



International YMCA Trainee Program Manual



Dear ICCP Trainee Participant,

Welcome to the International YMCA's Trainee Program. We are very pleased to be sponsoring your stay in the United States.

We are calling this manual the "Survival Manual" in the hope that most of the questions that will arise regarding the program that you have been selected for, J1-visa information, your responsibilities at your training site and life in the US, to list a few, will be answered here. You may still have questions after reading this manual. If your director/supervisor cannot answer these questions, please contact the International YMCA office.

You are coming to the United States for two very important reasons:

1. To have a comprehensive experience, not only through your training plan which was submitted by your host site, but also about life in the United States. Most trainees tell us that they learn more about themselves and their own values than about any other topic while on the program.
2. You are coming to share your experiences and knowledge about life outside the United States. This may be more important than you realize. Your stay in the United States will help those whom you meet better understand the differences and similarities in our practices, values, and beliefs.

We update this manual each year. If you discover something important that isn't covered—whether it's about your visa, sickness and accident insurance, life in the United States, the YMCA, or United States income taxes, please let us know. Your help in making future editions of this manual as useful as possible will be most appreciated.

We enjoy hearing from our participants. We love postcards! Feel free to write or e-mail and let us know how you are doing.

Good luck with your stay in the USA.

The International YMCA Staff

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The YMCA Trainee Program

The YMCA Trainee Program was established as a cultural exchange program recognized by the United States Government. Camps conference center and YMCA's in the United States are able to host international trainees in the fields of education, social service, management, commerce, finance, health enhancement, arts and culture.

Trainees are admitted to the United States under section 101(a)(15)(J) of the immigration and Nationality act of March 2, 1960. They enter the country on a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa which is stamped in their passport. Their Exchange Visitor category is "Practical Trainee". The International YMCA administers this Exchange Visitor program.

The International Camp Counselor Program / ICCP, a department of the International YMCA sponsors qualified trainees from all over the world. ICCP works to add an international component to participating camps, YMCAs and conference centers, increase cross-cultural understanding, and provide ongoing assistance to international participants and host sites.

The YMCA

The Young Men's Christian Association was founded in England in 1844 by George Williams.

Although the YMCA is Christian in origin and purpose, it is open to all and has no formal ties to any church or government. The YMCA is the USA's largest non-profit volunteer organization. In the USA, YMCAs provide a range of programs and activities to enable children and adults of every age, race, color, creed and economic status to develop to the fullest in spirit, mind and body. For more information about the YMCA of the USA, visit the website at www.ymca.net

YMCA Values

As a participant in a YMCA program, you will be a role model to everyone with whom you have contact. Whether or not your training site is a YMCA, you are a participant in a YMCA program. As such, you are expected to model positive values. The YMCA challenge is to accept and demonstrate the YMCA of the USA's four core values in everything you say and do:

- **Caring:** To love others; to be sensitive to the well being of others; to help others.
- **Honesty:** To tell the truth; to act in such a way that one is worthy of trust; to have integrity; to make sure one's actions match one's values.
- **Respect:** To treat others as you would have them treat you; to value the worth of every person, including you.
- **Responsibility:** To do what you ought to do; to be accountable for your behavior and obligations.

We encourage you to accept the challenge!

Exchange Visitor Visa/Key Words:

- **SEVIS:** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System.
- **SEVIS Fee Receipt:** Fee paid by ICCP on behalf of the participant and a receipt accompanies the DS-2019 form when sent to the participant.
- **DS-2019 Form:** is the visa sponsor certificate issued by ICCP to international participant which he/she takes to the US Embassy or Consulate in home country to apply for J-1 visa; this form must be carried with the passport.
- **J-1 Visa:** it is stamped in participant's passport issued by US Embassy or Consulate in person's home country;
- **I-94 Form:** is issued at port of entry into US; usually stapled in passport.

Purpose of the Exchange Visitor Visa (J-1)

You are a participant in a cultural exchange-training program approved by the United States Department of State. The YMCA is authorized to operate the Trainee Program using the Exchange Visitor Visa (J-1 Visa). Under the terms of your visa, you are allowed to receive compensation as a trainee at the host institution which has been designated to provide your training. You are not allowed to accept any employment.

J- 1 Visa

A J-1 Visa is permission given by the United States consular officer in your home country for you to enter the United States to perform specific activities. You cannot get a visa to enter the United States if you are already in the United States. For this reason, your DS-2019 form and SEVIS fee receipt cannot be sent to a United States address.

A visa is a legal document which shows that the U.S. Consular Officer has determined that you have the proper background and sponsorship to enter the United States. If the Consular Officer cannot verify your background, you will be denied the visa. For this reason, J-1 Visas are issued in your country of legal residence.

Terms and Conditions of Your J-1 Visa

- The J-1 Visa is given to exchange visitors. It is issued with the understanding that at the end of the program you will return to your country to continue promoting international understanding and apply the skills gained from the training received in the US.
- The visa does not allow you to engage in any employment while in the USA except on-the-job training as described in your training plan.
- The government regulations limit your visa to a **maximum stay of eighteen months** plus a 30-day travel period after **successful completion*** of your training program. Your J-1 Visa cannot be extended if your DS-2019 has been issued for the full eighteen months.
- The DS-2019 form and SEVIS fee receipt sent to you by the International YMCA must be with your passport in order for your J-1 Visa to be valid.
- The dates on the DS-2019 governs the length of your stay , not the dates on the J-1 Visa in your passport
- The Trainee Program may not be repeated.
- Treaties between your government and that of the United States may require that you return to your country for a period of 2 years at the conclusion of your J-1 training plan. You should investigate if the two year rule applies to your participation before deciding to join the program.

**** Early withdrawal or termination do not qualify as successful completion***

Getting a J-1 Visa

- Contact the United States consulate closest to you to find out what documents you will need in addition to the DS-2019 form, SEVIS fee receipt and passport.
- Ask if you need an appointment before going to the consulate. You should do this early as new government regulations are lengthening the visa application process.
- Be aware that there will be fees charged by the United States government for the appointment and for the actual visa. These fees are non-refundable.

New government regulations require that your sponsoring agency (International YMCA) register you in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, SEVIS. You are automatically registered by the International YMCA and your SEVIS number is the same as your DS-2019 number, which is located above the bar code in the upper right hand corner of your visa form.

- Beginning September 1, 2004 all J-1 Visa applicants in the trainee category will need to pay US\$ 100.00 for enrollment in the US Government tracking system (SEVIS)

NOTE: The SEVIS fee will be paid in full by ICCP and a SEVIS fee receipt will be provided to participants along with the DS-2019 form.

- Having a DS-2019 form does not guarantee that you will be issued a visa. The DS-2019 form is certification that you have an official sponsor to enter the USA. **You have the responsibility to prove to the consular officer that you are going to leave the United States within the time period stipulated by the visa.** Section 214 (b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act states:

“Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for a visa, and the immigration officers, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a non-immigrant status...”

- During the brief interview and review of your visa application and supporting documents, you must show that you have a permanent residence and other ties in your home country that would compel you to leave the USA at the end of your temporary stay. Such evidence might include:
 - ✓ Evidence that you own or rent a house or apartment
 - ✓ Evidence that shows that you have a job waiting upon your return
 - ✓ A letter from your university stating that you are enrolled and expected to return by a specific date
 - ✓ An offer for a university placement when you return
 - ✓ A marriage certificate
 - ✓ Birth certificates of any children that you have
 - ✓ Names and addresses of family members in your home country
 - ✓ A recent bank statement.
 - ✓ Your voter registration card
 - ✓ A letter from your religious leader attesting to your intent to return
 - ✓ Character reference from a professional person that states their confidence in your intent to return
 - ✓ Ownership of bonds
 - ✓ A copy of the travel itinerary for your proposed return trip (we advise you NOT to purchase your travel tickets before receiving your visa)

- ✓ Evidence you have other commitments that would require you to leave the USA at the end of the visa period.
- ✓ Evidence that your training plan is related to your employment or academic curriculum. Be ready to present job descriptions or academic transcripts which link your training plan to your background.

