

# EXPERIENCE INTERNATIONAL



## Hosting an International **USFS** Trainee or Intern

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## HOSTING WITH EXPERIENCE INTERNATIONAL

### PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Experience International (EI) J-1 Training and Internship Program was established to provide quality, on-the-job training and cross-cultural exchange in fields related to natural resource management, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, management, business, commerce, sciences, and engineering. The program is for:

**U.S. Hosts** in both the private and public sectors that have businesses related to the above fields; *and* who have a sincere interest in providing experience and training to young professionals while participating in a rewarding cultural and professional exchange. Hosts provide on-the-job training opportunities. Hosts receive qualified, motivated, and reliable help in their operations.

**Exchange Visitors (EVs)** are professionals or students from abroad who seek quality on-the-job work experience and career-related training in the United States. The program is intended to enhance participants' skills in their career area. They are carefully screened by our program, fully meet the selection criteria, and have conversational English skills on arrival. Exchange Visitors are usually sponsored on a J-1 visa under one of two categories:

- **Trainee:** a foreign national who has either (1) a degree or professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution and at least one year of related work experience in his/her occupational field acquired outside the United States, or (2) five years of work experience outside the United States in his/her occupational field, and who enters the U.S. to participate in a structured and guided work-based training program in his/her specific occupational field.
- **Intern:** a foreign national who either (1) is currently enrolled in and pursuing studies at a degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the United States or (2) graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to his/her internship begin date and who enters the U.S. to participate in a structured and guided work-based internship program in his/her specific academic field.

## WHAT IS A J-1 VISA?

### **Background and Overview of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program**

The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 was enacted by Congress to increase understanding and cooperation between U.S. citizens and those of foreign nations. The Act established the J visa to enable nonimmigrant foreign nationals to enter the United States to participate in educational and cultural activities. The categories of participant include: professors and research scholars, college and university students, camp counselors, au pairs, trainees, interns, and others.

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) designates a limited number of organizations to sponsor J-1 trainees and interns in the U.S. for practical training and work experience in specified fields. The DOS has designated Experience International (EI) to sponsor both trainees and interns in fields related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, engineering, all sciences, and business. USFS is also a designated sponsor of interns and trainees, so in this case, the USFS International Visitor Program Office is the official sponsor of your trainee or intern, while EI sources, assists, and monitors the visitor during their program.

### **Federal Regulations Governing J-1 Exchange Programs**

The U.S. Department of State periodically updates the Federal Regulations Governing the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. We and the USFS International Visitor Program Office ensure that all participants in the Experience International J-1 Exchange Visitor Training/Internship Programs understand and follow the Federal Regulations as revised.

The Federal Regulations can be reviewed on the following web site:  
<http://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/current/regulations-compliance/>

If you'd like a printed copy of the Federal Regulations, please let us know – we'd be glad to provide you with one.

## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. **Trainees/Interns come to our Program - *and you*** - with the expectation to work hard, be given responsibilities, get involved in your daily activities, projects, and ongoing operation, to learn by doing, to improve their English, to make friends, and to "experience" the United States. Their primary commitment is to *you*.
2. **Culture:** Hosting an Exchange Visitor (EV) allows hosts to "travel the world without leaving home!" There will be many cultural differences and surprises. What may seem unreasonable or strange will often have roots in cultural differences. Understanding these differences is key

to working successfully with a trainee/intern. Flexibility, open-minds, patience, and withholding judgment are useful strategies for successful placements.

3. **Our goal** is to provide the highest quality program possible and the support necessary to ensure that *you and your EV* have a successful and productive experience. In addition to making the placement, we provide the following:
  - a. **Host Support:** The program provides hosts with a *Host Manual* that addresses numerous topics such as payroll/stipend, emergency procedures, and suggestions on training, intercultural adaptation, and more. We are always available by phone or email to help with issues that arise.
  - b. **Trainee/Intern Arrival Orientation:** Visitors are required to participate in a webinar orientation conducted by the USFS International Visitor Program sometime during their first month. Additionally, EI will conduct a supplemental orientation by phone, Skype, or in person after arrival in which we discuss (a) occupational safety, (b) intercultural adaptation, (c) maintaining J-1 status, and (d) experiential learning/training concepts. We cover details such as: bank account, social security card, training plan, and J-1 responsibilities. Hosts are also encouraged to discuss with them the orientation and cover topics that may not have been completely understood. We also rely on hosts to introduce the visitor to community resources, provide a safety orientation, and help with housing and transportation. The EI program provides trainees with a comprehensive Orientation Manual (sent by email prior to arrival in the U.S.) that will help guide and support them throughout their program. Topics include: tax obligations, schedule of reports and evaluations, emergency and safety procedures, intercultural adaptation, and more.
  - c. **Training Tools:** All EVs are provided detailed *Training Plans* that are reviewed and accepted *prior to confirming participation in the program*. During the first 6 weeks of placement, trainees/interns in programs lasting four or more months develop specific *learning objectives* in cooperation with their host. Learning objectives are used to focus, guide, monitor, and evaluate each placement. EVs in longer placements are strongly encouraged to complete a *special project, with host approval*, designed to learn in depth about a specific area of interest. In combination, these *learning tools* have proven to be very useful to ensure that all participants get the most out of their program. Additionally, EVs complete quarterly or midterm reports and a final evaluation. Hosts complete an online midterm (if placement is over 6 months) and final evaluation of their EV. These insure that we, you, and your trainee/intern are in compliance with both the letter and spirit of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program as authorized by Congress and administered by the U.S. State Department.
  - d. **Site Visits:** We visit most placements located in Oregon and Washington. The site visit serves to answer questions, review the training plan, get to know the host and its needs, get to know the trainee or intern and his/her needs, and offer assistance for making the placement go smoothly.

