

# Reception Booklet for Incoming Interns

This Reception Booklet will cover the following categories:

- Introduction
- Visas and Other Documents
- Arriving in the United States
- Money
- Administration while in the United States
- Living in the United States
- Working in the United States
- Traveling in the United States
- Need help while in the United States?
- Local Committees in the United States



**IAESTE United States™**  
An AIPT Program

10400 Little Patuxent Parkway,  
Suite 250, Columbia, MD 21044-3519  
Tel 410.997.2200  
Fax 410.992.3924  
E-mail [iaeste@aipt.org](mailto:iaeste@aipt.org)  
Web [www.iaesteunitedstates.org](http://www.iaesteunitedstates.org)

## INTRODUCTION

When you come for a “traineeship” in the United States, you might be surprised that your host employer, colleagues and local committee members do not call you a “trainee.” Instead, you are an intern and you are here to do an internship. Knowing these American terms will be helpful, not only for understanding this booklet, but also for your time in the United States.

This reception booklet will give you a basic overview of the United States. It will not give you many details on American culture – you should have received an informative booklet on American culture with the original offer of training. If you did not receive it, contact your national committee and ask them to send it to you. If you want specific information on the area where you will be interning, you can probably find it on the Internet. Each individual state (like California, Florida, Texas, etc.) has its own website, as do most major cities and towns.

Finally, IAESTE United States knows you are excited about your internship, experiencing a new culture and living in a new country. And we will work our hardest to make sure that your internship is a great professional and personal experience. Please remember, however, that you have certain responsibilities as an intern. If you read all of the information that IAESTE United States sends to you, you should understand these responsibilities. Carefully read all information sent to you by IAESTE United States, and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We are here to make your time in the United States as enjoyable and beneficial as possible!

## VISAS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Before you come for your internship in the United States, you must have a J-1 practical training visa, issued by a United States embassy or consulate. In order to receive your visa, you must have the “Certificate of Eligibility” (form DS-2019) and a Training and Internship Placement Plan (DS-7002). These documents will be sent to your national committee after you have returned the necessary documents from the N5 packet and the Department of State required SEVIS Fee. Please remember to return all necessary forms as quickly as possible.

Please be aware that IAESTE United States cannot advise you on how to exactly obtain a J-1 practical

training visa because every U.S. embassy or consulate has its own procedures. Once you are accepted for training, contact your nearest embassy or consulate. All will require that you interview with them once you have your DS-2019. Follow the directions that the embassy or consulate gives you! Visa processing time depends on your home country, so contact your nearest embassy or consulate quickly.

## **ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES**

Before your arrival, confirm your arrival details with your host employer and local committee (if there is one in your area). During your trip to the United States, you will have to complete an “I-94 card.” This is an important entry and exit document, and you should always keep it in your passport. At the port of entry to the United States, your I-94 card should be marked with “J-1, D/S.” Make sure you receive this marking on the card.

Within 10 days you **MUST** contact IAESTE United States to update your arrival and contact information. If you do not contact the office within 10 days, IAESTE United States will be unable to validate you in the U.S. government tracking database, and this could result in your deportation (forced departure from the United States).

Within 30 days of your arrival to the United States, you must send your “initial evaluation” form to IAESTE United States. You will receive this form at the same time that you receive your certificate of eligibility. Failure to return this form to IAESTE United States during the first 30 days of your stay in the United States could result in deportation.

## **MONEY**

An IAESTE intern is training in the U.S. on a J-1 Practical Training Visa. This means that all interns **MUST** have a Social Security number.

Often companies will not pay their trainees until the trainees have Social Security cards. For this reason, you should prepare for a delay in your first payment from the employer. You should come to the United States with enough money to last 4-6 weeks.

## **ADMINISTRATION WHILE IN THE UNITED STATES**

You are required to obtain a Social Security card. It is not a difficult process, and you will receive directions on how to apply for the card – these directions will be sent to you with the Certificate of Eligibility. Once you obtain your Social Security card, please give the information to your host employer. The Social Security card is necessary for paying taxes. Each state has its own taxes, and there are general federal taxes, too. In general, you should expect to have 22% of your paycheck withheld for taxes. You are not responsible for Social Security or federal unemployment taxes, so make sure your employer understands that you do not have to pay those taxes.