Each person's situation is different and consular officers examine the long range plans that you have within your country of residence.

The DS-2019 Form

The visa sponsor form (DS-2019 form) allows you to apply at the American embassy or consulate in your country for the Exchange Visitor Visa (J-1). This visa will allow you to receive training at the host site indicated on your application. ***You may not accept any other training or employment.***

You should apply for the visa as soon as you can. ***Do not wait until the last minute. Do not make your travel arrangements until you actually have your visa.***

Completing the DS-2019

You will receive the DS-2019 form signed in blue ink by the Responsible or Alternate Responsible Officer at the International YMCA Branch. Before applying for a J-1 Visa you must:

1. Carefully read and check your DS-2019 to understand what you are signing.
2. Sign bottom of page.
3. Be certain to fill in the city and country in which you have filled out the form.
4. Fill in date

SEVIS

SEVIS stands for Student Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a computer system operated by the US department of Homeland Security to track that individuals with F, J, or M visas are where they were assigned by their visa sponsors and are doing the activities approved for the visa. You are entered into Initial Status in SEVIS by the creation of your DS-2019 form. The U.S. Visa Officer at the Embassy updates SEVIS with your visa details. The Immigration Officer upon your entry into the United States enters your arrival information. To maintain your J-1 Visa status, your participation on your J-1 training program must be validated immediately after your arrival to your training site.

To validate your participation, you must contact the YMCA with the address where you are living while in the United States. This contact should be made within five days of your arrival. Once the YMCA confirms your arrival, your SEVIS status will be changed to Active.

Failure to contact the YMCA will lead your SEVIS status changing to "No Show" or "Invalid". Should your SEVIS status change to "No Show" or "Invalid" you will be required to leave the United States, and may have difficulties being approved for future visas to enter the U.S. We must know of your whereabouts at all times. Please update your location at: <http://www.ymcaiccp.org/Participant/PartWhatSWT.htm>

Frequently asked questions

▪ How long can I stay in the United States on my J-1 Visa?

The white card (I-94 stapled into your passport by the U.S Immigration officer states the length of time you are allowed to stay in the USA. In most cases it will be marked "D/S". This stands for "Duration of Stay". It means you can stay until the expiration date on your DS-2019 form –plus 30 days.

During the 30-day travel period, you may tour the U.S., but you may not work or train. If you leave the United States during the 30-day travel period, you cannot be re-admitted on your J-1 Visa. If you wish to stay beyond the date 30 days after the expiration of your DS-2019 form, you must leave the country and reenter on another visa (tourist, student, etc.). **The International YMCA staff is not able to help you with this process.**

▪ Can I travel in the United States before beginning my program?

No. Your J-1 visa has been issued for you to participate in a designated training program. The International YMCA issues the DS-2019 form to begin on the date of arrival requested by your training site.

The end date on your DS-2019 form is the maximum length of stay allowed under United States government regulations. If you choose to travel during the 30-day period which follows the end dates on your DS-2019 form, you will need to notify ICCP of your travel plans and arrange for sickness and accident insurance coverage.

▪ What if I lose the DS-2019 Form?

You must have your DS-2019 form for your visa to be valid. If you lose your copy, you may have to change your travel plans. The International YMCA charges a fee to replace a DS-2019 form.

To have a DS-2019 form replaced, you should send a letter to your placement director at ICCP stating that you need a replacement DS-2019. The letter should explain where and when you last had your DS-2019 and why you believe it to be lost. A check or money order for the replacement fee must be included along with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

▪ What if I Already Have a J-1 Visa

Even if you already have a J-1 Visa, you will need to make an appointment at the United States Consulate to register your new DS-2019 form. Unless the stamp on your J-1 Visa matches the program designation on your DS-2019 form, you will not be allowed into the United States.

▪ Can I leave the U.S. and Re-enter on my J-1 Visa

During your time off, you may leave and re- enter the U.S. without obtaining a new visa if:

- ✓ Your visa and DS-2019 form have not expired
- ✓ You hold a multiple-entry visa.
- ✓ Your passport is still valid,
- ✓ You have the DS-2019 form in your possession.

Before you leave the United States, the International YMCA staff must sign the travel authorization on the DS-2019 form to show that you are still in good standing with your training program.

International Staff will sign your DS-2019 form if:

- ✓ Your supervisor approves your leave in writing to International YMCA indicating your exact date of departure and return, the reason for your leave, and that you are in good standing with respect to your training plan.
- ✓ **You send the above letter to International YMCA along with your DS- 2019 form at least 15 days before your planned departure.**
- ✓ You send a self addressed stamped envelope for International YMCA to return your DS-2019 form. (registered or Express courier)

Before You Leave Home

Documents You Must Bring

- DS-2019 Form stamped by the US Consulate or Embassy official in your home country.
- Passport/J-1 visa stamp
- Exit visa, if required in your home country
- Insurance Identification card
- Updated Health History Form
- Insurance brochure/Medical Claim form
- Medical prescriptions
- This manual
- A copy of your signed training plan
- The Social Security Letter
- The Social Security Application
- Host site contact information
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Your driver's license

Make copies of your passport and DS-2019 to leave at home with your designated emergency contact in case these are lost or stolen while traveling.

The International YMCA does not assist with visa application procedures or training contract negotiations. It is your responsibility to get the visa and all other documents, such as exit visas, medical reports. You will need to clarify with your training supervisor who will be responsible for making international and domestic travel arrangements, what date you are expected to arrive, what your monetary compensation will be, when and how you will be paid, and what dates you are expected to be at the site. It is important that you stay in contact with your host site supervisor during the weeks preceding your arrival.

Once you have arrived to your host site you must notify ICCP **within 5 days** of the start date on your DS 2019 form. Failure to do this will result in automatic termination of your visa by the State Department.

Other considerations

Lost Passport

You will not be able to return home without your passport, and it can take up to a few weeks to replace. Replacing a lost passport will be at your own expense. In the event that you lose your passport:

- ✓ You must obtain copies of your passport details, i.e. passport number, date and place of issue and visa details.
- ✓ Make a police report at the nearest police station
- ✓ Contact ICCP to request a replacement of your DS-2019 form if the visa form was also lost (have the police report handy)
- ✓ Contact your country's nearest Embassy, Consulate or High Commission for re-issuance of your documents.

Finances

- Bring money in the United States Traveler's checks only. Stolen or lost travelers' checks can be replaced, but cash cannot.
- Bring emergency funds for unexpected problems that occur en route to your training site. It is advisable that you travel with an activated phone card.
- Bring enough money to cover expenses which will not be covered by your training stipend. Having money sent from home can take a long time.
- If you do not have a credit card a bank card/debit card may prove just as valuable. However limit withdrawals from Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) to emergencies, as service fees are high, especially for international transactions.
- Having a major credit card such as American Express, Visa, or MasterCard is a good thing to have in case of an emergency.
- If you wire transfer money via Western Union. Western Union operates throughout the world and can have your money available to you at the nearest Western Union branch within 24 hours.
- Check Cashing: U.S. banking is not interstate. If you are given a check written against a checking account in your state, you must cash it at a bank in your state.

