

Guiding our Partnership

A Manual for
ASSIST
Representatives
at Day Schools

J-I Visa Program

A detailed manual that will help us work effectively
together throughout the year to support
ASSIST students and homestay families.



Today's Scholars. Tomorrow's Leaders.

2011/12 Academic Year

Mission Statement

To promote mutual understanding, cultural interchange and a more peaceful world, ASSIST provides opportunities for outstanding international students to attend the finest American independent secondary schools on one-year scholarships, and for students and teachers from these schools to engage in educational experiences abroad.

Introduction

Since the 1969/70 academic year, more than 4,000 students from 46 countries have studied in the United States as ASSIST scholars. Through our unique partnership with American independent secondary schools, which offer scholarships to our students, future leaders of many cultures have come to know one another and have formed friendships that contribute to a more peaceful world.

Our school colleagues have been generous in their support of ASSIST students, and the common work of ASSIST and the schools has created an excellent foundation for our students. To provide a framework for this teamwork, we have compiled *Guiding our Partnership*, to present in one place all of the information that each ASSIST Representative needs to know.

The information in this booklet originates from four sources: our organizational experience over 42 years; the experiences shared with us by our students, host families and school colleagues; the regulations of the State Department; and the standards set by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). You will note in many places that we have established minimum standards, guided by the State Department or by CSIET, and you may well find that you already exceed these standards.

In the first section of the manual, we summarize the relationship and our mutual responsibilities. The second section of the manual includes excerpts from the CSIET standards.

The key responsibilities of the ASSIST Rep are:

- **Reading and referring to two important documents: *Important Understandings for ASSIST Students* and *Guiding our Partnership*.**
- **Recruitment of excellent host families, using as a foundation the State Department regulations and CSIET standards.**
- **Meeting with each student monthly and submitting a brief report to ASSIST.**
- **Meeting with, e-mailing or phoning each host family monthly, and submitting a brief report to ASSIST.**

We hope that you find this booklet helpful, and we invite your input toward its improvement in the years ahead.

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School Enrollment

Each fall, ASSIST asks each member school to reenroll for the following academic year. A school membership agreement is executed, generally by the director of admissions. In this agreement, the school informs ASSIST how many full and partial scholarships will be offered for the following academic year. A school must offer at least one full scholarship before requesting students who will receive a partial scholarship.

In the enrollment agreement, ASSIST lists the countries in which we plan to interview for the academic year being planned. The school may select up to five countries from which it would prefer to receive its full scholarship student, even rank ordering them if desired. We will use this as one part of our matching sequence during school placement. As well, if there are any special requirements of which we should be aware (i.e., host family prefers a young woman, we would prefer a 10th grader), please use this opportunity to inform us.

As you will note from the State Department and CSIET standards, we are not able to fill special requests for athletes. Our students are fine scholars first, and each also brings other special talents to share. We place students so that they can use these talents at schools with suitable programs and make a contribution while enriching themselves in the process.

Student Selection

With schools making a membership commitment in November, ASSIST begins its interview season knowing how many full and partial scholarship offers it can make to international students. Our colleagues overseas spend the fall promoting the program, receiving applications, and prescreening candidates. During the fall (Australia, Vietnam and China) and the winter (all other countries), ASSIST staff and volunteers interview finalists who have been selected through the screening process.

ASSIST uses the following criteria in selecting scholarship recipients:

- A history of notable academic achievement.
- A high degree of competence in spoken and understood English; evidence of competence in written English.
- An engaging personality, an instinct to learn and to share, and evidence of strong character.

- Talents and interests that can be utilized at receiving schools, including instrumentalists, vocalists, athletes, painters, debaters.
- Upon returning home, the potential to share what has been learned and to become a leader in his or her chosen field.

Student Placement

ASSIST concludes its interviews by the end of January, and by early March generally has received responses to its offers of scholarships. In March, the placement of students at individual schools commences.

ASSIST places students one at a time, taking into account the ability and talents of the student; the unique strengths and character of each school community; and requests made by the school for the upcoming academic year. Great care is taken to be certain that evidence of a good match exists, facilitated by ongoing contact with the school and a cycle of on-campus visitations.

Once these decisions are made, ASSIST presents to the member school a full dossier profiling each scholar. The school reviews the dossier, utilizing its own protocols for student admission. In almost all cases, the student presented by ASSIST is accepted for admission. In those few cases where the school feels the match is not an appropriate one, the dossier is returned immediately to ASSIST, and another candidate is presented. The dossier includes:

- An introductory write-up that summarizes the candidate's strengths and includes feedback from the interview.
- An application form and essay.
- An official transcript with appropriate translation guides (where needed).
- Recommendations from teachers and/or school administrators.
- The results of the SLEP test for most nonnative speakers.

When the candidate is accepted for admission, the school first informs ASSIST of this decision. The school and ASSIST then both write the candidate to inform him or her of the acceptance and the award of the full or partial scholarship. Along with an official letter of acceptance, the school should mail:

- The admissions catalogue and any other materials that fully describe the school to the student and his or her family.

- The curriculum guide.
- Information regarding personal expenses for which the student is responsible.
- A student handbook and any other materials that will help the student integrate into the community.
- Once a host family is identified, complete information is forwarded to the student so that a dialogue can begin between the student and family.

Host Family Selection and Support

Since the student will live full-time with a family, selecting a suitable family is one of the most important responsibilities borne by each member school. A great deal of the year's success will stem from this relationship.

All ASSIST host families are volunteers. No compensation is provided for the priceless services they provide, although a small tax abatement is available through the Federal government. We are all seeking families who see this as an opportunity to grow and develop new perspectives while providing a loving and suitable home for the ASSIST scholar.

It is most common for several families to host a student during the year. By sharing the responsibility, and by transitioning along school calendar lines (e.g., semesters or holidays), it is easier for families to envision inviting a student into their homes.

