



J-1 Visa Exchange Programs Application Instructions

Thank you for requesting information regarding Cultural Vistas exchange programs. Cultural Vistas is a private, non-profit organization devoted to helping individuals gain practical work experience and develop global skills for a culturally diverse world and, thereby, foster mutual understanding between people of different nations. Our Train USA program makes it possible for foreign nationals to do on-the-job training in their fields of study or career, while experiencing American society, life and culture in the United States under the J-1 visa program. Cultural Vistas was formed by the merger of two leading cultural exchange organizations, AIPT and CDS, effective January 1, 2011.

Cultural Vistas is designated by the U.S. Department of State to administer J-1 visa programs in the Trainee and Intern categories under the provisions of the Exchange Visitor Program. Cultural Vistas is thus authorized to act as the legal sponsor of international participants approved to take part in our programs. As a designated sponsor we issue government documents that allow an international participant to apply for the J-1 Trainee or Intern Exchange Visitor visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate overseas in order to participate in their US internship or training program.

As the legal program sponsor, Cultural Vistas helps prepare participants for their program experience and provides the necessary documents needed to obtain the visa. Cultural Vistas also monitors the program and provides emergency backup services. Throughout the program Cultural Vistas serves as a resource for both the employer and participant and ensures program compliance with federal regulations. Upon completion of the program, the participant must return home. Ultimately, it is the intent of the program that the participant benefits from the experience in the United States to further his or her career in the home country and share the experience and American culture with those at home.

In accordance with the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 22 C.F.R. Part 62, the primary objectives of the Trainee and Intern programs are to enhance the exchange visitor's skills in a structured program and to improve the participant's knowledge of American techniques, methodologies, and business practices within the individual's career field. These programs are also intended to help the exchange visitor participant to better understand American society, as well as allow Americans to gain exposure to foreign cultures by interacting with the international exchange visitors in the workplace. The program is not:

An employment visa

To be used for ordinary employment or as a staffing tool

To displace American workers

A pathway to other visa statuses or permanent status

Eligible Programs

Cultural Vistas can sponsor programs in most business fields and is designated in all J-1 visa occupational categories. Programs in these areas are not eligible for sponsorship as Interns or Trainees:

- Flight training
- Performing arts
- Positions involving more than 20% clerical activity
- Positions of unskilled labor
- Positions involving clinical or medical patient care or contact including dentistry, child/elder care, veterinary medicine, doctors, nurses, psychological therapy, cosmetology, sports or physical therapy, speech therapy or social work
- Programs involving the use of staffing agencies

Application Process

To be considered for sponsorship by Cultural Vistas please complete our Host Employer and Exchange Visitor application forms. The information contained therein will be used to determine whether the program is suitable for our sponsorship. Once we receive the completed forms and accompanying documents we will verify the information and reach out to you for additional questions as needed. Should the program be approved Cultural Vistas will issue the government documents needed by the Exchange Visitor to appear for their in-person visa interview at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate abroad to formally submit the visa application to the U.S. government. The documents supplied through Cultural Vistas sponsorship and required for visa interview include:

- DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility (proof of sponsorship)
- DS-7002 Training/Internship Placement Plan (describes the program)
- SEVIS receipt (receipt for Homeland Security fee)



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Processing Times

The average processing time is 10 business days from submitting a complete application provided there is no missing information or additional items needed. This means you will receive a decision from Cultural Vistas on your case (not that the visa will be issued). Any fields left blank or documents missing will result in delays. Expedited service is also available for an additional fee and a decision will be granted within 5 business days. You should plan to apply 2-3 months in advance of your expected program start date to ensure sufficient time for Cultural Vistas processing and Consular processing as well as preparation for your participant's departure and travel arrangements. Consular processing can take 2-4 weeks once sponsorship is secured. You must submit payment in full of the Administration fee, Insurance fee and SEVIS fee with your application. Please see Fees and Refunds for more information.

DO NOT MAKE FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS UNTIL THE VISA IS ISSUED.