Commitments:

The Trainee agrees to the following

- To participate in all aspects of the training program, including orientation and evaluations.
- To accept placement arrangements made by the host site and to carry out responsibilities to the best of his/her ability.
- To follow all rules and regulations of the training facility and to report any problems to his/her immediate supervisor and to the International Branch/ICCP.
- To read and agree to the Training Plan developed by the host site and approved by ICCP.
- To accept the terms of the Exchange Visitor Visa: to train only at the designated site, to leave the USA before the expiration date of the DS-2019 plus 30 days post program travel period (If program is successfully completed) and to not train outside of the activities specified in the training plan.
- To report your residential US address to the YMCA International Branch within 5 days of a move
- To follow and obey all laws of the United States.
- **To understand that the International YMCA Branch is the sponsor of the training program and the trainee is responsible for reporting to us any problems in a timely manner should the trainee leave the program early, the trainee must notify the International YMCA Branch**
- To Understand that the International YMCA branch as the program sponsor is responsible to monitor compliance with J-1 Visa regulations, the training plan and YMCA policies. The training plan cannot be modified without International YMCA branch / ICCP approval. The International YMCA may require modification of the training plan or terminate visa sponsorship if Branch staff determines the J-1 visa regulations, the training plan, or the YMCA policies are not being followed.
- To provide evidence of possession of round trip transportation to and from the United States, or sufficient funds to purchase return trip upon entry into the United States.
- To understand that the intent of the training program is to gain skills to be used in the home country. Any attempt to remain in the United States after the end dates of the training program may be viewed as misuse of the program, and visa sponsorship by the International YMCA Branch may be terminated.

The Host Site agrees to the following

- To take full responsibility for the participant's placement and performance, and assure that the candidate meets all requirements for the participant's placement and performance.
- To pay the International YMCA Branch the full application fee, which covers: SEVIS fee, DS-2019 form and Express Mailing fee.
- To pay the International YMCA Branch for sickness and accident insurance coverage for the participant for the duration of the training program.
- To assure the package containing the DS-2019 form and other documents is deliverable to the address provided on the application. If not, the host agrees to pay the International YMCA/ICCP. If the package containing the DS-2019 form and documents is undeliverable to the address provided on the application, the host site will have to pay another courier fee to resend the package.
- To supply the International YMCA Branch with a copy of the training plan signed by the trainee and to consult with the International YMCA Branch before any alterations are made to the approved training program.
- To ensure continuous supervision of the trainee and to complete with the trainee, all evaluation forms sent by International YMCA Branch.
- To guarantee sufficient equipment, facilities, and guidance of trained personnel to provide the specified training.
- To understand and accept that the trainee is here for training in the skills and knowledge needed to perform the particular task in the home country, not to be trained for employment in the United States.
- To guarantee trainees will not be in positions that would otherwise be filled by US residents as full or part-time employees.
- To accept the terms of the J-1 visa: representatives of the host site **may not** in any way assist the trainee to extend his/her stay or remain in the United States after the expiration date of the training visa.
- To understand that the sponsor of the training program is the International YMCA Branch and any problems, changes and pertinent information must be reported directly to International YMCA Branch including exact arrival, departure, and travel dates.
- To be responsible for arrival orientation.
- To notify the trainee of expenses covered by the host site;
- To clearly specify those expenses for which the trainee is personally responsible. The expenses for room, board, transportation and fees paid to International YMCA Branch must be considered.
- **To understand that the International YMCA Branch is the sponsor** of the training program and as such it is responsible to monitor compliance with J-1 visa regulations, the training plan, and the YMCA policies. The training plan cannot be modified without the approval of the International YMCA Branch. The International YMCA Branch may require modification of the training plan or terminate visa sponsorship if Branch staff determines the J-1 visa regulations, the training plan, or the YMCA policies are not being followed.
- To adhere to all Federal, State, and Local regulations regarding payroll taxes, insurance, and background screening.

International YMCA Branch agrees to

- Determine the trainee's eligibility for the training program
- Determine the host site's eligibility to offer the approved training program
- Sponsor the trainee's J-1 visa to the USA by providing the DS-2019 form and SEVIS fee receipt, which enables the trainee to apply for the visa at the American consulate in the home country.
- Provide sickness and accident insurance coverage for the trainee for the duration of the training program
- Determine that formal evaluation of the progress in the training occurs
- Provide on-going assistance to the trainee and training site with cross-cultural and visa-related issues.
- Report to the US government
- Adjust and/or terminate sponsorship if training is not being provided or if the J-1 visa regulations are being violated.

Your Training Plan

Knowing your training plan -Your training plan must be designed to improve your knowledge of American techniques, methodologies or expertise within your field of study. The use of the Exchange Visitor Program for ordinary employment purposes is strictly prohibited. The purpose of your training must related to your previous work and/or educational background.

Evaluations -At the mid – point, and again four to five weeks before the conclusion of your training plan, the International YMCA/ ICCP will send you a formal evaluation questionnaire. Please fill it out immediately and return it to the International YMCA.

In addition, you and your supervisor will have more frequent evaluations sessions on your own progress. Remember, the primary reason for your stay in the United States is the learning you will acquire through your training plan. The evaluation session and the International YMCA/ICCP questionnaire will help you, your supervisor and the International/ICCP understand what you have learned. The evaluation forms are available online at: www.ymcaiccp.org

Two-year home country physical presence requirement-Certain Exchange Visitor Program participants and family members must return home for at least two years after completing their educational or cultural program before they can change or adjust to certain nonimmigrant or immigrant status.

This requirement applies to those:

1. Whose exchange visitor program has been financed to some extent by the U.S Government or their home country.
2. Whose skills are needed by their home country as indicated in the Exchange Visitor skills list.
3. Whose purpose in coming to the United States is to receive graduate medical education or training.

Grounds for applying for a waiver of this requirement are limited.

Problems during your stay-If you decide to leave before the end of your program or if you are terminated by your host site, the International YMCA sponsorship of your visa will also be terminated.

If you are terminated from your assignment your Supervisor will ask you to leave the grounds immediately, not giving you much time to pack. You will not be allowed to say

good-bye to coworkers or friends. This is done so as to keep the disruption to a minimum. You must contact the International YMCA/ICCP before leaving your host site for the following:

- Discuss the reasons for your termination.
- Ensure that you receive any unpaid monetary compensation.
- Make sure that we know your exact whereabouts when you leave your placement site and assist you on where to stay.
- Discuss the possibility of re-assignment (If applicable).

If your dismissal is outside normal working hours, find a local place to stay and notify us on the International YMCA emergency number **1-(917)-841-4498**.

Depending on the cause for dismissal you will:

- Be re-assigned to another training site (depending on availability and a positive reference from your prior supervisor).
- Be responsible to finance your immediate return flight from the US

If it is determined that you must leave the country the International YMCA/ICCP will notify the United States government that you are no longer on the program and you must leave the country within 24 hours. Failure to leave the country within 24 hours could severely affect any future legal visa or immigration status you might have in the United States.

Finding Solutions-At some point during your stay a problem may occur. Problems create opportunities for learning experiences. Be prepared to be challenged and mentally “stretched” during your stay in the United States. One of the most challenging issues you will face is defining just what the real problem is, not the symptom of the problem. If you are having an assignment-related problem as part of your training, you may find that your host site has already established a procedure for dealing with the problem. Ask your supervisor for help. If your problem is with your supervisor, ask your supervisor for some uninterrupted time to discuss your concerns. Again, make sure you have clearly identified the problem before you begin the discussion. Stick to facts and specific behavior. Do not let your judgment be clouded by personalities and emotional reactions.

Once you have identified the problem, seek as much information as you can about why the problem exists and what options might be available to address its resolution. Frequently, understanding why a problem exists helps clarify what is really happening. If it is an assignment-related problem, discuss the options with your supervisor.

If you need International YMCA staff assistance, contact us!

