



J-1 SUMMER STUDENTS SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS

Welcome to the US! We hope you have a wonderful time this summer. Your local Irish center is here to support you during this exciting experience that allows for independence, travel and a significant cultural exchange. Though this is an exciting and fun experience, it is also important to be prepared and aware of the responsibilities you have as a traveler.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

- Participate in all orientation processes with your respective sponsor
- Know who your US Based sponsor is (CIEE, InterExchange or Intrax) and how to get in contact with them
- Make contact with friends, family or organizations in the US that can help with securing accommodation and employment
- Bring sufficient funds for your trip in case you have delays securing work or long term housing. We suggest you bring or have access to between \$2,500-\$3,500

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Contact your VISA Sponsor (CIEE, InterExchange or Intrax) immediately to activate your SEVIS record
- Continue to make your required Sponsor/SEVIS contacts as outlined by your US based sponsor (CIEE, InterExchange or Intrax) and keep your record current throughout your J1 stay. Failure to do so can result in termination of your visa.
- After registering with SEVIS apply for your Social Security Card. To avoid processing delays, you should wait at least 48 hours after you have activated your SEVIS record with your sponsor to apply. A Social Security Card is necessary to work in the US. Visit this website to locate the nearest Social Security Office: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp>
- Contact the Irish Center in the area to get local information. A list of Irish Centers in the US can be found at http://www.ciic-usa.org/whoweare_findcenter.html.
- Make a list of emergency contacts in case you run into problems. –
- For information on departing and reentering the US with useful tips on documentation and procedures go to http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_5213.html.
- Always carry official identification with you. Also make copies all your important documents, including DS 2019, passport, J1 visa and your flight tickets. Keep a copy at home and preferably scan them and store them in 'the cloud'.

ACCOMMODATION

- Be aware that most apartments come unfurnished unless listed otherwise.
- Do not wire money to rent housing via Western Union or any other wire transfer agency! This is a classic scam. If in doubt, check with your US based sponsor.
- In most areas you will be required to pay first and last month's rent, and a security deposit up front. Be sure to get a receipt for any payments you make.
- Before you sign any lease make sure that you are dealing with a legitimate Real Estate Agent/landlord and that you read and understood the lease. Seek advice from local Irish Centers who have experience with local laws and conditions.
- Do not secure accommodation from businesses/agencies that meet you upon arrival at the airport
- Do not overcrowd housing as this may lead to eviction. Keep in mind: The more people, the more noise and disruption in a building, and the more complaints that will be made against you.
- Be aware of where you are looking for housing. Seek accommodation in "safe" areas of the city where you are staying. Irish centers can be helpful in giving information about the local area
- If you change housing during your program, be sure to notify your sponsor (CIEE, InterExchange or Intrax) so they can update SEVIS.



JOBS

- Connect with local contacts, friends and family to help you secure a job especially in a tight labor market
- Apply for jobs that are looking for large numbers of seasonal workers. Employers must be hiring to fill a seasonal or temporary need for the job to qualify for the J1 Summer Work Travel program.
- Irish Centers often have job boards and some even organize summer job fairs.
- Bring a US style resume, and dress appropriately when you go for a job interview.
- Follow up with a thank you letter or email to the person who interviewed you.
- Apply for a range of jobs and take the first job that you are offered. You can always change later.
- Many employers require routine alcohol and drug screening before hiring.
- Utilize resources from your respective sponsor (CIEE, InterExchange or Intrax)

STAYING SAFE

- If you decide to travel outside the US on your J1 visa please adhere to US State Department travel warnings and be aware of your security at all times. Please see attached advisory regarding travel to Mexico.
- Law enforcement in the US rarely gives a warning for offenses. They act swiftly, so be aware of your actions and ensure that you are compliant with US laws
- **You must treat US police officers with respect.** Speak to police officers politely and follow directions. Do not argue with or annoy them: they will have no hesitation in arresting you and putting you in a cell to cool off.
- Public disorder offences are often penalized severely in the US. It is important to be aware of noise levels and number of participants when have party/gatherings.
- Public disorder offences can be enforced on the street—so be aware of your behavior and noise level while traveling home at night.
- Drug offences and criminal arrests/convictions in the US may result in deportation and a permanent bar from re-entering the United States.
- In the majority of states drinking alcohol in public is an offense that may result in arrest and a court date. Failure to appear for a court date can result in an arrest warrant and will cause problems for future visits to the United States
- Be aware of personal safety, for example, walking home alone after a night out may put you at risk.
- Summer weather the US, especially in areas such as New York, can be very hot and humid. It is important to wear sunscreen and stay hydrated
- If you are having difficulty adjusting to life away from home and perhaps are not enjoying the J1 experience, stop into the local Irish center to speak with someone (<http://ciic-usa.org/find-your-local-irish-center/>)

DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR PASSPORT

- Do not tamper with your Passport or someone else's passport in an attempt to get around the US legal drinking age of 21 and/or to gain entry to over 21 bars and clubs. Falsifying passports is a **federal offence**. The punishment can include a fine or imprisonment. Those convicted will also almost certainly be refused entry to the US from that point forward.
- The J-1 visa allows you to travel and work legally in the US for **up to 4 months** beginning from the date on your DS-2019 form. **You are strongly advised not to overstay your visa.** Overstaying a visa in the US, even by one day, results in your visa being automatically voided and can leave you liable for arrest, detention and deportation, and/or severely affect your chances of obtaining a visa to enter the U.S. in the future.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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| Irish Consulates in the US: | http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=5535 |
| Irish Centers in the US: | http://www.ciic-usa.org/whoweaare_findcenter.html |
| Crosscare Migrant Project: | http://www.migrantproject.ie/ |
| CIEE | www.ciee.org/wat |
| InterExchange | www.interexchange.org/work-travel-usa |
| Intrax | http://icd.intraxinc.com/pxr/ext/login.action |