



Host Employer Handbook



Table of Contents

2006/2007 Edition

Welcome to AWA	2
About AWA.....	3
Placement and Application Process.....	6
Preparing for Your Employees' Arrival!.....	7
After the Employees Arrive!.....	8
Insurance.....	10
Social Security.....	11
Taxes.....	12
I-94 Card.....	13
Form I-9.....	13
Frequently Asked Questions.....	14

Dear Employer,

Thank you for your decision to become a host employer with American Work Adventures! We are pleased to welcome you to our program.

Your participation continues the unique opportunity for U.S. employers to meet their business needs while promoting cultural understanding and inspiring personal growth. We work with countries around the world to facilitate a beneficial exchange experience for both participants and employers.

Participants choose AWA to learn and benefit from the valuable international work experience, to earn money to finance their education, and to improve their English skills in a wide variety of enjoyable environments. American employers appreciate the extensive applicant pool of motivated and pre-screened students, and our international partner organizations value AWA's 100% placement of all students, the personal service, and the multilingual staff.

Whether you are a long-time AWA host employer, or are new to our program, this handbook is a valuable resource that will help you to learn about AWA's services and will also provide information and details on topics you will be dealing with during the upcoming season.

We look forward to working with you throughout the program to ensure your successful experience!

Sincerely,

The American Work Adventures Team

About American Work Adventures

American Work Adventures was established in 2002 under the parent company of Face the World (FTW). FTW is a family of international and educational exchange programs with its home office located in San Rafael, California. In 1993, FTW began organizing short-term exchange programs for high school students through the Face the World Foundation program. The mission was to provide students, host families, and host communities with a quality experience that would offer a new dimension of cultural understanding and encourage lasting friendships. As the program grew, FTW expanded to include a work and travel program, American Work Adventures, as well as the Au Pair Foundation program. Today, FTW is an internationally recognized presence in over 40 countries with a focus on providing culturally enriching programs. Both in the United States and abroad, we are all contributing to the development and education of tomorrow's leaders.

American Work Adventures (AWA) enables university students from around the world on the **J-1 Visa** to live and work in the U.S. for up to four months during their summer break from classes. Students are between the ages of 18 and 26, and currently enrolled as full-time university students. AWA provides students with a broad array of job positions including ski areas, amusement parks, hotels, resorts, and national parks.

AWA also offers a **H2B Visa Labor Program** designed for international graduates, employees, and independent contractors with good English skills and a willingness to work in the U.S. for 8-10 months. The H2B visa can be issued to qualified participants to fill a seasonal labor shortage in job positions in the U.S. The H2B program matches motivated employees with U.S. employers seeking to fill temporary positions.

Why AWA is the Preferred Service For Your Business

- **Personal Support** – We believe that quality, personalized support to both the international participants and to the employers directly contributes to the program’s success. AWA provides comprehensive support services to both employers and participants, including a 24 hours per day/7 days per week Emergency Call Line, our highly trained and multilingual staff, and local support from field coordinators in designated areas.
- **Worldwide Partner Network** – Over 15 years of establishing global contacts has allowed AWA to form professional relationships with skilled and dependable partners in countries around the world. Our partners are highly trained and we are confident in their abilities to effectively screen and assist us in recruiting well-qualified students for your job placements.
- **Expand and Diversify Your Workforce** – Our international employees are highly dedicated to the program, and in turn to their employers. All of our participants have been screened for their English ability, and demonstrate a willingness and motivation to work. Your American employees will have the opportunity to learn about new cultures, and benefit from a global perspective.
- **Return on Investment** – The AWA program increases seasonal staff retention, thus reducing costly turnover expenses. Partnering with AWA also allows you to save time and money by simplifying the recruiting and hiring process. AWA arranges international recruiting trips for employers who wish to personally interview prospective participants. All of these custom services are provided at no cost to you.
- **Department of State Designation** – AWA is designated by the Department of State to assist with all necessary documentation and paperwork in the preparation of participant visa appointments. AWA also provides medical and travel insurance for all participants. We make your job easier by handling the details for you.

Contact AWA

Our Headquarter office in San Rafael, California operates during the hours of 8:30 to 5:30 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday.

Address: American Work Adventures
1010 B Street, Suite 200
San Rafael, CA 94901

Phone: 888-292-0088
415-257-2208

Fax: 415-257-2207

Email: info@workadventures.org

Website: www.facetheworld.org

Participants or employers with general questions should contact our office during our normal business hours at our support line, 888-292-0088. This line is available 24 hours a day, and AWA staff will respond to emergency calls outside of business hours.

Placement and Application Process

In conjunction with our overseas partners, AWA has designed an application process that demonstrates the applicants' motivation and qualifications to work in the U.S. Most participants learn of our program through recruitment fairs at international universities or by recommendations from past participants.