Here are some important guidelines to follow:

Be open to your new surroundings. Adjustment usually occurs gradually. Ask questions if you don't understand. Make friends with your supervisor. If you feel overwhelmed by your surroundings and/or are unhappy, talk to staff members at your training site.

Sometimes trainees encounter serious problems. Try to talk over and work through any problems for at least two weeks (the first two weeks are the most difficult) because most problems are identified and settlements made during that period.

Most trainees have a very successful program. Very few, in fact, have the kind of problems described above. However, we don't want you to become one of the few who does have to leave before planned, so spend a few moments thinking about what it will mean to be a trainee participant in the United States.

Insurance/Sickness and Accident

You must be covered by sickness and accident insurance while you are in the United States. This coverage must begin on the day you enter the United States. Trainee participants are automatically covered by sickness and accident insurance for the duration of their program as specified by the DS-2019 form. If you plan to travel during the 30 days after your visa end date you must purchase additional insurance. Insurance forms are available on our web site: www.ymcaiccp.org. Be sure to read the insurance form in detail to understand what is, and what is not covered.

If you are hurt while working as part of your training, the placement site's worker's compensation plan should provide insurance. Your host institution knows how to handle this. If you become ill, or are hurt while not working, your insurance is provided by World Student Insurance. There is a \$100,000 limit per accident or illness with this insurance. Be aware that there is a deductible of \$100 per sickness. A deductible is the amount that must be paid by you.

Not covered by insurance:

- Any illness or condition that begins before your arrival in the United States.
- Dental care.
- Routine eye care.
- Pregnancy.

Tip:

Bring any prescription you have for any pre-existing medical condition including eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Medical Treatment

If you need to see a doctor or visit a clinic:

1. Take the medical claim form with you. Most clinics and hospitals will not treat you until you can prove with the claim form that you have insurance. You will need to pay \$100 the first time a doctor treats you for each accident or illness. This is called the "deductible" and is not paid by the insurance company.
2. Sign the medical claim form and leave it with the doctor, clinic, or hospital before you leave.
3. The claim form is sent directly to the insurance company by the doctor, clinic, or hospital. **If you forget to leave the claim form, you could become responsible for the cost of the medical treatment beyond the deductible.** This could cost you thousands of dollars! Medical care in the United States is very expensive.

If prescription medicine is needed, you will need to pay for it and then submit your receipts and claim form to the insurance company.

Keep a medical claim form and \$100 with your passport at all times. All forms are posted in our website you have internet access you can get the form from our Web site at: www.ymcaiccp.org

Serious Issues /Illegal and Inappropriate Behavior

You can expect to have a terrific training program. Usually International YMCA trainees have a meaningful, exciting, exhausting, friendship building experience. But, every year a few trainees find serious trouble. We do not want you to be one of these participants, so we hope you will carefully read the following information.

✓ Alcohol

Alcohol Consumption of any kind is strictly forbidden in placement sites

Trainees who bring alcohol to the training site can expect to lose their placements immediately. Some sites even have rules about their staff being seen drinking alcohol in the community during their free time. YMCA-ICCP does not want to hear, "I didn't know," or "In my country it's different."

We know that other countries view alcohol differently than does the United States. That's why we are telling you now to leave the alcohol at home. We don't want you to lose your training position over this issue.

If your supervisor does permit staff over 21 (legal drinking age in U.S.) to drink in a bar, please remember the following:

- ✓ You must be ready to resume all of your duties upon returning to the training site.
- ✓ Your actions in town are a reflection on your host site, the YMCA and your country.
- ✓ It is illegal to purchase alcoholic beverages for minors (under age 21).
- ✓ Your insurance does not cover Accidents resulting from the insured's use of alcoholic or intoxicants or any drug, unless prescribed by a physician.

✓ Drinking and Driving

The United States has very strong laws about driving after drinking alcohol. In the past, ICCP participants have found themselves serving jail time for drinking and driving. You may experience great peer pressure from coworkers or friends to drink and drive, or to bring alcohol onto the placement site property. Each year we warn ICCP participants not to listen to their new "friends" and become involved in drinking and driving. **We cannot help you if you are arrested for an alcohol offense.** Be safe; be smart; be responsible. **Do not drink and drive.** Do not get into a vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking.

✓ Smoking

There are several federal regulations regarding smoking in public places, and numerous local codes as well. Due to fire regulations, most host sites will have a strict **no smoking** policy everywhere on the grounds. If the host site does allow smoking it will be restricted to a designated place and time of the day.

✓ Drugs

Possession of controlled substances (drugs) in the U.S. is subject to prosecution by law. If you are found with illegal substances of any kind, you will be dismissed immediately and if you are not prosecuted you shall be sent home immediately at your own expense.

✓ Shoplifting

Shoplifting is removing anything from a store without paying for it. When ICCP participants have been asked why they shoplifted, the most common answer has been, "I don't know." American stores are filled with tempting merchandise. All stores have hidden surveillance. **DO NOT** put an item in your pocket or your bag before you have paid for it and keep the receipt. Shoplifting is a crime. It is punishable by jail time.

✓ **Sexual Harassment**

One of the greatest cultural differences between the United States and other countries is the understanding of what is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not limited to physical contact. It can occur any time an individual is uncomfortable with another's approaches, discussions, or comments.

It can be very difficult to know when you are causing another person to feel uncomfortable. Because what is considered proper behavior for males and females changes so much from one country to another, this is an area you will need to be especially careful about. Remember: you may be interpreting your action in a very different way from the rest of the staff. Few people will be willing to believe your explanation if they perceive sexual harassment has occurred.

✓ **Child Abuse/Sexual Abuse**

Researchers are finding that approximately. One in four girls and one in 10 boys, by the age of 18 have been sexually abused. If your training program puts you in direct contact with children, the laws in the state where your host site is located may require that you report any suspicion that a child has been sexually abused. You will learn the details about how to recognize and report sexual abuse during your staff training.

✓ **Physical or Emotional Abuse**

Most states have very strong laws regarding the physical or emotional abuse of children. You will learn more about what is considered physical or emotional abuse in the state in which your host site is located at staff training.

You may find that what is considered an acceptable action in your country is considered child abuse in the USA.

Some examples of physical or emotional abuse include:

- ✓ Using obscene language in front of children. If these words are part of your English vocabulary, leave them at home.
- ✓ Hitting, grabbing, pushing, shaking, shoving, or pulling a child. In many countries it is acceptable to control a child's behavior with a physical action. In the United States, hitting a child is considered abuse.
- ✓ Embarrassing or demeaning a child, causing a child to perform some action which results in embarrassment, or ridiculing a child in front of peers are considered forms of child abuse. Some children will seek attention by accusing adults of child abuse. Because laws in the United States require that all accusations of child abuse be investigated, your training could become a nightmare if you are one of the accused.

Here are some simple precautions which you should always practice to avoid becoming a victim of an attention-seeking child:

- ✓ Always be in view of others. If you need to speak with a child alone, do so in an area where you are in view of others.
- ✓ Do not allow children into private staff areas. Do not let children into staff housing areas, staff meeting rooms, storage rooms, etc.
- ✓ Know your host site's procedure for handling discipline. If you do not understand how your site handles discipline by the end of staff training, ask your supervisor.
- ✓ Be aware of what information you share. Use discretion with what information you share, especially as regards details about your private life.
- ✓ Report and/or record suspicious or unusual observations. If a child is acting in a way you consider unusual, report this behavior to your supervisor.

- ✓ Keep a written record of your observations. In rare occasions, parents may accuse you of being the person who caused the behavior. Your reported observations will help you protect yourself from unfair accusations.
- ✓ Supervise private activities in pairs. If you are supervising children during times when they are changing clothes, putting on bathing suits, taking showers, or otherwise using the bathroom, make sure another staff, who is of the same gender as the children, is with you.
- ✓ Do not force your attention on a child. It may be common for you to want to hug or touch a child who is hurt or homesick. Before you do, make sure the child understands your action.
- ✓ Never be alone with a child.