Provided below are criteria, suggestions and steps for selecting appropriate host families. In addition, you will find it helpful when you read the State Department regulations and CSIET standards to guide you in this work.

Host Family Selection Criteria

- A family that can willingly provide a nurturing, comfortable and stable environment for the exchange student.
- A family with demonstrably good character and reputation.
- A family with children who attend the member school – or faculty or staff members of that school.
- Adequate financial resources to support the needs of the student.
- A home in a safe neighborhood that is within a reasonable commute of the school.

The following are recommended but not required:

- A home that allows a separate bedroom for the student.
- Host families should have at least one same-gender child as the ASSIST student. It can be helpful, however, if the primary host sibling is not in the same grade as the ASSIST student. Common family interests also help.
- Both host parents living in the same household.
- Single-parent families are also acceptable candidates, but please contact the ASSIST office first. There should be mutual agreement among the ASSIST office, the school and the student before placement is made in a single-parent family.
- Parents who are actively involved in the school.
- Families that are internationally minded, have lived in another country, have experienced exchange themselves, or have international roots make good candidates.
- It is important to understand the responsibilities that the host-sibling will have to undertake and to select a family where the student is enthused and ready for this.
- Computer and Internet access available.

Host Family Selection Process

- Promote within your school community the opportunity to host a student. The most viable methods will vary by school.
- Receive from a prospective host family a written application (form provided by ASSIST), signed and dated, that provides a detailed summary of the family and the living environment.
- Ask the family to submit two personal references (forms provided by ASSIST) that attest to their good character and suitability to host. Please note that you, as the ASSIST Rep, cannot act as a personal reference.
- Conduct an in-home interview (forms provided by ASSIST) with the family, to include all members residing in their home.
- Ask the family to sign a standard agreement to serve as hosts for the specific ASSIST student.
- Secure the family in advance of the student's departure from the home country, and inform the student of the family and living situation.

Host Family Recruitment Suggestions

Independent schools are excited about global education and the opportunities it presents for their students, families, teachers and the extended community. Translating that excitement into a reliable structure presents a number of challenges, the most significant being creating a culture of commitment to the development of a host family program.

Underlying Principles: Get the Word Out & Share the Work

Schools that report the greatest success in reliably and smoothly recruiting and nurturing host families are those that take a committee or team approach. No one person or department should be solely responsible for finding the host families. As well, utilizing every means of getting the word out (the age of communication intersecting with the close-knit nature of our communities) ensures a blanketing of the school.

Get the Word Out

Work to raise the profile of ASSIST and the ASSIST scholar in your school community among the students, parents and faculty.

1. Use ASSIST materials
 - Have brochures from ASSIST ready to hand out to any interested people. Check with the ASSIST staff for the most current materials.
 - Encourage the perusal of the newly redesigned ASSIST website: www.assist-inc.org
2. Publish articles in the student newspaper, parent newsletter, alumni magazine, electronic newsletters, particularly when you are actively recruiting host families.
 - New schools could write about the program, with interviews of ASSIST Scholars at other schools.
 - Schools with a current ASSIST Scholar can highlight the background of the Scholar, his/her achievements on campus, as well as the host family. Such publicity is a way to thank host families and also indicate that it is a privilege to host an ASSIST Scholar.
 - Use prose and information from ASSIST website.
 - When sending out reenrollment contracts for school families, include a tear-off sheet that families can utilize to express an interest in hosting an international student.

3. Suggest to the faculty and coaches that they approach individual students whom they think would be good (one of the most successful ways to attract families).
4. Have an informational gathering for potential host families.
 - Explain the program. Have ASSIST materials available.
 - Have an ASSIST visitor speak. Time the meeting to coincide with the visit of a member of the ASSIST staff or Board. An ASSIST student or host family member (current or from a neighboring school) could report on their experiences.
5. Make ASSIST presentations at Parent Association meetings, student assemblies, faculty meetings, or Board of Trustee meetings. The presenter could be the school representative, an ASSIST Scholar, or a visiting ASSIST staff member.
6. Make a special award or thank you moment for the host families and volunteers who support the ASSIST program.
7. Make a special effort (e-mail, phone call, “catch them in the hallway”) to invite identified potential host families to these informational events.
8. Consider including a question like “Would you consider hosting an international student for a year? For a half year? For a short-term period?” on a yearly family information form or school volunteer recruitment form.

Share the Work

The ASSIST representative is the point person responsible for decisions concerning the ASSIST Scholar’s academic and social well-being during the year. But the responsibility of recruiting and supporting host families should not rest on the desk of a single person.

1. Form a committee that could include:
 - the school’s ASSIST representative.
 - faculty advisor to the ASSIST Scholar.
 - a faculty member who knows students and their families well and can identify potential host families, including music, dance and art teachers and coaches who might help help match a family to a Scholar’s talents.
 - parents active in the Parent Association who can identified potential host families.
 - parents from former host families.

- an upper school student.
 - anyone in the school community who has experience with or interest in international educational exchange.
2. Form the committee in the fall to give it plenty of time to identify a pool of potential host families.
 3. At some schools there is a standing “ASSIST Committee” or “International Relations Committee” of the Parent Association, enlisting the help of class parents and grade level advisors in identifying families. This committee might also enlist the help of families and potential host families in raising money for an international student contingency fund (to cover such expenses as the yearbook, a class ring, a prom dress or a field trip.).
 4. Recruitment can come from families in Lower, Middle or Upper School divisions. Some families enjoy having a Scholar the same age as the student in the family. But, a year or more distance in age can also give the Scholar and host siblings their own social space and take the potential competitive edge off the relationship. Some families find that a Scholar as “Big Brother/Sister” with much younger siblings works very well.
 5. Host families can be recruited for a full year, a term or a semester. Many families report that a full year gives the family and the Scholar an opportunity to bond in a deeper way, while other families feel that a partial year’s commitment is easier to make than a full year. Some Scholars report that multiple families mean repeated adjustments to a new environment and can be stressful, while others find it a broadening experience. A successful plan will depend on the commitment and the personalities of all those involved.

