a positive way to approach the adjustment process.
- Keep busy and join in as many activities as possible to make friends and take advantage of the surroundings.
- Be willing to try new things: foods, sights and activities.

- Remember to say, “thank you.” It is a phrase used frequently in the American culture.
- Practice English as much as possible. It is the best way to improve proficiency and the comfort level of being in a foreign country.
- Communicate. No one can help a student with a problem or question if he/she doesn’t speak up.
- Write down feelings.
- Talk with your ASSE ASPIRE Area Representative.
- Try to maintain a positive attitude about the experience and opportunity of living and working in a foreign country.
- Be patient. While you may feel a bit overwhelmed at first, it will all get easier in time.
- Be aware of the local, state and national laws.
- Remember, it is not better, it is not worse, it is just different!

TIPS FOR ADJUSTING AT WORK

- Respect the host company’s rules.
- Don’t expect special treatment. You will be expected to work just as hard as your American counterparts.
- Treat customers with respect and a “smile.”
- Work quickly and efficiently. Workers are expected to have a strong work ethic.
- Ask lots of questions to reduce unpredictability.

ELECTRICITY

The USA electrical system uses 110 volt, 60 hertz (cycles). If your appliances from home use 220 volts, you will need to purchase a transformer and plug adapter that can accommodate the wattage of your appliances.

UNITS OF MEASURE

Temperature

In the USA, the temperature is given in Fahrenheit. An easy way to convert Fahrenheit to Celsius is to subtract thirty from the Fahrenheit number and divide by two. While it’s not totally accurate, it’s close.

Metric Conversion

1 mile = 1.6 kilometers

1 yard = 91.4 centimeters

1 foot = 30.5 centimeters

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters

1 liquid quart = 0.95 liter

1 gallon = 3.8 liters

TIME ZONES

The continental USA (excluding Alaska and Hawaii) is divided into four time zones – Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific. When it is 12:00 noon Eastern Time, it is 11:00 am Central, 10:00 am Mountain, and 9:00 am Pacific. The ASSE ASPIRE office is open from 9:00 am – 5:30 pm Pacific Time. This means that if you are on the East Coast, you should call our office from 12:00 noon – 8:30 pm Eastern time. Much of the USA keeps Daylight Savings Time by turning the clocks forward one hour in the spring and back one hour in the Autumn.

Telephones, Internet & E-Mail

In most areas, to dial a local number, only the last seven numbers of the phone number are dialed. If a long-distance number is dialed, the number “1” is dialed followed by the area code and 7 digit number. Long-distance calls (outside of your “area code”) in the USA can be costly so you should investigate which types of phone card options are available where you are residing. They can generally be purchased at grocery stores and post offices. The card is a pre-paid telephone card that enables you to make telephone calls at a cheaper rate than is normally charged. To use the card, dial the toll-free access number on the back of the card and then enter the account number. This will allow you to make calls anywhere in the world from any USA land line telephone as long as the account is in good standing. A card costs generally \$10 or \$20 and can be recharged when the account gets low. The option for keeping costs low is to make calls after 5:00 pm on weekdays and on weekends.

Besides the local and long distance numbers, there are also free toll-free numbers, which will start with 1.800, 1.888, 1.877 or 1.866 plus the 7-digit number.

Telephones, Internet & E-Mail

In making international calls, there are a couple of primary options:

You pay for the phone call

1. Dial “011” from a land line. Dial “00” from a cell phone
2. Dial the Country Code
3. Dial the City Code (if the city code begins with “0”, leave the “0” out except if you are calling the Ukraine, Russia and Italy)
4. Dial the phone number

Access to e-mail will need to be explored in each community. Generally, public libraries have e-mail access for students. Many companies have Internet options for their employees. Internet cafes are also easy to locate in most locations.

If the Host Company provides e-mail and internet access, please respect their rules and hours regarding usage.

Do not download items onto their computers or surf websites with objectionable content. This will only lead to problems for the Host Company’s internet server, causing your usage to be terminated.

Going Home

Remember to give your Host Company the self-addressed stamped envelope for your W-2 form and to collect your friends’ numbers and addresses!

About Visas Issues, Restrictions and Return Home Requirements

What type of visa do I receive?

You are a participant in an educational exchange program approved by the US Department of State and will receive a J-1 visa. Under the terms of the J-1 visa, you are allowed to work for up to 4 months at work sites approved by the sponsor. The visa does not allow you to work as a domestic, au pair, camp counselor, or in the medical field. In Nov. 1986, the US Congress passed an Immigration Law requiring Host Companies to verify that all employees – both US citizens and non-resident aliens are eligible to work. The company supervisor will ask to see your passport and a copy of the Exchange Visitor Visa Form called DS-2019. This was the form that served to obtain the visa. It should remain in your passport at all times. We encourage you to make photocopies of your passport and the DS-2019 and keep them in a separate and safe place. These are the documents that prove your work eligibility and identity. You will also be asked to sign a form (I-9) that the host company keeps in its files. The form proves that the company has verified work eligibility.

Can I leave the USA early?

You will sign an agreement, the job offer, that commits you to a certain company and time frame. If you don't fulfill the commitment that will be very disappointing for the company as they will be counting on you for assistance. Thus, there can be no refund of any kind once you are in the country. If you have to leave due to an emergency, our program will do everything possible to ensure a smooth departure and transition.

Can I choose to extend my visa once arrived in the USA?

Unfortunately, no. According to the program regulations, the maximum program period is 4 months (some countries have program periods of less than 4 months). Plus, you may have an additional 30 days in which to leave the USA for home (students from some countries do not have the ability to travel for 30 days, and must return home immediately upon the completion of the program). The 30-day grace period is meant to allow students to sightsee and travel. They must go home after this period. You can stay until the expiration date on the DS-2019 form plus 30 days for travel providing you remain in compliance of the visa conditions. During the 30-day grace period, you may be a tourist in the USA, but may not work. If you leave the USA during the 30-day grace period, you cannot be

re-admitted on the J-1 visa. If you wish to stay beyond the 30-day grace period, you must leave the country and reenter on another visa (tourist, student, etc.) The ASSE ASPIRE staff cannot help with this process. To stay illegally after the 30-day grace period can prevent you from receiving future USA visas or immigration status.

What if I lose the copy of the DS-2019 form?

You must have the copy of the DS-2019 form for the visa to be valid. If this is lost, ASSE ASPIRE will replace the form for a \$50 fee. A good safeguard is to always keep the copy of the DS-2019 form in the passport and have copies put elsewhere in a safe place. If you lose your passport, please contact your nearest Embassy or Consulate as soon as possible so that they can assist you in obtaining new documentation.

Can I change jobs/positions once in the USA?

Please contact ASSE ASPIRE to discuss your situation if you feel you may want to change jobs/positions. Each case is examined individually, and depending on the situation, you may receive permission to change your job. Students must have written authorization from ASSE ASPIRE in order to change jobs. If you leave your assigned company before your agreement ends without permission from ASSE ASPIRE you will be in breach of the ASSE ASPIRE agreement and program conditions.



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