- e. **Retreat/Event:** EI occasionally sponsors a Program Retreat or Event in the summer, to which all hosts and EVs are invited. Although it is a great networking opportunity for all, it is not a requirement to attend. You will be notified at least 3 months ahead of time if a retreat or other event is planned.
- f. **Newsletters:** EI sends periodic newsletters with updates and articles written by staff, trainees, interns, and hosts. We encourage you to send us articles, information, announcements, etc. that you would like to share with other hosts and EVs.
- g. **Program Directory:** Participants are provided a Program Directory that lists current EI participants and hosts. It is a very diverse and exciting group! We encourage you to contact other hosts if you have questions. As a group, you have a wealth of experience to share and if you run into practical problems, another host may be your best resource!
- h. **Website and Facebook:** The EI website ([www.expint.org](http://www.expint.org)) contains information on our program as well as Experience International's other activities such as study tours and internships abroad. EI also has a facebook page ([www.facebook.com/ExperienceInternational](http://www.facebook.com/ExperienceInternational)) where hosts, EVs, and study tour participants can connect and see pictures of current and past participants on the program. We encourage hosts and trainees to post pictures and stories here as well.

## HOW TO BECOME A HOST

The process for becoming a host includes:

- **Host Agreement** –The Host Agreement outlines your obligations to the trainee/intern, to USFS International Program Office, and to Experience International; and our obligations to you as host.
- **Training Plan** – The training plan is the detailed, written description of the type of training that will take place, the month to month chronology of training, the skills to be imparted to the EV and the type of supervision, cultural activities and evaluation that will be provided by the host. We will provide first-time hosts with example training plans and can help write the initial draft. Once a training plan has been created it is then used to fill out the required government form (DS7002 – Training/Internship Placement Plan). The DS7002 must be signed by host, USFS International Program Office, and trainee/intern and presented to the U.S. Consulate/Embassy at the EV's visa interview.

Experience International will send resumes for the host to review. Once a match has been made, we encourage host and trainee/intern to converse via phone or email to share details that might help confirm mutual compatibility.

EI has a formal process of confirming the placement. The process in general works like this:

1. Host reviews Host Agreement and returns signature page (*for first placement only*).
2. Host provides a description of the training and activities offered (see above) along with a description of the supervisor's qualifications for providing training.
3. EI writes a draft Training Plan.
4. Host completes/verifies/edits details template (a document that includes compensation, dates, contact info, arrival details, etc) and Training Plan.
5. Host completes USFS documents and USFS host application.
6. EI sends out formal Confirmation of Placement and DS-7002 documents to host, USFS International Visitor Program, and exchange visitor to approve and sign.
7. Exchange Visitor pays applicable program fee to EI.
8. USFS International Visitor Program issues DS2019 and visa packet to exchange visitor.
9. Exchange visitor applicant applies for visa at US embassy and schedules interview appointment (wait time can be a few days or a few weeks).
10. Exchange visitor completes interview at Embassy and is granted visa (visa processing times vary and will take at least a few days to receive in mail).
11. Exchange visitor may then purchase flight to go to U.S.!

### EXPERIENCE INTERNATIONAL HOST EXPENSES AND FEES

**There is no fee for you to request or host a trainee or intern.** There are some costs to support a trainee or intern, and the Intern/Trainee pays a program fee to participate in the EI program.

Host provides to Trainee or Intern	Intern/Trainee Pays
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stipend is provided by host for living expenses.</li> <li>• Housing provided by host.</li> <li>• Hosts are encouraged to offer additional benefits. Benefits to consider include company Health Insurance Policy coverage, a vehicle for personal transportation, an allowance for work wear, assistance with the trainee/intern's airfare, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EI is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit and totally supported by participant fees. <i>Self-placed</i> trainees/interns pay a one-time fee of <b>\$800</b> for a 1-6 month placement, <b>\$1300</b> for a 7-12 month placement and <b>\$1600</b> for a 13-18 month program. <i>EI-placed</i> trainees/interns pay a one-time fee of <b>\$1200</b> for a 1-6 month placement, <b>\$1700</b> for a 7-12 month placement, and <b>\$2,000</b> for a 13-18 month program. This represents a significantly discounted rate compared to our non-government placements. (For example, total fees collected for a regular, EI-placed 12 month program are \$3140.)</li> <li>• EV pays \$160 in visa fees to the government.</li> <li>• EV pays \$65 per month in health insurance, unless host covers this.</li> </ul>

## **CONTACTING EI**

Please call or e-mail us anytime if you have concerns, questions, or would like to make suggestions as to how we might improve our program! **Tel: 360-966-3876**

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