To lessen the idea that a year’s commitment might be too much responsibility, the recruitment committee might organize support families (“aunt and uncle” families) who take the Scholar for both scheduled and spontaneous outings, occasional weekends or vacations. This gives the host family a break, and an opportunity for a potential host family to try it out. The Scholar and the host family then have a support network of other families to call on. These families might invite the Scholar on family outings to museums, ball games, movies, or to a weekend country house.

In cases where multiple families host the Scholar in a single year, those families should plan on some activities to ease the transition for both students and families. For example, the host families could have a few joint activities through the year, particularly at the beginning and transition

moments. These families could also act as support families (see above) when they are not the actual host family.

6. Thank the host families and the members of this committee for their enthusiasm and commitment to international education and to ASSIST.

Orienting the Host Family

- Provide the host family with a full write-up on the student, including the materials sent to the school by ASSIST.
- Have past host families meet with prospective host families – “Old meets New.” Sharing their perspectives, giving them things to think about, discussing the highs and lows, and answering questions are good ways to share information. Make sure first to brief/coach past host families on your goals.
- Ask the family to begin correspondence with the student and to provide pictures of themselves and their home, as well as details about themselves and how they live.
- ASSIST will provide its booklet entitled Information and Orientation for Host Families, as well as the book entitled Host Family Survival Kit, by King and Huff.
- ASSIST will communicate with both the host family and school regarding the timing of the ASSIST orientation and the arrival time and transportation details of the student.
- ASSIST will provide the family with complete details of the insurance coverage undertaken by the student.
- ASSIST will provide the host family with its booklet Important Understandings, which outlines all of the important rules and regulations of the program.
- ASSIST will provide excerpts of the State Department regulations and CSIET standards governing J-1 visa secondary exchange.

Ongoing Support of the Host Family

Throughout the year, it is important to maintain contact with the host family to support them, thank them, and provide the opportunity to review and solve any problems that arise.

- The State Department and CSIET require that the ASSIST Representative maintain monthly contact with the host family. Twice dur-

ing the academic year, the contact with the host family must be in-person. Other monthly contacts can be conducted by telephone, e-mail or in-person.

- ASSIST will send a contact log on a monthly basis to remind ASSIST reps to call host families. Please mail or fax the log to us monthly so that we can maintain a record for the State Department and CSIET.
- ASSIST will write to the host family on an ongoing basis with helpful reminders regarding what to expect and what topics to cover with the host child.

Timeline for Host Family Program

Establishing an annual calendar increases the efficiency and coordination of the group that works together to recruit, orient and steward host families. Following the timeline reduces the workload and balances the activities that lead to a successful hosting experience.

December

- Return enrollment contract to ASSIST with scholarship commitment and preferences for sending countries, gender and grade placement.
- Designate or redesignate an ASSIST representative within your school to be the liaison between ASSIST, the school and the host family. Notify ASSIST.

January

- Begin working within school community to cultivate excitement and energy for the program.
- Consider utilizing best practices identified in “Guiding Our Partnership.” Over time, develop reliable methods that work best for your school community.
- Begin to identify interested families throughout the community for hosting in the current year and for future years (please refer to “Recruitment and Cultivation of Host Families”).

March

- ASSIST will mail an ASSIST Representative Training packet to the designated ASSIST rep.

March/April

- Receive student folder from ASSIST. Have Admissions committee read folder. Contact ASSIST with formal acceptance of student.
- Mail acceptance letter and school packet to student.
- Share student profile with host family candidates. Please note that according to State Department regulations you may only share photographs and personally identifying information of the student with potential host families who have been fully vetted. We recommend that you share a summary of the student's background and interests with potential host families that does not include the student's photo, address, phone numbers, etc.
- Introduce new student to the school community through online newsletter, school newspaper, school meetings and presentations.

April-June

- Have interested host families fill out the ASSIST host family application packet. Return all host family application materials to ASSIST as soon as they are completed.
- Conduct in-home interviews with interested host family applicants.
- ASSIST will mail the Host Family Information Packet to the families selected.
- ASSIST will mail information on the host families selected to the new ASSIST Scholar.
- Ask host families to establish contact with the new student.
- Work with the host family to decide where the ASSIST student will set up a bank account and how it will be managed.
- Registrar's office should begin to communicate with the student for class selection.

June-July

- Continued communication between the host families and ASSIST Scholar.
- ASSIST will communicate travel plans to the school and host family. The school and host family arrange airport pick-up and communicate that plan to ASSIST.

August

- 17th – 21st: Orientation at The Pomfret School, CT, for ASSIST Scholars.
- 21st: Students travel to their schools and host families.
- For schools hosting a student from eastern or central Europe, the Middle

East, or South Africa, ASSIST will mail their stipend check to the school's Business Office.

September

- ASSIST office will follow-up with the host family to answer questions and to see how the student is adjusting.
- ASSIST rep begins to submit the student and host family Monthly Contact forms to ASSIST at the end of each month.

Beginning in October

- The ASSIST Rep should notify ASSIST of any intended changes in the host family. The application protocols must be completed before a host family change may occur.

Student Acculturation & Support

We select ASSIST students whom we feel will adjust well to a new culture and make a notable contribution. However, every student will need some level of help, from modest to significant, in making their transition to a new culture, language, education system and physical climate.

Upon arrival to the host family or school, we suggest that you have some low-level planned activities that help to introduce the student to the community of people who will form his or her new home. We advise that you refrain from organizing large welcoming parties but instead give the student time to acculturate at a pace the student finds comfortable.

