



TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL J-1 WORK & TRAVEL PROGRAM

1. SEVIS

It is imperative that all of your participants have registered in SEVIS, the government tracking system for all J-1 Work & Travel students, on or soon after their DS-2019 start date. They should be entering their home address and not just their work address. Participants are instructed to register on the AAG website.

www.allianceabroad.net/participants/Login_DS2019.aspx

2. SOCIAL SECURITY

Students must ensure they have successfully registered with SEVIS BEFORE they apply for Social Security. In some locations, we recommend waiting 10 days to ensure timely processing of the Social Security application according to regulations students are legally able to work even without a social security number at the beginning of their program.

3. UPON ARRIVAL

Host a meeting to welcome your students and outline your expectations! Have a "breaking the ice" activity to help participants feel comfortable with you and your company. It is critically important to review job details (hours, scheduling, pay, end date), housing information, contact person(s) and any other important information. Communication between you and your participants is essential to having a successful season!

4. UNDERSTAND AND PROMOTE CULTURAL EXCHANGE:

- a. Read AAG's cultural tips to help prepare you for the challenges that may come with hosting students from other countries and cultures.
- b. During the season, involve your participants in local activities or special events happening in your community. They are here to experience life in the U.S. first-hand through their experiences and the people they meet.
- c. Ask about their culture! Participants are often proud to share about their home country.
- d. Consider asking students to give a small presentation about their home country and/or make a traditional meal.

5. INITIAL CHALLENGES/THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

It is not unusual to experience challenges in the two weeks; be as patient as possible with the students during this initial

period as these are always the most challenging. Once they are through that initial culture shock they should settle in to work and life in the U.S.

6. EXPECTATIONS

Expect a transition period but once they are settled expect no more or less from your participants than you would any other employee. Furthermore, treat them the same as you would a "regular" employee; they should be held to the same standards as everyone else and we expect nothing less than the best from them!

7. CONTACTING AAG

It is important that you and your students contact AAG should problems arise. Each participant has an Outreach Coordinator at AAG that they are instructed to contact when they are having problems. We can be a valuable resource and are here to support you and your managers, too! We always like to be aware of any challenges before they escalate.

8. CONFIRMATION IN WRITING

Confirm important discussions in writing (e-mail) and copy your AAG Outreach Coordinator. It's always a good idea to make sure the participants understand your requests and/or expectations and sometimes a language issue or other misunderstanding can be cleared up through written communication.

9. FINAL PAYCHECKS & TAX FORMS

It is not unusual for employers to have paychecks at the end of a season; ensure all students provide self addressed and prepaid envelopes before they leave so you can send their final paychecks and/or W-2 forms directly to them at no cost to your company. Please do not send to AAG!

10. USEFUL MATERIALS: *please click on the links below*

- [HC handbook](#)
- [Participant handbook](#)
- [Insurance card](#)
- [Sevis flyer](#)
- [Exchange visitor brochure](#)
- [HC Cultural Items](#)



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