

# Exchange Visitor (Intern/Trainee) Handbook



Worldwide Farmers Exchange (WFE) sponsors agricultural training/internship programs while creating meaningful shared cultural experiences. This is your handbook to being an Exchange Visitor (EV) intern/trainee with WFE. It goes hand in hand with the EV Rules and other information found on our website. This handbook is our best advice on how to make sure you take full advantage of your J-1 visa program!

## J-1 Visas

WFE is certified by the U.S. State Department as a Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act program, which permits WFE to sponsor J-1 nonimmigrant exchange visitor (EV) programs and visas.

The J-1 visa is not a work visa, but it can be used for cultural exchange work-experience programs. A J-1 visa sponsored by WFE is valid only for participation in the WFE Program with a WFE Host. As part of the J-1 visa processing, WFE can access SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) and use it to generate the DS-7002 and DS-2019 forms.

As a program sponsor, WFE is responsible for:

- ✓ Providing J-1 visa sponsorship and documentation to Exchange Visitors (EVs)
- ✓ Maintaining secure and accurate data in SEVIS
- ✓ Supplying medical insurance coverage to EVs
- ✓ Monitoring participation in the WFE Program

As a WFE Exchange Visitor (EV), you are responsible for:

- ✓ Applying for the J-1 visa and paying all required fees, travel costs, and incidental expenses
- ✓ Reviewing and following all [WFE Program Rules](#) and guides, including those regarding WFE Program Fees.
- ✓ Being aware of and adhering to all local and federal laws
- ✓ Completing the program as described in the DS-7002 form and returning to your home country after the program ends

**Any violation of these Rules, State Department, DHS, USCIS regulations, or federal or local laws may result in program termination, fines or other penalties.**

## Exchange Visitor (EV) Intern/Trainee Rules

1. EV applicants for the WFE Program must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Screened and approved by a WFE partner and/or host (in most cases)
- ✓ Intermediate or B1+ English skills
- ✓ Age 18-30 (with limited exceptions)
- ✓ Student or recent graduate in the same field as the internship, plus at least one year of practical experience

**OR**

- ✓ No education, but at least 5 years of practical experience in the field

2. EV applicants must follow processing instructions as described in the J-1 Visa Application Guide.

3. EV applicants must disclose any physical or mental health concerns that may affect their participation in the Program prior to application.
4. Exchange Visitors (EVs) must inform WFE of their arrival and departure dates.
5. The DS-7002 (Training/Internship Placement Plan) and DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status [J-Nonimmigrant]) describe the terms and conditions of each WFE Program. Any changes to the DS-7002 or DS-2019 must be approved and documented by WFE.
6. EVs may not share the DS-2019 form with anyone. It is a secure document and its contents are for the visa sponsor's and EV's uses only.
7. EVs with visas sponsored by WFE can work/train ONLY with WFE hosts. It is illegal for EVs to work/train at any business other than the one shown on the DS-7002 and DS-2019 forms.
8. EVs must pay WFE Program Fees either directly or through a payroll deduction by their host. If the program fees are not paid, the visa may be terminated.
9. EVs and hosts must attempt to resolve any interpersonal or professional problems, but WFE may intervene to support resolution.
10. WFE must be notified of any issues involving its EVs including (but not limited to):
  - Arrival and Departure
  - Change of address or contact information
  - Changes to training environment or tasks
  - Emergencies or incidents (eg. health concerns, illegal activities, other serious issues)
11. EVs receive [medical insurance](#) as part of the WFE Program. Coverage is provided from arrival to departure (up to 30 days before and 30 days after the Program). Any costs related to health care not covered by the insurance are the responsibility of the EV. Hosts must supply workers comp coverage for EVs where required by law.
12. Hosts may set rules and expectations for their property, and EVs are required to follow rules set by their host.
13. EVs are required to complete a minimum of two reports during the Program: one at the middle of the program and one before the end.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

**WFE has a long history of successful exchange visitor experiences. We know what it takes to make the program the best it can be for everyone involved. Here are the keys to a great training/internship experience:**

### Prepare yourself to apply

Make sure you're ready for the exchange experience. When you apply for the program, you may be interviewed by WFE staff, a WFE host, a WFE partner and the U.S Consulate. Before you apply, think about whether you're prepared in the following ways:

**English skills:** Can you understand instructions, avoid injury, and properly benefit from the training program? This is a big investment and you want to get the full experience. Be honest.

**Motivation and Expectations:** Consider why WFE and the J-1 visa would be right for you. Is there any reason your visa would be denied? Why do you want to participate in this internship in the U.S.? What will you do after you return home? Do you have plans for the future?

**Personal Experience:** Have you traveled before? Are you ready to live away from home, in a different country? Are you good at meeting new people and making friends? Do you have the right knowledge and skills to be an intern/trainee? Depending on your program, you might need to check if you qualify for the visa.

**Physical Preparedness:** Do you have any allergies or limitations? Can you adapt to changes in your schedule, diet, environment, and activity level? Is this the best time for your health (and your family's health) to apply for a program in the U.S.?

**Financial Preparedness:** Can you afford this trip and all the costs and fees? WFE recommends having at least \$2000 in funds to apply, plus travel costs.