Case scenarios:

#1- A male ICCP participant decided that a female staff liked him because she was friendly during staff training. He suggested that they have a relationship. The female staff told him that she was not interested. The male participant decided that she was "being shy." The female staff complained to her supervisor that the ICCP participant would not leave her alone. The ICCP participant was fired from his position for sexually harassing the female staff.

#2 - Another ICCP participant found himself in a conversation with a female staff about the difference in dating between their countries. In the course of the conversation, the ICCP participant talked very explicitly about sexual practices in his country. The female staff became uncomfortable with the conversation and spoke about it to her supervisor. The ICCP participant was notified by the supervisor that he was to have no further contact with the female staff for the duration of the summer.

Legal Alert

Please understand that even though you are a visitor, the law still applies to you. You must respect local laws, just as you do at home. It is extremely important that you familiarize yourself with the local laws so that you may avoid any unexpected legal difficulties. Also be aware that due to the events of September 11th legal issues for Non-U.S. residents have become more severe. A night in jail or a large fine are not appropriate souvenirs for YMCA participants. Any legal trouble is your responsibility. If you have a legal problem, ICCP will try to provide support through your consulate in the United States.

▪ What are your legal rights if you are arrested?

- ✓ You have the right to remain silent and to refuse to answer any questions you choose.
- ✓ No person accused of a crime may be forced to confess or give evidence against them.
- ✓ You have the right not to be searched unless the police officer has a warrant.
- ✓ Most important, you have the right to be represented by a lawyer, and to be provided with a lawyer to represent you if you cannot afford to hire one.
- ✓ You are entitled to be released from jail upon posting of a jail bond (money paid to ensure that an accused person reports for trial) set by the court while you await trial.
- ✓ You are entitled to a fair trial conducted according to all the rules of evidence and court procedures.

- **What are the possible police procedures if you are detained?**
 - ✓ You may be charged, finger printed, required to complete paperwork, etc.
 - ✓ You may be held in jail until a bail bond is posted.
 - ✓ You may see a court judge who hears preliminary details and drops charges or sets a court date within the following 30 days. Sometimes court dates can be set sooner, especially if you remind the judge that you are only legally able to stay in the USA until the end of your J-1 Visa.
 - ✓ Depending on the severity of the charges, you might not be able to leave the area before your court date.

- **What are the possible results of being found guilty of charges?**
 - ✓ Monetary fine (varies for charge). Fines and penalties are subject to local laws, therefore the degree of penalties and amount of fines, etc., differ from town to town and may also differ from violations of state or federal laws.
 - ✓ Community service
 - ✓ Jail time
 - ✓ Deportation

Life in the United States

The United States is a large country with people from many different backgrounds. You will find cities divided into ethnic neighborhoods and concentrations of immigrant groups, many retaining their own customs and social traditions. However, almost everyone merges in the American mainstream in some aspect of life (schools, sports, and business).

Wide geographical differences also make for profound differences in attitudes and values. No matter what we tell you about the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of people in the United States, however, you will find a part of our population which does not fit the description.

The following are brief observations on some of the cultural attitudes and traits most associated with U.S. Americans:

- **Informality:** Everyone is treated more or less alike regardless of differences in social status.
- **Tact:** United States citizens can be indirect when trying to communicate information which may cause another person to feel uncomfortable.
- **Directness:** In some parts of the country, residents can seem overly blunt when answering questions or giving advice.
- **Materialism:** People have a strong respect for personal property and expect to be asked before someone uses their belongings.
- **Touching:** While it may be common for some friends to hug upon greeting, touching or hand-holding are often seen as signs of sexual attraction.
- **Time:** Time is considered a thing that can be saved, spent, or budgeted. Your training site supervisor will value being "on time." Being late can be seen as insulting.
- **Assertiveness:** Those who take initiative are admired. Don't wait to be introduced or for people to speak to you first if you want to meet others. It is common in many parts of the USA to wait for a person you don't know to show that he/she wants to know you. If you don't make the first move, the assumption may be you want to be left alone.
- **Roles:** There are no separate jobs for men and women. Men do house cleaning; so do women. Women construct buildings; so do men. You should expect to do jobs you would not be asked to do at home.
- **Servants:** Many United States citizens don't understand why people would have a servant do what we can do for ourselves. Everyone is expected to assist with chores so there will be more free time for activities. Not offering to help is insulting.

Cultural Adjustment

Most people who move to a new culture experience a series of emotional ups and downs, especially during the early weeks when most of the adjustments are taking place. Your reaction to time changes, foods, sleeping accommodations, bathroom arrangements, language patterns, will cause some emotionally low periods. Of course, the excitement of new people, places, and experiences will also cause some equally emotionally high periods.

Cultural stress occurs when you are cut off from familiar ways of communicating and interacting with others.

Most of us unconsciously believe the way we have always done things at home: the subjects we speak with one another about, the way we walk together, the times we eat, the frequency we bathe, the clothes we wear; is the "right" way to do things. When faced with an environment which offers a different "right" way, our personal identity and self-esteem are put into crisis. Hopefully, this phase will give way to a more realistic adjustment to the U.S. culture. Once the values and characteristics of people in the U.S. become more comprehensible and seem more familiar to you, day-to-day life will become easier. It is during this time that you will immerse yourself in the American way of life and begin to experience the culture in a way that would never be possible if you were only here as a tourist traveling for a few weeks.

Our best advice to you is to keep a sense of humor and keep an open mind. Even the worst experience will probably make a highly entertaining story back home! If you are having a difficult time with "culture shock" please communicate this to your supervisor or your peers. If this does not help, contact the International YMCA/ICCP for advice and assistance.

Ways to reduce Cultural stress

If you feel very uneasy and stressed in your new environment try the following:

- Reduce unpredictability by asking questions
- Eat a healthy diet. Try to make sure they are getting enough carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals
- Drink plenty of water and juice
- Get enough sleep
- Lower your expectations; it takes time to adjust to a new culture and routine

How to Have a Successful Training Program

You are an International Trainee. That is why you have been given an Exchange Visitor visa and the opportunity to come to this country. We hope that you will come to know a portion of United States culture and that those with whom you come in contact at camp will learn about you and your homeland.

Many host sites are experienced in using International Staff members to provide cross-cultural awareness in their programs and facilities. However, other host sites are not so experienced. This may be their first time to host international staff.

You might be able to help by suggesting activities to raise the international awareness level at your host site.

Ideas to Try at Your Site:

- ✓ Folk dance programs, simple songs, unique games
- ✓ International festival (mini world fair with songs and games)
- ✓ International Christmas in July (with your Christmas customs)
- ✓ International village (each cabin is a different country)
- ✓ Include "Camp Olympics" or "model United Nations"
- ✓ Informal language instruction (teaching a new word or a simple song each day)

Travel in the United States

Most participants have some time for travel after the training program ends. These notes may help you plan your travels. Schedules and prices change. Contact a travel agency, they have some bargains. Shop around. Be sure to plan ahead. You must also plan to arrange your travel from your host site at least two weeks before your training program ends.

Travel Tips

- The host site expects you to stay until the program ends. **DO NOT PLAN TO LEAVE EARLY.**
- Think about size. The USA is a country that has 52 states of various sizes. Texas and France are about the same size. There are 4,800 kilometers between New York City and San Francisco. You can't see everything in two weeks.
- Think about budget. The cost of staying in the USA is expensive.
- Travel costs will depend upon whether you will travel alone or with a group and upon your standard of living.
- There are very few student discounts in the USA.