Each school has in place a system for welcoming, orienting, acculturating and supporting new students, and in most cases, our schools have significant experience with this sequence for international students specifically. In addition to your own experiences, here are important milestones:

- As with the host family, the State Department and CSIET require that the ASSIST Representative maintain monthly contact with each ASSIST student. The first monthly contact must be in-person, but all other contact throughout the year may take place in-person, on the phone, or via e-mail. Of course, we encourage you to become as well acquainted with our students as your time and commitments allow – monthly contact is the required minimum standard.
- ASSIST will send a contact log on a monthly basis as a reminder for ASSIST reps. Please e-mail or fax the log to us monthly so that we can maintain a record for the State Department and CSIET.

- ASSIST will write you during the year with helpful reminders regarding what to expect and what topics to cover with the ASSIST student.
- Upon the start of the school year, encourage the ASSIST student to become active immediately. Beyond classes, we have found it beneficial for the adjustment of the student, host family and school if the student “plugs in” during the first term. This may mean selecting a club, activity, athletic team or artistic interest to which they can contribute and from which they can learn.

Our Partnership

The ASSIST exchange experience works best when the student, school, host family, and ASSIST work well together. In that regard, please call upon us whenever we may be helpful to you. We are available during normal office hours, but we may also be reached during the evening or on weekends if an acute situation calls for our experience and support.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead and to hearing of the contributions our students make to your school.

State Department Regulations

ASSIST is recognized by the United States Department of State as a designated Exchange Visitor Program. ASSIST is also able to facilitate the issuance of the J-1 visa under which our students study in the U.S. for one academic year on Exchange Visitor status.

ASSIST's business model builds from the regulations enacted by the State Department as they cover secondary exchange students studying on J-1 visas. We have excerpted the State Department regulations below; the full version can be located at the State Department home page:

(www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html).

Summary

The Exchange Visitor Program is carried out pursuant to the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended.

Its purpose is to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges.

Sponsors and exchange visitors are required to comply with the Exchange Visitor Program regulations. It is essential that they become familiar with these regulations.

Student, Secondary (High School)

Through the high school exchange program, foreign secondary school students enter the United States to complete up to one year of academic study at an accredited public or private secondary school. During their stay, participants live with American host families or reside at accredited U.S. boarding schools. Students attend school as full time students and may attend for not less than one academic semester (or its quarter equivalent) or more than a full academic year.

Eligible participants are between the age of 15 and 18-and-a-half years at the time of initial school enrollment (by the first day of school), or have not completed more than 11 years of primary and secondary school (excluding kindergarten). Students who have previously participated in an exchange program [semester-long or year-long] are ineligible for participation in the high school program.

Prior to the students leaving their home country, program sponsors are required to provide them with all travel arrangements and a profile of the school, host family and community in which they have been placed. Students and their parents should be made aware whether their host family is considered an arrival (temporary) family or a permanent family for the school year. Students may take part in school sanctioned extracurricular activities, including athletics, if the school district and the state authority responsible for determining athletic eligibility approve their participation. Students may not be employed on a part- or full-time basis, but may accept occasional work such as yard work or baby-sitting.

Sponsoring organizations may not under any circumstance facilitate the entry of any foreign student into the United States without a school placement. They must obtain written notice of a participant's acceptance by the school from the principal or other authorized school administrator. Sponsors may not enroll more than five students in one school unless so requested in writing by the school.

Sponsoring organizations are required to screen all potential host families with whom participating students are placed. Sponsors ensure that the family can provide a comfortable and nurturing home environment, and has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations. Under no circumstances will a sponsor facilitate the entry of any student for whom a host family placement has not been secured. A second student may be placed with a host family only with the prior written approval of the Department of State.

Please refer to the program regulations for details on the screening and selection of the students, host families, and the sponsor's administrative obligations and procedures.

Exchange Visitor Program **22 CFR 62** **(updated March 2011)**

Sec. 62.25 Secondary school students.

- (a) Introduction. This section governs Department of State designated exchange visitor programs under which foreign national secondary school students are afforded the opportunity for up to one year of study in a United States accredited public or private secondary school, while living with an American host family or residing at an accredited U.S. boarding

school.

- (b) Program sponsor eligibility. Eligibility for designation as a secondary school student exchange visitor program sponsor is limited to organizations:
 - (1) With tax-exempt status as conferred by the Internal Revenue Service pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
 - (2) Which are United States citizens as such terms are defined in Sec. 62.2.
- (c) Program eligibility. Secondary school student exchange visitor programs designated by the Department of State must:
 - (1) Require all participants to be enrolled and participating in a full course of study at an accredited educational institution;
 - (2) Allow entry of participants for not less than one academic semester (or quarter equivalency) nor more than two academic semesters (or quarter equivalency) duration; and
 - (3) Be conducted on a U.S. academic calendar year basis, except for students from countries whose academic year is opposite that of the United States. Exchange students may begin in the second semester of a U.S. academic year if specifically permitted to do so, in writing, by the school in which the exchange visitor is enrolled. Both the host family and school must be notified prior to the exchange student's arrival in the United States that the placement is for either an academic semester or year, or calendar year program.
- (d) Program administration. Sponsors must ensure that all officers, employees, representatives, agents, and volunteers acting on their behalf:
 - (1) Are adequately trained. Sponsors must administer training for local coordinators that specifically includes, at a minimum, instruction in: Conflict resolution; procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations; awareness or knowledge of child safety standards; information on sexual conduct codes; procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual misconduct or any other allegations of abuse or neglect; and the criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercise good judgment when identifying what constitutes suitable host family placements. In addition to their own training, sponsors must ensure that all local coordinators complete the Department of State mandated training module prior to their appointment as a local coordinator or assumption of duties. The Department of State

training module will include instruction designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Exchange Visitor Program; its public diplomacy objectives; and the Secondary School Student category rules and regulations. Sponsors must demonstrate the individual's successful completion of all initial training requirements and that annual refresher training is also successfully completed;