**If any of these things makes you reconsider, it's best to take a few months and focus on your health and goals before applying.**

## Carefully Review the DS-7002 and DS-2019

The DS-7002 (Training/Internship Placement Plan) describes the terms and conditions of the training/Internship program. Review the DS-7002 form very carefully! There may be a supplement to the DS-7002 form, like a Living Expenses Deduction or Payroll Deduction Authorization (PDA). Make sure you understand the information on the DS-7002 form and any supplements before accepting a placement offer. Here are some things to note when reviewing the DS-7002 form and other documents:

**Biographical data** (including educational qualifications)

**Program dates**

**Rate of pay and deductions**

**Skills and Techniques** (expectations and tasks for the program)

[DS-2019 information](#)

## Know where you're going to live

WFE provides some cultural orientation materials, but do your own [research](#) about the local area. Get familiar with the city and its climate, and see how much you can learn before you go.

For EVs in the General Agriculture Program, housing is provided by the host. Some hosts charge a small fee for utilities or transportation. Housing provided by the host must meet the WFE Housing Standards.

For EVs in the Wine Program, housing is not usually provided, but hosts are expected to assist EVs with locating available housing. WFE recommends the following resources for temporary housing:

[Traveling Winemakers Facebook Group](#)

[Furnished Finder](#)

[Craigslist](#)

## Get validated

Contact WFE and your host after you have your visa and before you make your travel plans. Some hosts have specific times when EVs must arrive, and WFE needs to know your travel plans before your SEVIS record can be validated.

Take these steps after your record has been validated:

- ✓ Get your [I-94 Admission Record](#)
- ✓ Apply for a [Social Security number](#) and Driver's License (if required)
- ✓ Open a bank account
- ✓ Get paid
- ✓ Set up your online account with the [WFE medical insurance](#)

## Payroll and Taxes

Some EVs are paid by their host's payroll and others are paid by WFE. If you aren't sure how you will be paid, discuss this with your host. To be put on your host's payroll, your host will need your:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ [I-94 admission record](#)
- ✓ [Social Security number](#)

Check the WFE Payroll Info Sheet if you need help completing the W-4.

WFE partners with [Sprintax](#) for nonresident tax return processing. This service is included in the WFE Program Fee. If you were paid by your host's payroll, you must file a tax return. Yearly discount codes and additional information are usually available in January. EVs paid by WFE do not need to file a tax return.

## Maximize your cultural exchange experience

Hosts are expected to give EVs an orientation to the training site, housing (if provided), and other areas. Exploring the town or city outside your host will help you adjust and understand the local culture. Here are some ways to get the most out of your cultural exchange experience:

- Take a walk in the local area
- Visit historic sites
- Shop at local markets
- Taste local food
- Cook and share food from your own culture
- Attend a parade, festival, or county fair
- Play an American game or sport
- Go to a museum, concert, or theater performance

## Follow the rules of your visa—your future depends on it

As a J-1 Exchange Visitor, you're required to follow all U.S. federal and state laws, as well as all WFE Program Rules. Any violation could cause program termination, which may affect your ability to get a visa in the future.

Hosts and EVs are expected to complete the program as described in the DS-7002, but sometimes things don't go as planned. In rare cases, the program can be terminated by WFE. If a program is terminated by WFE, the EV is expected to leave the United States immediately, and their visa is canceled. Some reasons for termination include:

- Violation of WFE Program Rules or U.S. Federal or State Laws by Host or EV;
- Failure of EV to pursue the exchange activities for which the participant was admitted to the United States;
- Inability to continue the program;
- Willful failure to maintain insurance coverage as required under [22 CFR 62.14](#)
- Unauthorized employment [[22 CFR 62.40](#)]

## Take care and stay in touch

The WFE Program can be challenging for its EVs, both personally and professionally. Hosts and EVs must complete two reports: one at the midpoint of the program and one toward the end. It's a good idea to meet with your host and do this together, discussing any areas of concern. Contact WFE directly if you have any comments you wish to keep private: [letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org](mailto:letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org)

Living in a different country can be stressful, and every EV will experience some homesickness or culture shock during the first weeks of internship or training. This can affect your mood, behavior, and productivity. Hosts are also susceptible to culture shock as a side effect of the exchange program. Culture shock is a real and debilitating condition and should be taken seriously. WFE offers some advice for [Managing your Mental Health](#).

Need additional support? Send us a confidential email: [letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org](mailto:letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org)

Contact WFE if you have questions, or in any of these cases:

- Arrival and Departure
- Change of address or contact information
- Changes to training environment or tasks
- Emergencies (eg. health or behavior concerns, illegal activities, other serious issues)

### Remember:

- Medical insurance coverage is included in the WFE Program Fee and provided for your entire stay in the U.S., if you inform WFE of your travel plans. Coverage can be extended up to 30 days before and after the program.
- WFE General Agriculture Program Fees are shown here. Participants must pay WFE Program Fees either directly or through payroll deduction by their host. If fees are not paid, the program may be terminated.
- EVs can only work-train with WFE Hosts. It is illegal for EVs to work or train at any business other than the one shown on the DS-7002 and DS-2019 forms.
- If you're traveling outside the U.S. during the Program, you must get approval from your host and WFE, and get a Travel Validation signature from WFE Staff on your DS-2019 form.
- EVs and Hosts must attempt to resolve any interpersonal or professional problems, but WFE may intervene to support resolution.
- As the Program Sponsor, WFE may also remove an EV from a host agribusiness at any time, for any reason.

### Contact WFE:

Main: [info@worldwidefarmers.org](mailto:info@worldwidefarmers.org), 510.558.9933

Billing/Insurance: [billing@worldwidefarmers.org](mailto:billing@worldwidefarmers.org), 510.575.0965

Confidential Support: [letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org](mailto:letstalk@worldwidefarmers.org)

24-Hour Emergency: 510.334.0121