



# cape cod

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

## FAQs about the Work and Travel J1 Work and Travel Program for Employers

### 1. What is the Work and Travel J1 Students Program

The Work and Travel J1 Students Program is a U.S. government-sponsored cultural exchange program that allows international university students to work and travel in the United States during their summer break. It provides an opportunity for students to gain practical work experience, immerse themselves in American culture, and travel while financing their trip.

### 2. How can my business participate in the program?

To participate in the Work and Travel program, your business should be willing to hire international students as temporary employees during the summer season. You can sign up as a host employer through designated program sponsors or agencies that facilitate the exchange, such as CIEE, Intax or InterExchange. Please visit the [list of designated sponsors](#). They will guide you through the application process, help you understand program regulations, and connect you with eligible J1 students who are eager to work and travel in the United States. Each program sponsor may have specific requirements and procedures, so be sure to check with them for the most up-to-date information on becoming a host employer.

### 3. Do we have to provide housing for the J1 students we hire?

Yes, many employers provide housing or assistance with housing to program participants. Some sponsoring organizations require employers to provide housing but not all. We encourage you to utilize your local contacts and resources to assist with the housing search. If require assistance, our workforce housing manager -[christina@capecodchamber.org](mailto:christina@capecodchamber.org) can offer support in connecting your J1 students with affordable housing options.

#### **4. What is the job commitment? Can they quit? Can they have more than one job?**

All participants are at-will employees and can leave their employment at any time.

Participants are allowed to have more than one job. However, their primary commitment is to their initial, approved employer and they should maintain an open dialogue if they are interested in working another job. Participants typically arrive between May and July and can work until October 1.

#### **5. How well can they speak English?**

Participants must speak at least an intermediate English level. They should be able to communicate on their own. Their English level will also help determine for which job positions they are well suited.

#### **6. Is there a minimum wage requirement for J1 student employees?**

The U.S. Department of State does not set a specific minimum wage requirement for J1 student employees, but you should pay J1 students a wage that complies with federal and state minimum wage laws. It is essential to provide fair compensation to ensure a positive experience for program participants. Host employers must pay international students the same wages as similarly situated American colleagues. The students are afforded a variety of additional protections, including the right to a healthy and safe workplace, the right not to be discriminated or retaliated against, and coverage under applicable state laws, among many other legal rights.

#### **7. Can I hire J1 students for various roles within my business?**

Yes, you can hire J1 students for various roles within your business, depending on your specific needs. Many businesses in the hospitality, tourism, and seasonal industries, for example, hire J1 students for positions such as front desk staff, lifeguards, housekeeping, servers, and more. The key is to match the students' skills and interests with your job openings. All J1 work and travel jobs must be entry-level, temporary in nature, and may not displace American workers.

#### **8. How much does the program cost?**

There are no program fees to host employers. Participants pay program and insurance fees, flights, interview fees, rent for housing, etc. The program can benefit your business by providing you with enthusiastic and culturally diverse employees during the busy summer season. This can lead to a more dynamic and culturally rich work environment, which can be a valuable asset for your business. It's also an opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of young people from around the world.

#### **9. Who should I contact in case I have a problem or concern about a participant?**

All questions and concerns should be addressed to the sponsoring organization **unless they involve the health or safety of a participant**. The Form DS-2019 contains the name and telephone number of the participant's sponsor. To locate a designated sponsor, please visit the list of designated sponsors. Sponsors are required to maintain monthly contact with each student, as well as provide 24/7 toll-free help lines. Sponsors actively protect the health, safety, and welfare of program participants, and take seriously their role facilitating experiences that will improve the image and influence of the United States abroad.

#### **10. How to Obtain a Social Security Card for International Workers (J1's)?**

After they have registered with their sponsor, please instruct the international workers to complete the application for a Social Security number with this link: [Request a Social Security number | SSA](#) .

Once this online application is complete, the applicant would then visit the office to **submit their documents** (passports, visa, etc.). The applicant will be asked to present their submission number and present their documents (passport, DS2019).

**If the issue involves health or safety, contact the State Department at any time via the hotline 1-866-283-9090 or at [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov).**