In some cases Cultural Vistas will be required to visit your office in person before sponsorship can be determined. This may cause a delay in processing your application. If you have not previously participated in our programs and do not have at least 25 employees or at least 3 million in annual revenue your organization will require a visit.

Fees and Refunds

Administration fees are based on program length and the status of the participant.

Students*	Non-Students
0-3 Months: \$750.00	0-3 Months: \$875.00
3-6 Months: \$950.00	3-6 Months: \$1275.00
6-12 Months: \$1250.00	6-12 Months: \$1575.00
12-18 Months N/A	12-18 Months: \$1775.00

*Students are defined as currently enrolled in a post-secondary degree program outside the U.S.

Insurance fees

All participants are required to have insurance through Cultural Vistas. The Department of State requires a specific minimum coverage and failure to maintain proper coverage is considered a violation of the visa resulting in automatic cancellation. Cultural Vistas takes care of this compliance by enrolling all participants in our insurance. The fee is \$46 per month and provides coverage from program start date to end date. Additional coverage may be purchased for the 30 day grace period before and after the program. Payment in full for insurance is due with the application.

J-2 dependents are also required to meet the insurance minimum and may choose to purchase through Cultural Vistas for \$380 per month.

New Employer Fee (\$200)

All employers who have either never worked with Cultural Vistas or who have not yet completed a successful training program through Cultural Vistas within the past three (3) years will be required to pay a one-time registration fee. (A successful program is defined as a program during which both the mid-term and final evaluations were completed as required).

This fee covers the research Cultural Vistas does to ensure that your company is a legitimate company; to make certain that your company meets the standards that are outlined by U.S. Department of State for all J-1 visa host employers; and to guarantee that you understand your responsibilities as a U.S. host employer to a J-1 visa holder (this includes training, supervision, evaluations to be completed by trainee and supervisor, etc). Once your company has hosted a successful training program, your registration is considered complete and you will not have to pay the mandatory new employer fee again. This fee is non-refundable and cannot be paid by the participant.

Expedite Option

To expedite your application for a 5 business day decision an additional fee of \$1250 will be charged. If your organization also needs a site visit you must pay the Expedited Site Visit fee of \$1250 as well to ensure a visit can be scheduled in 5 business days.

Refunds

Refunds will be issued only to the party who paid the fee.

Cultural Vistas reserves the right to withhold additional monies or refuse a refund request.

Fee Type	Fee Amount	Refund— Cultural Vistas Rejection, or Withdrawal Before Decision	Refund— Embassy Denial, Cancellation or Approved Refund Request
Administration fee	varies	50%	\$0
SEVIS fee	\$180	100%	0
Insurance fee	\$46/mo	100% (minus admin fee)**	100% (minus admin fee)**
New Employer Fee*	\$200	0%	0
Expedited Application Review*	\$1250	0%	0
Expedited Site Visit*	\$1250	0%	0
Dependent	\$500	100%	0
Dependent insurance	\$380/mo	100% (minus admin fee)**	100% (minus admin fee)**
Extension	\$500	N/A	N/A
Forms Replacement	\$100	N/A	N/A

*If the expedited review, site visit, or new employer vetting has not been completed a partial refund may be possible.

**Unused insurance will be refunded minus a \$7.25 per month administration fee for months not already billed to Cultural Vistas.