- (2) Are adequately supervised. Sponsors must create and implement organization- specific standard operating procedures for the supervision of local coordinators designed to prevent or deter fraud, abuse, or misconduct in the performance of the duties of these employees/agents/ volunteers. They must also have sufficient internal controls to ensure that such employees/agents/volunteers comply with such standard operating procedures.
- (3) Have been vetted annually through a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry);
- (4) Place no exchange student with his or her relatives;
- (5) Make no exchange student placement beyond 120 miles of the home of the local coordinator authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from that exchange student's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program;
- (6) Make no monetary payments or other incentives to host families;
- (7) Provide exchange students with reasonable access to their natural parents and family by telephone and email;
- (8) Make certain that the exchange student's government issued documents (i.e., passports, Forms DS-2019) are not removed from his/her possession;
- (9) Conduct the host family orientation after the host family has been fully vetted and accepted;
- (10) Refrain, without exception, from acting as:
 - (i) Both a host family and a local coordinator or area supervisor for an exchange student;
 - (ii) A host family for one sponsor and a local coordinator for another sponsor; or
 - (iii) A local coordinator for any exchange student over whom he/she

has a position of trust or authority such as the student's teacher or principal. This requirement is not applicable to a boarding school placement.

- (11) Maintain, at minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the exchange student. The first monthly contact between the local coordinator and the exchange student must be in person. All other contacts may take place in- person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.
 - (12) That a sponsor representative other than the local coordinator who recruited, screened and selected the host family visit the exchange student/host family home within the first or second month following the student's placement in the home.
 - (13) Maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the host family. At least once during the fall semester and at least once during the spring semester, (i.e., twice during the academic year) the contact by the local coordinator with the host family must be in person. All other contacts may take place in person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.
 - (14) That host schools are provided contact information for the local organizational representative (including name, direct phone number, and e-mail address), the program sponsor, and the Department's Office of Designation; and
 - (15) Adhere to all regulatory provisions set forth in this Part and all additional terms and conditions governing program administration that the Department may impose.
- (e) Student selection. In addition to satisfying the requirements of Sec. 62.10(a), sponsors must ensure that all participants in a designated secondary school student exchange visitor program:
- (1) Are secondary school students in their home country who have not completed more than eleven years of primary and secondary study, exclusive of kindergarten; or are at least 15 years of age but not more than 18 years and six months of age as of the program start date;
 - (2) Demonstrate maturity, good character, and scholastic aptitude; and

- (3) Have not previously participated in an academic year or semester secondary school student exchange program in the United States or attended school in the United States in either F-1 or J-1 visa status.
- (f) Student enrollment.
- (1) Sponsors must secure prior written acceptance for the enrollment of any exchange student participant in a United States public or private secondary school. Such prior acceptance must:
 - (i) Be secured from the school principal or other authorized school administrator of the school or school system that the exchange student participant will attend; and
 - (ii) Include written arrangements concerning the payment of tuition or waiver thereof if applicable.
 - (2) Under no circumstance may a sponsor facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a written school placement has not been secured.
 - (3) Under no circumstance may a sponsor charge a student private school tuition if such arrangements are not finalized in writing prior to the issuance of Form DS-2019.
 - (4) Sponsors must maintain copies of all written acceptances for a minimum of three years and make such documents available for Department of State inspection upon request.
 - (5) Sponsors must provide the school with a translated "written English language summary" of the exchange student's complete academic course work prior to commencement of school, in addition to any additional documents the school may require. Sponsors must inform the prospective host school of any student who has completed secondary school in his/her home country.
 - (6) Sponsors may not facilitate the enrollment of more than five exchange students in one school unless the school itself has requested, in writing, the placement of more than five students.
 - (7) Upon issuance of Form DS-2019 to a prospective participant, the sponsor accepts full responsibility for placing the student, except in cases of voluntary student withdraw or visa denial.
- (g) Student orientation. In addition to the orientation requirements set forth at Sec. 62.10, all sponsors must provide exchange students, prior to their

departure from the home country, with the following information:

- (1) A summary of all operating procedures, rules, and regulations governing student participation in the exchange visitor program along with a detailed summary of travel arrangements;
 - (2) A copy of the Department's welcome letter to exchange students;
 - (3) Age and language appropriate information on how to identify and report sexual abuse or exploitation;
 - (4) A detailed profile of the host family in which the exchange student is placed. The profile must state whether the host family is either a permanent placement or a temporary arrival family;
 - (5) A detailed profile of the school and community in which the exchange student will be placed. The profile must state whether the student will pay tuition; and
 - (6) An identification card, that lists the exchange student's name, United States host family placement address and telephone numbers (landline and cellular), sponsor name and main office and emergency telephone numbers, name and telephone numbers (landline and cellular) of the local coordinator and area representative, the telephone number of Department's Office of Designation, and the Secondary School Student program toll free emergency telephone number. The identification card must also contain the name of the health insurance provider and policy number. Such cards must be corrected, reprinted, and reissued to the student if changes in contact information occur due to a change in the student's placement.
- (h) Student extra-curricular activities. Exchange students may participate in school sanctioned and sponsored extra-curricular activities, including athletics, if such participation is:
- (1) Authorized by the local school district in which the student is enrolled; and
 - (2) Authorized by the state authority responsible for determination of athletic eligibility, if applicable. Sponsors shall not knowingly be party to a placement (inclusive of direct placements) based on athletic abilities, whether initiated by a student, a natural or host family, a school, or any other interested party.
 - (3) Any placement in which either the student or the sending organization in the foreign country is party to an arrangement with any other

party, including receiving school personnel, whereby the student will attend a particular school or live with a particular host family must be reported to the particular school and the National Federation of State High School Associations prior to the first day of classes.