Applicants are assessed for their English ability, emotional maturity, and job placement qualifications by our overseas partners. After receiving the applications, the AWA staff confirms that the participants meet your specific needs, and will then place the employees. Participants are also required to demonstrate proof of sufficient financial resources for the duration of their stay, according to the U.S. State Department. These participants are motivated to earn money working at a U.S. company and to learn more about U.S. culture, and make a big financial commitment by traveling to the U.S. They expect to earn enough money to cover the program costs, living expenses, and hopefully be able to take some money home at the end of the program. It is important that participants be able to work full-time, or at least 32 hours per week, during the season.

Timeline

International students are available for spring, summer, and winter seasons. These students can often work later in the season than American university students, offering you extended service during your peak months. The students can work for up to 4 months in the United States, with a 30-day grace period for traveling at the end of their employment season.

Preparing for Your Employees' Arrival!

Employer Profile and Seasonal Offer of Employment

You will have completed the Employer Profile and Seasonal Offer of Employment communicating your job requirements and responsibilities to potential employees before their arrival. Please be as thorough as possible, in order to reduce any confusion of job expectations. The more comprehensive you make the profile and job offer, the smoother the employees' transition will be into the community.

Housing Arrangements

All participants are responsible for their own housing arrangements, if not provided by the employer. If you provide housing for the participants, or refer them to housing in the area, please ensure that it meets all standards for health and safety. If you do not offer housing, we have found that assisting the students in their search by showing them the most effective resources, such as websites, newspapers, or other referrals, is of great benefit. This support helps them to more easily adjust to living in a new country. Housing options include apartments, houses, long-term hotel rentals, hostels, and sublets. We recommend providing ideas on housing leads to the participants before their departure, so that they can begin to make their arrangements.

Transportation Arrangements

As it will take some time for the students to become acclimated to the surrounding area, please advise them on the safest and best ways to travel to work. Bicycle rental is a popular option for students, as well as carpools and rideshares.

Orientations

All of our participants are required to attend an orientation. Orientations cover pertinent topics, such as program rules and regulations, necessary documentation, and what to expect when working and living in the United States.

After the Employees Arrive!

For many of our program participants, this may be the first time they have had the opportunity to experience the United States. The sudden immersion into a new culture and different lifestyle can be an exhilarating experience, and also overwhelming. Your employees will go through a range of emotions during their stay in the U.S., and may require some time to adjust to their new environment.

The experience of culture shock or homesickness is associated with feelings of loneliness, irritability, and insecurity. While not all participants will go through this phase, it is important to be aware of the adjustment cycle, so you will have more insight and a better understanding of your employees' behavior. Talk to your employees about their life in their home country, in order to encourage the students to discuss their feelings. Remind the students to stay positive and to not withdraw from their American co-workers.

Adjustment Cycle:

First Stage: Participants will experience initial excitement, as they will be constantly surrounded by something new and different.

Cultural Fatigue: As the excitement and new sense of adventure begins to wear off, participants will begin to notice more differences in the U.S. and to feel uncomfortable. They may become both physically and mentally tired.

Recovery: The participants will begin to understand more about the culture and lifestyle, and will feel more comfortable in their surroundings.

Stability: This final stage represents the participants' acceptance and adjustment to the American culture. They will have established a daily routine, and will find it much easier to immerse themselves in the culture.

Procedure for Changing Jobs

Although participants and employers have an obligation to each other to fulfill their seasonal commitment, in some cases it may be possible for participants to change jobs. The participants must receive written permission from AWA before changing employers, and participants may not change jobs without AWA approval. Each request is reviewed by AWA before receiving permission, to ensure that all program regulations are followed.

Sexual Harassment

Cultural sensitivity and awareness is a key component in establishing a harmonious workplace. Many cultures view harassment differently than in the U.S., so it is important that you educate your employees on your company's rules and regulations. Your employees need to be aware of the differences, and need to understand the importance of respecting these boundaries.

The same goes for the environment in which the employees will be. They need to be able to feel safe and secure in their workplace. Please be sensitive and aware of possible inappropriate conduct towards your international employees, as they are in a vulnerable situation.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, as defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Insurance

All AWA participants are covered by basic insurance through AVI International Medical Insurance. However, as with any insurance policy, it has specific coverage exclusions and limitations, and is intended only to cover incidents not related to a participant's employment or training.

If a participant needs to seek medical attention, he or she should submit a completed claim form to AVI. A copy of the claim form has been provided in the participant handbook, as well as comprehensive information regarding AVI insurance. If employees have any questions or concerns regarding the insurance, they should contact AVI. For other emergencies or concerns regarding AVI, they should contact the AWA staff. Please contact AWA immediately in the case of a participant injury.