Host Employer Eligibility and Requirements

- A. The host must be an established business in operation for at least one year and provide their Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- B. The host must not use the intern/trainee program for ordinary employment or staffing and must not displace American workers with interns/trainees.
- C. The host must not intend to assist the participant in remaining in the United States beyond the authorized program dates or change status to another type of visa.
- D. The host must be able to prove they have a valid workers compensation insurance policy. If exempted by law from having insurance, proof of exemption must be submitted to Cultural Vistas.
- E. All participant applicants must be interviewed by either the US host or the sponsor. For the purposes of the J-1 visa such interviews must be documented and be performed via web cam, videoconference, phone, or in-person. Hosts will confirm these details in the Host Employer Application.
- F. The host must offer a minimum of 32 hours per week to the participant.
- G. The host must provide continuous on-site supervision of participants and their program activities and provide feedback to facilitate the participant's development. Cultural Vistas requires a staff to participant ratio of 10-1 in most cases.
- H. The host is expected to provide the participant with a "real life" experience in his or her career field as normally practiced in the United States including exposure to various aspects of the business or occupation and activities designed with the participant's career level and interest in mind. Programs should be clearly defined and expectations, requirements, and activities specified in the training plan and should not be changed without approval from Cultural Vistas.
- I. The host must abide by all federal, state, and local labor and wage laws. This includes laws relating to withholding applicable taxes as appropriate. J-1 visa trainees and interns do not pay FICA (Social Security/Medicare) and FUTA (Unemployment) and are required to obtain a Social Security Number in order to be paid wages. Participants should not be considered independent contractors.
- J. The host should encourage participants to seek maximum interaction with Americans both professionally and socially.
- K. The host must ensure participants notify us of their arrival and complete all required evaluation forms.
- L. The host should provide orientation upon arrival to ensure the participant is prepared for participation in the program and clearly explain company rules, policies, and any benefits to which the participant is entitled.
- M. If payments are to be made by third parties instead of by the U.S. host, the funding organization must be clearly identified on the application. Cultural Vistas will determine the suitability of such payments.

Participant Eligibility and Requirements

Applicants may qualify in two categories:

Interns are foreign nationals currently enrolled in and pursuing studies full-time in a foreign post-secondary academic institution outside the United States OR graduated from such an institution within 12 months of the program start date. Students must complete one semester before planning to participate in an Intern program. The maximum program duration is 12 months for Interns.

Trainees are foreign nationals who have:

- A degree or professional certificate from a foreign-post secondary academic institution outside of the U.S., in a related field AND have at least one year of full-time prior related work experience in his or her occupational field outside of the United States.
OR
 - At least five (5) years of work experience in his or her occupational field outside of the United States that is related to the proposed field of training. The maximum program duration for trainees is 18 months except in the case of Hospitality and Agriculture which are limited to 12 months.
- A. All applicants must be 18 years old in order to participate in a J-1 visa Intern or Trainee program.
 - B. Applicants must be able to demonstrate recent experience in the field for which they are requesting an internship or training experience. Applicants must have related work or education within the 6 months prior to the program start date.
 - C. If the applicant's most recent work or educational experience has been outside of his or her home country, Cultural Vistas may require that the applicant return to his or her home country to gain additional experience for one year or more, and then apply to the program.
 - D. Applicants in the United States for other work or study programs must leave the United States for 90 days before beginning a J-1 Intern or Trainee program with Cultural Vistas in most cases. Please call to discuss your case.
 - E. Applicants must be interviewed by the U.S. host or Cultural Vistas to assess their eligibility and qualification.
 - F. No professional recruiters or employment agencies, either in the United States or abroad may be used to recruit or select prospective participants.
 - G. The applicant must intend to enter the United States solely for the purpose of internship or training and not to abandon non-immigrant status. Applicants must not intend to change status while in the United States.
 - H. Applicants must know English well enough to function in an English-speaking environment, both during the normal work period and non-working hours. This must be verifiable via documentation from an educational institution, English language test, or interview with Cultural Vistas.
 - I. Applicants should be able to demonstrate sufficient funding to pay their travel and living expenses at the visa interview.
 - J. Applicants are expected to apply in their home country in most cases. Cultural Vistas does not allow applicants to change status to the J-1 visa.
 - K. Participants are required to be covered under Cultural Vistas health and accident insurance which must be paid in full with the application. Any other insurance held by the participant will be primary and Cultural Vistas insurance will be secondary.
 - L. Participants must notify Cultural Vistas of arrival within 30 days of the start date and provide notice of all address changes.
 - M. Mid-term evaluations are required for programs 6 months or longer and final evaluations are required for all programs.
 - N. Participants are responsible for reading and complying with all information provided by Cultural Vistas including orientation materials detailing program requirements.
 - O. Participants cannot have a break of more than 30 days during their program.