- (i) Student employment. Exchange students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.
- (j) Host family selection. Sponsors must adequately screen and select all potential host families and at a minimum must:
 - (1) Provide potential host families with a detailed summary of the exchange visitor program and the parameters of their participation, duties, and obligations;
 - (2) Utilize a standard application form developed by the sponsor that includes, at a minimum, all data fields provided in Appendix F, “Information to be Collected on Secondary School Student Host Family Applications”. The form must include a statement stating that: “The income data collected will be used solely for the purposes of determining that the basic needs of the exchange student can be met, including three quality meals and transportation to and from school activities.” Such application form must be signed and dated at the time of application by all potential host family applicants. The host family application must be designed to provide a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment (to include photographs of the host family home’s exterior and grounds, kitchen, student’s bedroom, bathroom, and family or living room), family composition, and community environment. Exchange students are not permitted to reside with their relatives.
 - (3) Conduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home where the student will be living;
 - (4) Ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment and that the home is clean and sanitary; that the exchange student’s bedroom contains a separate bed for the student that is neither convertible nor inflatable in nature; and that the student has adequate storage space for clothes and personal belongings, reasonable access to bathroom facilities, study space if not otherwise available in the house and reasonable, unimpeded access to the outside of the house in the event of a fire or similar emergency. An exchange student may share a bedroom, but with no more than one

other individual of the same sex.

- (5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references from within the community from individuals who are not relatives of the potential host family or representatives of the sponsor (i.e., field staff or volunteers), attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;
 - (6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and is not receiving needs-based government subsidies for food or housing;
 - (7) Verify that each member of the host family household eighteen years of age and older has undergone a criminal background check; and
 - (8) Maintain a record of all documentation, including but not limited to application forms, background checks, evaluations, and interviews, for all selected host families for a period of three years.
 - (9) Ensure that a potential single adult host parent without a child in the home undergoes a secondary level review by an organizational representative other than the individual who recruited and selected the applicant. Such secondary review should include demonstrated evidence of the individual's friends or family who can provide an additional support network for the exchange student and evidence of the individual's ties to his/her community. Both the exchange student and his or her natural parents must agree in writing in advance of the student's placement with a single adult host parent without a child in the home.
- (k) Host family orientation. In addition to the orientation requirements set forth in Sec. 62.10, sponsors must:
- (1) Inform all host families of the philosophy, rules, and regulations governing the sponsor's exchange visitor program, including examples of "best practices" developed by the exchange community;
 - (2) Provide all selected host families with a copy of the Department's letter of appreciation to host families;
 - (3) Provide all selected host families with a copy of Department of State-promulgated Exchange Visitor Program regulations; and
 - (4) Advise all selected host families of strategies for cross-cultural interaction and conduct workshops to familiarize host families with cultural differences and practices.

(5) Advise host families of their responsibility to inform the sponsor of any and all material changes in the status of the host family or student, including, but not limited to, changes in address, finances, employment and criminal arrests.

(l) Host family placement.

(1) Sponsors must secure, prior to the student's departure from his or her home country, a permanent or arrival host family placement for each exchange student participant.

Sponsors may not:

(i) Facilitate the entry into the United States for an exchange student for whom a host family placement has not been secured;

(ii) Place more than one exchange student with a host family without the express prior written consent of the host family, the natural parents, and the students being placed. Under no circumstance may more than two exchange students be placed with a host family, or in the home of a local coordinator, regional coordinator, or volunteer. Sponsors may not place students from the same countries or with the same native languages in a single home.

(2) Sponsors must advise both the exchange student and host family, in writing, of the respective family compositions and backgrounds of each, whether the host family placement is a permanent or temporary placement, and facilitate and encourage the exchange of correspondence between the two prior to the student's departure from the home country.

(3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances that necessitate a change of host family placement, the sponsor must document the reason(s) necessitating such change and provide the Department of State with an annual statistical summary reflecting the number and reason(s) for such change in host family placement in the program's annual report.

(m) Advertising and Marketing for the recruitment of host families. In addition to the requirements set forth in § 62.9 in advertising and promoting for host family recruiting, sponsors must:

(1) Utilize only promotional materials that professionally, ethically, and accurately reflect the sponsor's purposes, activities, and sponsorship;

(2) Not publicize the need for host families via any public media with

announcements, notices, advertisements, etc. that are not sufficiently in advance of the exchange student's arrival, appeal to public pity or guilt, imply in any way that an exchange student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately, or identify photos of individual exchange students and include an appeal for an immediate family;

- (3) Not promote or recruit for their programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families, or schools. Specifically, sponsors shall not include personal student data or contact information (including addresses, phone numbers or email addresses) or photographs of the student on Web sites or in other promotional materials;
 - (4) Ensure that access to exchange student photographs and personally identifying information, either online or in print form, is only made available to potential host families who have been fully vetted and selected for program participation. Such information, if available online, must also be password protected.
- (n) Reporting requirements. Along with the annual report required by regulations set forth at Sec. 62.15, sponsors must file with the Department of State the following information:
- (1) Sponsors must immediately report to the Department any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation or abuse of an exchange student participant. Sponsors must also report such allegations as required by local or state statute or regulation. Failure to report such incidents to the Department and, as required by state law or regulation, to local law enforcement authorities shall be grounds for the summary suspension and termination of the sponsor's Exchange Visitor Program designation.
 - (2) A summation of all situations which resulted in the placement of exchange student participants with more than one host family or school placement; and
 - (3) A report of all situations which resulted in the placement of an exchange student with more than one host family or in more than one school. The report must be in a format directed by the Department and include, at a minimum, the exchange student's full name, Form DS-019 number (SEVIS ID #), host family placements (current U.S. address), schools (site of activity address), the reason for the change in placement, and the date of the move. This report is due by July 31

for the previous academic school year.