AVI International
International SOS Assistance
AVI Claims
491 Baltimore Pike 664
Springfield, PA 19064

Phone: 800-317-2907 or 215-701-2978
Email: aviclaims@internationalsos.com

Social Security

Participants are instructed to apply for a Social Security Card 10 days after arriving in the United States. This allows time for their registration in SEVIS to become effective.

For J-1 visa students, the Social Security office will not process the application until students have been validated in the SEVIS system. **SEVIS** (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) is the method that tracks all exchange visitors entering the U.S. on a J-1 visa. Validation happens when the student arrives at the employer and registers with the AWA office by faxing the Arrival Report. Students are instructed to register with AWA within 48 hours after arrival in the U.S., and will not be validated until AWA receives this important Arrival Report.

Participants must bring the following original documents, as well as an additional set of photocopies:

- ✓ Passport and Visa
- ✓ Job Confirmation Form with the name of the host employer
- ✓ Social Security letter from AWA
- ✓ DS-2019 form
- ✓ I-94 form (stapled into passport)

Due to changes in the homeland security in the aftermath of September 11th, it may take two to six weeks to receive a Social Security Card. Social Security has taken extra steps to ensure the integrity of Social Security numbers, and this may cause a delay in receiving a number. Note that the employee may work while the Social Security number is being processed.

Taxes

J-1 participants are temporary visitors, and required to pay Federal, State, and Local income taxes. However, they are exempt from paying Social Security and Medicare taxes.

W-4 Form

J-1 participants must complete a W-4 form with the employer once they begin the program. The instructions on the form do not apply to non-resident aliens like the J-1 participants. Please note the changes in the following instructions:

1. Complete instructions for “non-resident aliens”.
2. Check “single” on line 3, regardless of marital status.
3. Claim only one withholding allowance on line 5, unless a resident of Canada, Mexico, Japan, or South Korea, or a U.S. National.
4. Request that an additional tax of \$7.60 per week be withheld on line 6. If pay period is two weeks, request that \$15.20 be withheld instead.
5. Do not claim “exempt” on line 7. Line 7 should be blank.

W-2 Form

International employees will need a W-2 Form in order to file their U.S. tax returns. We recommend that before your employees depart for their home countries, you confirm with them the best address to which these forms should be sent, helping to save time and effort at the end of the program, as well for next tax season. The address on the W-4 will generally be their U.S. address and they most likely will not be at that address when the W-2s are mailed. Employers are required to mail the W-2 forms by January 31 of the following year.

Form 1040NR-EZ

J-1 participants must also complete a 1040NR-EZ (Non-Resident Aliens with No Dependents) tax form. This Federal Income tax form is specifically for non-resident aliens earning less than \$50,000 a year. They may access this form online at the IRS website.

I-94 Card

Participants receive and complete an I-94 Card while on their flight to the United States. This Admission-Departure Card reflects the date of entry into the U.S., and the participant's status in the country. This card is presented to the Immigration Officer, and then stamped and stapled to the participant's passport. Participants must present this card when applying for their Social Security Card, and again when departing from the U.S.

Form I-9

The purpose of this form is to ensure the verification of employment eligibility of all employees working in the U.S. Employers are required to complete Form I-9 for all employees, including U.S. citizens. The participants are instructed to present their visa, I-94 Card, and passport when filling out this form. Section 2 of the form is completed only by the employer.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the seasonal availability for international J-1 Work and Travel employees?

A. In summer, participants begin arriving May – July and can work until September – October. In winter, participants begin arriving in December and can work until March – April. In spring, participants begin arriving March – April and can work until May – June.

Q: What is the availability for H2B employees?

A: H2B employees are not defined by university breaks, but by the dates of the Employer Labor Certificate.

Q: What countries are the participants from?

A: Summer staff comes primarily from countries in the Northern Hemisphere, including Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland and Russia. Countries in the Southern Hemisphere provide participants for the winter season, including Brazil, Argentina, and Peru. In spring, participants come from Thailand and Indonesia.

Q: My international employees are outstanding! Can the same employees return next year?

A: Yes! If you are especially pleased with an employee, you may request him or her to return the following year. Please notify AWA, and we will make arrangements for the direct placement of the participant for the following season.

Q: How many hours per week do I have to provide to J-1 students?

A: The Department of State requires that J-1 students work at least 32 hours per week.

Q: Can a J-1 student have a second job?

A: Yes. J-1 Work and Travel students can have a second job as long as it does not interfere with the primary employer. H2B participants cannot have a second job.

On behalf of the American Work Adventures Team, our overseas partners, and our excited students, we would like to thank you for choosing this unique cultural exchange opportunity. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns during your experience. We look forward to working with you!