For Air Travel:

Reconfirm reservations prior to going to airport by calling the airline's toll free number to avoid waiting for delayed or cancelled flights.

Special meals must be ordered in advance by requesting it at time the time reservation is made or calling the airline to add a request to your reservation.

Seat assignments are given to you in advance on the major airlines. You may change these at check in. Some airlines do not assign seats in advance and you will select a seat when you check in at the airport. Seating on buses and trains is 'open'.

Check in at least 2 hours in advance for flights, and 1 hour in advance for bus or train.

Connecting flights: If you are changing planes en route, you may check the T.V. monitor in the airline terminal or ask a customer service representative for your connecting gate number. Train stations have arrival/departure monitors, and for buses, check at the ticket window. The airline or train company will transfer checked luggage. On buses, you must pick up your own bags at the transfer point and take them to the next bus.

Record Locators/Reservation Numbers are found on your itinerary. These numbers make it easy for the check-in agent to find your reservation.

Baggage Allowance varies from airline to airline, but you can usually be safe with 2 checked bags and 1 carry on that fits in the overhead compartment or under the seat in front of you. It may be necessary to place your pocketbook or purse into your carry-on bag, so leave a little extra room. Check with the individual airline if you have any questions.

Lost luggage: If your bag does not appear on the baggage carousel, proceed to the airline's 'Lost Luggage Department' located in the baggage claim area. You will fill out a form, giving them a description of the lost bag and a phone number and address where you would like the bag to be delivered. Since it could take a day or two to receive your luggage, it is recommended that you have a change of clothes and any personal items you will need for the next couple days in your carry-on bag.

Security at U.S. airports has increased. Passengers from other countries may already be familiar with this in their own countries. Your carry-on luggage should not contain any

hazardous items and give extra time for individual searches. If you have not checked in by 35-45 minutes prior to departure, you may be denied boarding.

Electronic tickets: When traveling on an electronic ticket, you will need your photo I.D. (passport) and knowledge of your flight number, which is printed on your itinerary.

Missed flights: If you miss your flight, go to the ticket counter within 4 hours of the original flight time and you will usually be accommodated on the next available flight.

Standby on an alternate flight on the original day of departure may carry a fee of \$100.00.

Changes/Refunds: Airline reservations must be changed and tickets reissued by your original day of departure, either prior to flight time or by 11:59pm the same day or ticket is forfeited on most airlines this year. You must pay your fee when you make your change. This can be done over the phone with a proper credit card or in person at the ticket counter by cash or proper credit card. There are some airlines who will give a credit if you are a 'no-show', but not many anymore. Trains and buses charge a change or cancellation fee on most of their fares.

Toll Free Numbers (free of charge if calling from within the US)

- Air Canada 1-888-247-2262
- Air Tran Airways 1-800-247-8726
- American Airlines 1-800-433-7300
- American Trans Air, ATA 1-800-225-2995
- America West Airlines 1-800-235-9292
- British Airways 1-800-247-9297
- Continental Airlines 1-800-525-0280
- Delta Airlines 1-800-221-1212
- Frontier Airlines 1-800-432-1359
- Jet Blue 1-800-538-2583
- Mid Way Airlines 1-800-446-4392
- North West Airlines 1800-225-2525
- Southwest Airlines 1-800-435-9792
- Spirit Airlines 1-800-772-7117
- United Airlines 1-800-241-6522
- US Airways 1-800-428-4322

- Amtrak Train 1-800-875-8725

- Greyhound Bus 1-800-231-2222

Travel Options

Air: For long distances, planes are quickest. For example, if you travel from New York to Los Angeles, here's what each mode of travel takes: Plane — 5 hours; Train — 57 hours; Bus — 72 hours; Automobile — 4 to 5 days minimum

Many of the American domestic airlines have air passes for international travelers that cannot be purchased in the United States.. If you are interested in a multi-city pass you should investigate American Airlines, Continental, Delta, Northwest, TWA, or US Airways before you leave home.

Bus: Buses are the least expensive mode of travel. Long-distance buses run day and night. They are comfortable and affordable. Greyhound bus lines sell discount tickets for long-distance travel. Fifteen-day and 30-day passes are often available.

Train: There are fewer train routes in the USA than in Europe. The national rail company, AMTRAK, offers some bargains. RAILPASSES MUST BE PURCHASED OVERSEAS. Have a relative or friend buy the pass and mail it to you! For more information, contact: AMTRAK International Sales, 400 N. Capitol NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Automobile: Renting a Car —most companies require that a driver be over 25 and have a major credit card. Rentals are cheaper outside major cities. Some companies have special monthly rates or one-week rates with free miles. Compare companies. Find out the weekly rate, number of free miles and the rate per mile thereafter. Companies are listed in the telephone book—in the yellow pages—under “Automobile Rental.” The big companies (Avis, Hertz, Budget, and National) are more expensive, but may allow you to rent a car in one city and return it in another. The smaller companies require you to return the car where you rented it. You will have to pay insurance in addition to the rental fee. Take the maximum insurance; it covers everything in case of accident.

Hitchhiking: Hitchhiking in the United States is illegal and can be very dangerous, We don't recommend hitchhiking. In the past, ICCP participants have been assaulted by drivers who picked them up.

Bicycle: The American Youth Hostel Association can give you lots of help. Many cities and states have bike routes. Check the nearest bike store for maps and guidebooks. One caution: Be sure you have a good lock for your bicycle.

Traveler Aid: If you have trouble while traveling (you are lost, or you lose money or a ticket), look for the *Traveler's Aid Society*. Their representatives are in many airports, train stations, and bus terminals. Police officers can also be very helpful.

Where to Stay:

YMCAs and YWCAs — YMCA hotels are sometimes for men only; YWCA hotels are primarily for women only. Some are mixed. They are usually located in downtown areas and are quite inexpensive, comparatively, for a single room. Call first to check rates and availability.

Youth Hostels — there are 200 youth hostels in the USA but they are usually located outside major cities. You need a youth hostel membership card. Contact American Youth Hostels, 75 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012. Telephone: 1-212-932-2300.

Universities — Universities often rent rooms in student dormitories.

Hotels/Motels — look for less expensive chains; some are: Days Inn, Econo-Lodge, Travel Motor Hotel, Friendship Inns, Imperial 400 Motels, Motel 6, and Regal 8 Inns.

American Families —take all addresses you have of American friends and hope that you are invited to spend the night. Most American families are used to having an extra person for dinner or an overnight guest on their couch.

Camping — there are both public and private camp grounds throughout the USA. The national parks campgrounds fill up very quickly, so you should arrive early in the morning to get a place. Average cost is \$9 to \$14 per night.

Resources:

- *Where to Stay, USA* — available in bookstores;
- *Sleep Cheap Guide in North America* — available from CIEE:
205 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017
Telephone: 1-212-661-1414
- *Let's Go USA* — available in bookstores
- *SERVAS*- www.servas.org
United States SERVAS, Inc., 11 John Street, Suite 407, New York, NY 10038.

Special Deal for ICCP Participants

If you decide to travel to New York during the summer time, ICCP has arranged a special accommodations rate for ICCP participants at the West Side YMCA.

For reservations contact reservations at the:

West Side YMCA in New York City:
5 West 63 St
New York, N.Y. 10023
1-(212) 875-4100

Telephones and Mail

TO CALL LOCALLY FROM A PUBLIC TELEPHONE:

1. Listen for the initial dial tone.
2. Deposit 25-50 cents, or use a pre-paid phone card.
(See below.)
3. If the line is busy, you will hear a buzzing signal. If the line is busy or there is no answer, hang up and your money will be returned.