For tax questions and help, please visit: [www.taxback.com](http://www.taxback.com).

Also, remember that IAESTE United States and AIPT are your program sponsors. If you change address or have any other changes related to your internship, please contact us immediately.

## **LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES**

If you are interning in a local committee area, housing will be found for you. Before you arrival, make sure your host local committee knows your dates of training. If you are interning in an area without a local committee, the host employer will usually assist you with locating housing. However, you will also be expected to help locate the housing, and the employer will not do all of the searching. Be ready to help in the search, and you might even want to look on the Internet for housing options before your arrival!

Housing costs can vary greatly from one part of the country to another. You can look at the Work Offered form to have an approximate cost of living in your host area.

## **WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES**

By the time you start your internship, you should have already received a few documents about U.S. culture and daily life. If you have not received such documents, contact IAESTE United States or the IAESTE National Committee in your host country. As you already know, English is the primary language used in the workplace. However, it is not uncommon to hear Spanish or other languages. Spanish is quite common in the Southern states, like Texas and Florida.

Please remember that your host employer expects you to be a productive intern that benefits the workplace. This means you must show up to work on time and follow your host employer's rules. However, if your host employer is mistreating you, not giving you proper training, not paying you accurately, etc., please feel free to contact your local committee or IAESTE United States and we will try to help resolve the problems. We are here to help!

## **TRAVELING IN THE UNITED STATES**

The United States is a large country that offers countless numbers of travel opportunities. It is very common for people to travel by plane, and there are many companies that offer good prices.

It is also possible to travel by bus (the largest bus company is called Greyhound) or by train (Amtrak). However, these modes of transportation can be slow and not very useful for traveling long distances.

Automobile travel is very popular in the United States. You can either rent a car or purchase one. It is not difficult to find a reasonably priced used car. Remember you must have insurance and a valid driver's license before driving. We highly recommend that you have an international driver's license before coming to the U.S. Once driving, follow the local driving laws. You might notice that each state will have its own speed limit, and you should follow that state's laws. In the United States, drivers normally pay attention to the speed limits, and being stopped by a police officer for speeding is expensive. Please be careful.

If you plan to travel outside the United States during your internship, you must have your Certificate of Eligibility validated for travel by IAESTE United States. Please contact us for more information. Also, you should not leave the United States for travel if your visa has expired. A valid visa is required for re-entry to the country. Finally, be aware that you have thirty days after the end date of your internship during which you can travel as a tourist in the U.S. You cannot intern during this 30-day period. It is exclusively a travel time.

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SMOKING**

In the United States it is illegal to take any kind of drugs, including marijuana. The legal drinking age for any alcoholic drink, including beer and wine, is 21. For this reason, always be sure that you have photo identification with you when entering a pub or bar. You will be required to show your identification even if purchasing alcohol at a store. You must be 18 to buy cigarettes, and it is becoming increasingly common for public places, including restaurants and bars, to be non-smoking.

## **NEED HELP WHILE IN THE UNITED STATES?**

If you have any questions, you should contact IAESTE United States. Simply call 410.997.2200 and ask to speak to an IAESTE representative. Or, email us at: [iaeste@aipt.org](mailto:iaeste@aipt.org)

If you are in a local committee area, speak with a student from the local committee. A list of local committees is provided at the end of this document.

If you have an emergency and need a paramedic, police, or fire rescue, 911 is the emergency number that is available in most areas of the United States.

Finally, remember that your host employer is also a great resource, and can answer many of your questions and be a great help with questions specific to your area or state.

Have a great stay in the United States.

## **LOCAL COMMITTEES IN THE UNITED STATES**

Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts  
North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina  
Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania  
University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland  
University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia  
Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana  
University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky  
University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois  
University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan  
University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota  
University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin  
Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Rice University in Houston, Texas  
Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas  
Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas  
University of Houston in Houston, Texas  
University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska  
University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona  
Stanford University in Palo Alto, California  
University of California in Berkeley, California  
University of California in Davis, California  
University of California in La Jolla, San Diego, California