(a) A sponsor shall terminate an exchange visitor's participation in its program when the exchange visitor:

- (1) Fails to pursue the activities for which he or she was admitted to the United States;
- (2) Is unable to continue, unless otherwise exempted pursuant to these regulations;
- (3) Violates the Exchange Visitor Program regulations and/or the sponsor's rules governing the program, if, in the sponsor's opinion, termination is warranted;
- (4) Willfully fails to maintain the insurance coverage required under § 62.14 of these regulations; or § 62.42

(b) An exchange visitor's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program is subject to termination when he or she engages in unauthorized employment. Upon establishing such violation, the Department of State shall terminate the exchange visitor's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program.

Council on Standards for International Educational Travel

ASSIST belongs to a number of organizations that support and advocate for international and cultural exchange. One such organization is CSIET, the organization recognized as setting the most comprehensive and effective standards in the field.

A listing in the CSIET Advisory List means voluntary adherence to a number of standards that guide how we conduct our business. Using the State Department regulations as a point of departure, CSIET further strengthens the standards to which leading exchange organizations comply. Each year, ASSIST must submit an application to be listed, including questionnaires submitted by randomly selected students, school colleagues and host families. ASSIST has been deemed in substantial compliance with these standards and so is listed in this important publication.

We have excerpted below those standards that will help you with your work with students on campus.

Standards for International Educational Travel Programs

Agent: Individual or organization authorized to represent or act on behalf of the organization in administering one or more aspects of the program, for example, an overseas partner.

Organization: Entity that sponsors international educational travel activities.

Program: Organized international educational travel activity that begins with participant recruitment and selection, includes the components outlined in the standards which follow, and terminates when the participant returns to his or her point of origin or otherwise severs the relationship with the program sponsor.

Volunteer: 1. A representative who is compensated for out-of-pocket expenses only. If a representative receives regular compensation, such as a per student placement fee, this individual cannot be considered a volunteer.
2. A host family that provides room and board gratis to a student.

STANDARD 1: EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A. Programs shall be designed to fulfill educational purposes related to an

international experience.

- B. The organization sponsoring the program shall have clearly established goals and learning objectives to fulfill the educational purposes of its programs.

STANDARD 4: PROMOTION

The organization's promotional materials shall professionally, ethically and accurately reflect its purposes, activities and sponsorship.

The organization shall not publicize the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc, that:

- a. are not sufficiently in advance of the student's arrival
- b. appeal to public pity or guilt
- c. imply in any way that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately
- d. identify photos of individual students and include an appeal for an immediate family.

Following are guidelines for public media advertisements:

CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be unacceptable: Urgently Needed, Don't let me be homeless, This is an emergency...

CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be acceptable: Open your hearts and homes, Host a Foreign Exchange Student...

It is permissible to use a picture of a student, a first name, age, country of origin and a composite or generic listing of interests in an advertisement in order to demonstrate the personal nature of the program and the types of interests that students have. It is not permissible to identify that specific student as needing a home, nor is it permissible to refer to a student's athletic ability or accomplishments. Written waivers must be obtained for the use of any student photographs.

- C. The organization shall not promote or recruit for its programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families or schools.
- D. All promotional materials/activities shall distinguish the program and the sponsoring organization from others operating under:
 - a. affiliated or related corporate structures
 - b. the same or similar names or symbols.
- E. The organization shall fully disclose all fees, including school tuition, host family reimbursements, and other required or optional costs to prospective

students and their natural families before enrollment. (If host families provide room and board gratis to the students, publicity should state that fees cover “selection and placement in host families” and not imply in any way that the fees paid by the students cover “room and board.”)

- F. Neither the organization nor its agents shall promote its programs as providing opportunities for school athletic participation, high school graduation, driver’s education instruction, household domestic service, child care, employment, or other activities that might compromise the student, program, or school. (Standard 4F specifically prohibits the organization and its agents (this includes foreign partners) from promoting its programs as providing any of the aforementioned activities. The word “promote” as it is used in Standard 4F includes any specific focus on or prominence of pictures and/or text depicting these activities. No prominent pictures and/or text will be considered to be in compliance.)
- G. The organization shall not state or imply in its promotional materials/activities that persons who are compensated other than out-of-pocket expenses are volunteers.

Supplemental Guideline: Promotion

International visitors must have a clear understanding of the program in which they are participating, including issues of host family reimbursement, school costs, and student participation in sports, driver education, and graduation. The materials to be submitted for this standard should clearly confirm that each organization is responsible for the actions of its agents in the U.S. and abroad.

Pictures of students in cap and gown, taking driver’s education, or wearing sports uniforms may not be displayed prominently in brochures. CSIET particularly discourages large photographs, or the placement of such photographs on the inside or outside front and back covers of brochures. There is not a set policy about the number of such pictures, and the Evaluation Committee uses its discretion in judging whether such photographs are too prominent. If there are questions regarding the use of such promotional pictures, contact the CSIET office and your questions will be referred for feedback to the Committee chair.

STANDARD 5: STUDENT SELECTION AND ORIENTATION

- A. The organization shall screen and select student participants on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.

Supplemental Guideline: Athletic Participation in the United States

The following statement must be included on either the student application or other written rules document: “Athletic eligibility or participation is not guaranteed.”

- B. Screening procedures for homestay programs shall include personal interviews with student applicants.

- C. Selection shall be completed sufficiently in advance of the student's departure to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation.
- D. Students shall be given a suitable orientation before departure and after arrival in the host country, including information on how to identify and report cases of suspected student abuse.
- E. All inbound students enrolled in a U.S. high school must have adequate English language proficiency to function successfully.
- F. All inbound and outbound students enrolled in school must have adequate academic preparation to function successfully.