TO CALL TO A NUMBER IN NORTH AMERICA, BEYOND THE LOCAL AREA:

1. Dial 1 + (three-digit area code) + number (seven digits). Have plenty of coins.
One minute may be \$2 or more.

TO MAKE A COLLECT CALL:

A collect call is one in which the recipient of the call agrees to pay.

1. Dial "0," plus the three-digit area code, followed by the seven digits number, to get the telephone operator. Say you want to make a "collect call" and give the number you want to call.
2. When the operator asks your name, say your name.
3. The operator will ask whoever answers the call if he or she will accept paying for the charges. When the respondent says "yes," you may talk.

TO MAKE INTERNATIONAL CALLS OUTSIDE NORTH- AMERICA:

1. Get about \$12 to \$15 in coins, or use a pre-paid phone card. (See below.)
2. Find out the country code of the city you are calling.
3. After hearing the dial tone, dial "011" plus the country code, followed by the city code and number. If calling Europe, do not dial the first "0" of the city code.

DO NOT CHARGE CALLS TO YOUR HOST SITE OR HOST FAMILY TELEPHONE.

USING A PHONE CARD:

The best way for you to make phone calls without needing large quantities of coins is to use a debit calling card, which you can use from almost any telephone in the U.S.

Mail:

A letter to an address in North America requires a 37¢ stamp. Your host site probably will have stamps for sale. Be aware that these prices are subject to change.

If your family or friends write to you at your host site's address, ask them to include the words, "International Staff" after your name.

HANDLING AN EMERGENCY:**▪ At the training site:**

Every host site has a very comprehensive emergency plan or plans which you will become familiar with during your staff training. You are expected to follow your host site emergency procedure. In the event of a national emergency, the designated contact staff person at your host site will notify the International YMCA/ICCP of your well-being and will be the liaison between you and the International YMCA/ICCP.

▪ Emergency En Route to the United States:

If you find yourself traveling to the U.S. during an emergency contact your family first, then ICCP.

▪ Emergency En Route to your training site:

If you find yourself traveling to your placement site during an emergency, contact your training site first, then ICCP.

▪ After program is over:

In the event of a national emergency after you have completed your program and during your travels within the U.S. remain at your location and contact the International YMCA/ICCP or your host site.

▪ General Emergency Information:

For any immediate emergency requiring the assistance of police, fire department, or ambulance service, dial "911" on any phone. No coins are required when dialing "911" on pay phones. Some rural communities do not have a "911" system, however you can always dial "0" and an operator will help you contact emergency services.

You should dial "911" only in the event of a medical, fire, or criminal emergency.

Tax Information for Trainee Participants

The following information about tax issues is meant to provide general guidelines only. Tax law is constantly changing and is subject to interpretation. For specific and updated information, you should contact the IRS, a tax accountant, a tax attorney, or the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your country.

■ Payroll Issues

Before you begin to read about payroll issues, there are four concepts you should understand:

1. The IRS nor Social Security Administration considers trainees on J-1 visa ordinary taxpayers. Therefore, a different tax code applies to international trainees than applies to regular employees. Most payroll services do not have the computer software to handle the different tax code.
2. The State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service do not always use the same definitions in their regulations; i.e., they may use the same word to mean different things.¹
3. If the following does not make sense to you, don't worry about it. With many different government agencies administering regulations affecting international trainees, contradictions happen.²

Trainees are authorized to participate in a training program which may not exceed eighteen months in length or the time period specified by their DS-2019 form, whichever is shorter. They are assigned to a specific host institution, which has submitted a training plan detailing the training. They may receive a financial stipend for on-the-job training described in the training plan. They are not authorized to do any other type of work or to work at any other site. If for any reason they do not fulfill the requirements of their training plan, they must leave the United States.

■ Getting a Social Security Number

Trainees receiving a stipend for services rendered as part of on-the-job training are required to have a Social Security Number. If you already have a U.S. Social Security Number from a previous stay in the United States, this number will be used on all tax documents. If you do not remember what your social security number is, the Social Security Office nearest you will search for it. Do not apply for a new number. It is important to get the U.S. Social Security Number as soon as possible as it is needed for payroll purposes.

If you do have a Social Security Number from a previous stay in the United States, application must be made in person at the nearest Social Security Office to your training site. You will need to show the DS-2019 form, the passport with the J-1 visa and an original letter from the visa sponsor (the International Branch YMCA) stating that on-the-job training has been approved.

In order for your Social Security application to be processed, your visa must be validated in SEVIS first. You or your supervisor must inform ICCP that you have arrived at the training site so that your visa gets activated in SEVIS.

¹ According the IRS and Social Security Administration, the meaning of the word “work” refers to an activity for which one receives payment and which is performed under supervision. Do not confuse the IRS definition of “work” with the definition used by the Department of State.

² The following information regarding tax issues is meant to provide general guidance only. Tax law is constantly changing and is subject to interpretation. For more specific and up-dated information, you should contact the IRS, a tax accountant, or a tax attorney. The following information was reviewed by Lowell Hancock, Issues Specialist, IRS Foreign Payments Division.

When filling out the Social Security application form <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>:

1. Enter your name exactly as it is printed in your passport
2. Enter your mothers maiden name (her family name at birth)
3. Use your training site or US residential address, not your home country address.
4. Mark that you are a “ Legal Alien Allowed to Work” (you are not a student)
5. Remember that dates in the United States are written month, day, and year.

Before leaving the Social Security Office, make sure to request a receipt confirming that you have applied for the Social Security number. You will need to submit this receipt to your host site's payroll department in order to get paid.

Trainees can expect the process to take as much as long as 34 days.

The Social Security Administration will mail a Social Security Card to the address written on the Social Security number application. The card will be marked, “Allowed to work with Immigration approval.” This does not mean that you need to contact Immigration. It does mean that your training site must check that you have all of the documents mentioned in the section, “Identity and Eligibility to Work.”

▪ Identity and Eligibility to Train

Immigration law requires that employers verify that all employees—both U.S. citizens and aliens—meet certain requirements.

Within three days of hiring (that is, of starting training), your employer must fill out an I-9 Federal Government form on each employee hired. The employer must retain these forms for three years.

For international staff on an Exchange Visitor Visa, employers will ask to see the following forms, which participants have in their possession:

Document	Document Function
1. Passport	Confirms Identity
2. DS-2019 form	Confirms placement location
3. J-1 visa	Proves work eligibility
4. White I-94 form stapled into passport	Gives J-1 Visa status authorized length of stay

■ Tax Status

There are three factors that determine your tax status. Indeed, your tax status may change during your stay in the United States. The following three factors need to be determined **for each calendar year** of your stay in USA:

1. Are you taxed as a nonresident or resident alien? (See below)
2. What is the withholding tax rate?³
3. Does an international tax treaty cover you?⁴

Are you taxed as a nonresident or resident alien?

✓ *Non-resident or Resident Alien*

The IRS requires that you provide information to the host site to determine this status. To determine residency status:

- #1: List the calendar years in which you have previously been in the United States on a J-1 visa during the last six years.
- #2: Add to the list the calendar years you will be with your training site on the current J-1 visa.
- #3: Delete the earliest two years.
- #4: If the current year is no longer on the list, you will be taxed as a non-resident alien. Go to step 9.
- #5: Determine the total number of days you will be in the United States during the current calendar year. If you will be in the U.S. for less than 31 days in the current calendar year, the status is non-resident alien for tax purposes. If so, go to step 9.
- #6: If the previous calendar year is still on the list, determine the total number of days during that calendar year you were in the United States. Divide this number by 3. _____
- #7: If the list still shows two calendar years ago, determine the total number of days you were in the United States during that year. Divide this number by 6. _____
- #8: Add the resulting numbers in steps 5, 6, and 7. _____ (All days in current year, 1/3 days in last year, 1/6 days in two years ago.) If the result is less than 183, you are taxed for this calendar year as a non-resident alien. If the result is 183 or more, you are taxed for the current calendar year as a resident alien).
- #9: If you are still here on next January 1, repeat from step 1.

