

# Exchange Visitor Program



## WHAT IS THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM?

The primary goals of the Exchange Visitor Program are to allow participants the opportunity to engage broadly with Americans, share their culture, strengthen their English language abilities, and learn new skills or build skills that will help them in future careers. There are fifteen different categories of participants under the Exchange Visitor Program, of which, thirteen categories include privately-funded programs that are implemented under the auspices of the Office of Private Sector Exchange in the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The State Department designates more than 1,500 for-profit, non-profit, or federal, state, and local government entities to conduct such private sector programs. Exchange visitors on private sector programs may study, teach, do research, share their specialized skills, or receive on-the-job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years. In addition to the thirteen private sector exchange categories, the Exchange Visitor Program also includes two categories that are publicly funded: International Visitors and Government Visitors.

## PROGRAM CATEGORIES

**Professors/Research Scholars:** These two categories promote the exchange of ideas, research, and linkages between research and academic institutions in the United States and foreign countries.

**Short-term Scholars:** Professors, scholars, and other accomplished individuals travel on a short-term visit to lecture, observe, consult, train, or demonstrate special skills at U.S. research and academic institutions, museums, and libraries.

**Trainees:** Professionals with a degree, professional certificate, or relevant work experience gain exposure to U.S. culture and receive training in U.S. business practices through a structured and guided work-based program.

**Interns:** College and university students or recent graduates gain exposure to U.S. culture as they experience U.S. business practices in their chosen occupational field.

**College and University Students:** Students study at a U.S. degreegranting post-secondary accredited academic institution, participating in a degree, non-degree, or student internship program.

**Teachers:** Educators teach fulltime at a U.S. accredited primary or secondary school or in an accredited pre-kindergarten program.

**Secondary School Students:** Secondary school students study at an accredited public or private high school and live with an American host family or at an accredited boarding school.

**Specialists:** Experts in a field of specialized knowledge observe U.S. institutions and methods of practice and share their knowledge with their U.S. colleagues.

**Alien Physicians:** Foreign medical graduates pursue graduate medical education or training at a U.S. accredited school of medicine or scientific institution, or pursue programs involving observation, consultation, teaching, or research.

**Camp Counselors:** Post-secondary students, youth workers, teachers or others with specialized skills interact with and supervise American youth at U.S. camps.

**Au Pairs:** A young adult lives with a host family for 12 months and experiences U.S. culture while providing child care and taking courses at an accredited U.S. post-secondary institution.

**Summer Work Travel Program:** College and university students at foreign universities gain first-hand experience as they work in seasonal or temporary jobs and travel in the United States during their summer.

**Government Visitors:** Distinguished international visitors develop and strengthen professional and personal relationships with their American counterparts in U.S. federal, state, or local government agencies.

**International Visitors:** Reserved for State Department-sponsored and funded exchange participants

More than 300,000 participants from almost every country in the world come to the United States on the Exchange Visitor Program each year. Eighty-five percent are 30 years of age or younger. Fifty-five percent are women or girls.

## WHO COMES ON THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM?

Participants are young leaders eager to hone their skills, strengthen their English language abilities, connect with Americans, and learn more about the United States. Most individuals choosing to come to the United States on the Exchange Visitor Program are funded privately. The program includes a cultural component that gives participants the opportunity to engage more broadly with Americans and share their own cultures with their U.S. host communities. They return home eager to stay connected, to expand their networks, and to explore future exchange opportunities as "citizen ambassadors."

Find out more about the Exchange Visitor Program at [j1visa.state.gov](http://j1visa.state.gov), which also hosts the Route J-1 blog where participants share their experiences.