J-2 Dependent Sponsorship

- A. The legal spouse and minor children of J-1 participants may apply for J-2 visa sponsorship to accompany the J-1 participant. Dependents may apply with the J-1 and arrive together or may seek sponsorship after the J-1 has begun the US program. Only the spouse and unmarried children under age 21 are eligible for J-2 status. Other family members are not eligible. When a dependent turns 21 the J-1 visa is automatically cancelled.
- B. Cultural Vistas will provide a Certificate of Eligibility marked "J-2 Dependent" for each family member approved for sponsorship.
- C. J-2 dependents must provide proof of health insurance that meets the Department of State requirements for the visa or may purchase it through Cultural Vistas.

Application evaluation

Cultural Vistas considers many factors in review of sponsorship applications including compliance with federal visa regulations. Additional questions may arise in our review of your application which must be answered before we can provide a final decision. Cultural Vistas must assess the ability of the host employer to provide a program that meets our requirements and the suitability of the program to the participant's background and career development. Cultural Vistas reserves the right to deny sponsorship to any individual. Sponsorship by Cultural Vistas does not guarantee visa approval by the US Embassy or Consulate. When reviewing cases we apply the following considerations:

- › Is the host organization using the participant as staff or seasonal labor?
- › Is there adequate supervision of the participant?
- › What specific new skills will the participant gain? How much experience does the applicant already have?
- › Is the wage suitable and sufficient to cover cost of living in the region?
- › How will the participant be exposed to U.S. culture?
- › How well does the participant speak, read, and write English?
- › Can the participant demonstrate his or her intention to exit the United States after the program to apply skills learned in the United States to another nation?
- › Has the applicant previously participated in a J-1 visa program?
- › Has the applicant worked or studied in the United States previously on other visa types?

Cultural Vistas has agreements with organizations in various countries. Prospective participants may contact the appropriate office listed below for assistance with their application. Our partners provide:

- › In-country assistance to applicants
- › Reciprocal positions for Americans going abroad as stipulated by U.S. Department of State regulations regarding J-1 exchange programs.
- › Overseas representation in various overseas organizations

**GLOBAL PARTNERS –
Required Registration;
Please see before
applying**

France (no fee)

l'Office Français de l'Immigration et
de l'Intégration (OFII),
44 rue Bargue - 75732
Paris Cedex 15 ///
Tél. : 01 53 69 53 70
Fax : 01 53 69 53 69
www.ofii.fr

Japan (fee)

The Institute for Japan International
Practical Training
Suite 703, 2nd Lawyer's Building, 2-18-
1/Nishi-Shimbashi Minato-ku Tokyo,
Japan/Zip-Code: 105-0003
e-mail: jipt@jipt.jp
URL: <http://jipt.jp>
Tel: 81-3-5402-6337
Fax: 81-3-5402-6192

Mexico (fee)

AMIPP
Av. Manufactura #8-Bis-Local 16
Plaza Comercial Korfu
Col. Alamos 3rd Seccion
Queretaro, Qro Mexico 76160
Tel: (52-442)245-2246
www.amipp.org

Switzerland (no fee)

BFM
Quellenweg 15
3003 Bern-Wabern
SWITZERLAND
www.bfm.admin.ch



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**GLOBAL PARTNERS –
No Registration
Required; Provides
assistance with and
information about
placement in United
States**

Argentina (fee)
Placement Solutions International (PSI)
Moldes 2166 20 A
1428 Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA
Tel/Fax: (54 11) 4788-0973
Email: info@psiargentina.com

Germany
ZAV Zentrale Auslands- und
Fachvermittlung
Villemombler Strasse 76
53123 Bonn
GERMANY
Tel: +49 (0)228 / 713 - 10 45
Fax: +49 (0)228 / 713 270 - 14 60
www.zav.de

Ireland (no fee)
Inspire Learning
Shop Street
Westport Co Mayo
IRELAND

Telephone: +353 98 37058
www.inspirelearning.ie

Information Resources

Please visit our website for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Health Insurance Booklet provides details about required health insurance coverage for all participants.

U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program

Code of Federal Regulations 22 CFR Part 62 is the code under which Cultural Vistas conducts its program.