Supplemental Guideline: Student Selection and Orientation

5.5 Orientation: The Committee prefers to use the term "introduction" to foreign exchange for meetings, explanations, and interviews that are given initially to prospective students or host families who may be considering a program. The term "orientation" is reserved for a thorough process of preparation and familiarization given to committed participants.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT PLACEMENT

- A. For programs that include a homestay, the organization shall:
 - 1. select host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program.
 - 2. personally interview all prospective host families in their home.
 - 3. match students and host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
 - 4. complete placement arrangements sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from home to ensure adequate time for preparation and orientation of the host family (Whenever possible, a student should be placed with a host family who has made a long-term commitment to host the student prior to the student's departure from his/her home country. In cases where this is not possible, a student may be placed with a short-term host family until long-term arrangements can be made. All short-term families must be selected and oriented according to the same criteria as are long-term families. The short-term nature of the host family placement must be fully disclosed in advance to the student, his/her natural parents, and the school principal, and be acceptable to them. Short-term families may, of course, also be utilized when a host family placement has not worked out and a new family must be found.)
 - 5. provide suitable orientation and training to the host family. (When a family expresses an interest in hosting a student and a representative

makes the initial home visit to explain the program, this is not to be considered the “host family orientation.” CSIET suggests that host family orientation include information on the student’s expectations about family and school life, customs, religion and mores of the student’s native country, the academic program in which the student will be enrolled, potential problems in hosting exchange students and suggestions on how to cope with such problems.)

6. Vet all adult members of the U.S. host family residing in the home through a national criminal background check in the United States.
- B. Organizations shall not knowingly be party to a placement (inclusive of direct placements) based on athletic abilities, whether initiated by a student, a natural or host family, a school or any other interested party. A direct placement is one in which either the student or the sending organization in the foreign country is party to an arrangement with any other party, including school personnel, for the student to attend a particular school or live with a particular host family. Such direct placement must be reported to the particular school and the National Federation of State High School Associations prior to the first day of classes.
 - C. For programs that include accommodations other than a homestay, the organization shall:
 1. arrange accommodations on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
 2. ensure the adequacy of the accommodations with respect to location, cleanliness, safety, nutrition, and supervision
 3. confirm the accommodations sufficiently in advance of the student’s departure from home.
 - D. For programs that include enrollment in US high schools, the organization shall:
 - a. secure written acceptance from the school principal or other designated responsible school administrator prior to the exchange student’s departure from his or her home country.
 - b. provide the school with the following information about the student:
 - 1) academic history, including
 - a) academic records, translated into English or other language as appropriate
 - b) number of years of school completed prior to arrival, and

number of years required in home country for the completion of secondary school

- 2) level of English language proficiency (for inbound students only)
- 3) appropriate background information
- 4) expectations regarding school experience.

Supplemental Guideline: Student Placement

The use of the term “orientation” is distinguished from an “introduction” to foreign exchange, as explained above.

STANDARD 7: OPERATIONS

- A. The organization shall ensure adequate care and supervision of students.
- B. Local representatives of the organization shall maintain regular personal contact with students and host families. (Contact should be initiated by the organization’s representative at least once a month be it by telephone, a visit to the home, personal contact at a gathering or other means. E-mail alone is not considered sufficient personal contact. Regular monthly contact is to include separate communication with the student and the host family in order to provide each with the opportunity to discuss issues they might not raise in the presence of the other. CSIET expects that there be formal documentation of this contact such as a monthly form, written journal, written log, etc. This is not to imply that representatives have to record every interaction. Rather it is to provide a record for the organization’s office of the pattern of student and host family adjustments, activities, and relationships through at least monthly contact with each student and host family.)
- C. The organization shall notify the student, host family, and/or other supervisor of accommodations regarding the travel itinerary sufficiently in advance of the student’s departure from the home country.
- D. The organization shall provide adequate support services at the local level to assist with program-related needs and problems, for example, counseling services, travel, medical care, language problems, changes in host family, emergencies.
- E. The organization shall maintain an effective system of screening (including a national criminal background check for U.S. representatives with direct in-person contact with student participants), selecting, training, and supervising program representatives and group leaders.
- F. The organization shall provide all students with an identification card that includes the student’s name; the host family’s name, address, and tele-

phone; the local representative's name, address, and telephone; the address and telephone of the organization's appropriate national office.

- G. For programs involving school enrollment, the organization shall maintain regular communication with school authorities.
- H. The organization shall provide an opportunity to the student, host family, and school to participate in a post-exchange evaluation.
- I. The organization shall have in place adequate plans and procedures for dealing with emergency situations that may arise during the program.
- J. The organization shall respond in a timely and appropriate fashion to complaints received from students, families, schools or others concerned with the program and its quality.

Supplemental Guideline: Operations

President as Area Representative: It is not appropriate for the president of an organization to serve as an area representative because this leaves no person within the organization to whom a student, host family, or school can turn to for recourse, should a conflict develop.

7.9 When establishing a timeline for each of your programs, it may be useful to think in terms of an individual student and the timing of the many different steps of the program relating to his/her participation with you.

STANDARD 8: STUDENT INSURANCE

- A. The organization shall guarantee that every student is covered with adequate insurance. Such insurance shall:
 - a. Protect students for the duration of their program.
 - b. Provide for the return of the student to his/her home in the event of serious illness, accident, or death during the program.
- B. The organization shall provide students, host families, and appropriate supervisor(s) with detailed printed information regarding the terms and limits of insurance coverage and procedures for filing a claim.
- C. Compensated officials and employees of the organization shall not receive compensation from the sale of insurance to its participants.

STANDARD 9: ADHERENCE TO GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

- A. The organization shall comply with all appropriate government regulations regarding international exchange or any other activity under its auspices.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the organization to notify the Council of any change in status with respect to government designation, acknowledgment, acceptance, endorsement and/or sanction.

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