³ Non-resident alien J-1 visa participants are exempt from FICA and FUTA taxes. The wages, stipends, and pocket money of resident aliens are taxed at the same graduated rate as citizens. Resident alien visa holders should have FICA and FUTA taxes withheld, unless tax treaty conditions apply.

⁴ Many YMCA international trainees will be from countries which have negotiated treaties with the United States affecting whether the trainee pays U.S. Federal taxes. Trainees who are claiming U.S. tax exemption for all or part of their U.S. income must give the employer a completed IRS Form 8233 each calendar year. The employer must verify the exemption exists before adjusting any withholding amounts. Tax treaties constantly change. IRS Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties can be used to verify a Form 8233 claim.

What is the withholding tax rate?

Non-resident alien J-1 visa participants are exempt from FICA and FUTA taxes. The wages, stipends, and pocket money of resident aliens are taxed at the same graduated rate as citizens, but an additional \$7.60/week must be withheld to adjust for the fact the non-resident alien taxpayer cannot claim the standard deduction.

Resident alien visa holders should have FICA and FUTA taxes withheld, unless tax treaty conditions apply. They are able to claim all deductions and allowances, as are citizens.

Does an international tax treaty cover you?

Many YMCA international trainees will be from countries, which have negotiated treaties with the United States effecting whether the trainee pays U.S. Federal taxes. Trainees who are claiming U.S. tax exemption for all or part of their U.S. income must give the employer a completed IRS Form 8233 each calendar year. The employer must verify the exemption exists before adjusting any withholding amounts. Tax treaties constantly change. IRS Publication 901: U.S. Tax Treaties can be used to verify a Form 8233 claim.

▪ Filling out the W-4 Form

All trainees must fill out in IRS W-4 form within three days of being added to the payroll.

Non-resident aliens should fill out the form as follows:

1. In box 3 you should check off "Single" regardless of actual marital status.
2. On line 5 you should claim only one exemption (unless you are from Canada, Mexico, American Samoa, Japan, Korea, or India in which case a tax treaty may allow additional personal exemptions).
3. On line 6 you should indicate that an additional \$7.60/week is to be withheld. This \$7.60/week is due to a non-resident alien being unable to claim the standard deduction on the tax return.

Resident aliens fill out the Form W-4 the same way as U.S. citizens. If your status changes from non-resident alien to resident or resident alien to non-resident during the internship, a new Form W-4 must be filled out.

▪ Reporting Your Trainee Income to the IRS

In most cases you will be issued a Form W-2 by your training site for all compensation you have paid regardless of non-resident or resident alien status. However, if you gave your training site a Form 8233 for the current calendar year which you have determined exempts you from all or part of U.S. Federal taxes, the exempt income is reported to the IRS on Forms 1042 and 1042S.

It may be that you have both exempt and non-exempt income requiring that you report the exempt income on Forms 1042 and 1042S and the non-exempt income on Forms W-2 and 1099. The filing deadline for Forms 1042 and 1042S is March 15 of the following calendar year from which the income was paid.

You are eligible for one personal exemption, so not your entire stipend is taxable. In 2003 the personal exemption was \$ 3,050. Upon arriving at your training site, you will need to fill out various tax information forms which will determine how much tax you will have withheld from your pay

Return Home /Re-entry

You finally make it to the end of your training program and are on your way back to your home country. You are proud of yourself for surviving all of the ordeals of “culture shock” thinking that it’s all over now that you have left the United States. Warning! It is not all over.

For many people, the process of readjusting to life in their own country is just as, if not more, complicated than their adjustments to the foreign culture they have returned from. When you travel abroad you expect things to be different and they are. However, having difficulty adjusting to the familiar surroundings of their home country comes as a surprise.

If you are like most people, you will go back home expecting everything to be just like you left it. However, two things will have happened: (1) all of your friends and family are continuing with their lives while you are away, so things will not just be as you left them, and (2) after living in a new culture you may form new ideas and return home a slightly different person with a new outlook on certain matters.

While being immersed in a foreign culture in the United States, you will obviously learn about the customs and society of the country. You may not realize it, but you will also learn a few things about yourself and your home country. As a result of your new observations and experiences over the summer, you will now look at your own culture from a slightly different perspective. After returning home at the end of the summer, you may notice that some comments or observations you make to friends or family are interpreted as being critical of your own culture. Maybe you lived in an American community where there was a nearby store always open (24 hours a day) and you got used to the fact that you could go out and buy a soda or a sandwich any time you wanted, whether it be 3:00 in the afternoon or 3:00 in the morning. When you return home and are first reminded that you can no longer find a store that is always open, you may comment on how you liked the fact that almost everything is accessible at almost any time in the United States. If you complain too much about stores closing early in your own country, your friends and family may become annoyed that you are criticizing your own culture (and their culture).

Those who make more complete adjustments to a foreign culture are usually the ones who return home and more openly observe their own culture. And they are the ones who may experience more confusion as they try to re-adjust to their familiar culture. This is a sign of your success in adapting to the U.S., but may cause your re-adjustment to take a bit longer.

Be aware of all of these cultural issues that you will undoubtedly encounter and use them as opportunities to learn about different cultures around the world-observe how they are different and learn what they have in common. Even though there may be difficult times that are caused by living in a different culture, you will find this experience to be one of the most enlightening of the program.

Contacts

ICCP Staff Members in New York

The International YMCA staff in New York works hard to promote the programs year round. The staff is made up of the Director of International Programs, regional Program Directors, administrative staff and trainees. During your stay in the United States, you will need to know who handles each responsibility should you ever need to contact the New York office.

How to Contact ICCP

The International YMCA office in New York is connected to an electronic telephone answering system called "voice mail." You will want to understand how this system works if you need to call anyone at the International YMCA office.

The telephone number for the International YMCA is: 1-212-727-8800. If calling from within the United States, you can call for free by dialing: 1-888-477-9622.

The office is open 9 AM to 5 PM New York time, Monday through Friday and a receptionist answers all phone calls. Your phone call will be transferred to the appropriate staff person once you tell the receptionist what you are calling about.

If calling the office after 5 PM New York time or on weekends or holidays, after dialing 1-(212)-727-8800 or 1-(888)-477-9622, you will hear a voice thanking you for calling the International Branch of the YMCA. You can dial the extension for the staff person who serves your region

Ext 4312 - New England program Director

Ext 4322 - Southern/ Mid America/ West Coast program

Ext 4309- Tri-State Program Director

Ext 4320- Overseas Relations

Ext 4329- ICCP Director

If you have an emergency that cannot wait until the staff returns to the office, you can contact the ICCP emergency line 1-917- 273-8964. This phone is answered 24 hours on weekends, holidays, and after normal business hours. You can also contact the International Branch emergency number 1-917- 273- 8964.

Contacting Us by E-mail

It may be easier for you to contact your placement director by email.

Visit the ICCP web site: www.ymcaiccp.org for your ICCP contact person's name and e-mail address.

Contacting Us by Phone in an Emergency

In the event of an extreme medical or legal emergency please know that ICCP is there to help. For immediate assistance call **1- (917) 273-8964**

Stay in touch

We encourage you to stay in touch with ICCP by joining our Alumni Group. More information about how to join will be available on the web site. We also invite you to stay in contact with our local recruiter and YMCA in your home country. Perhaps you can volunteer with local ICCP activities.

Lastly write to us at ICCP and send pictures. We'd love to hear from you!

Your friends at ICCP



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Celebrating 45 years of experience!

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