



Host Family Frequently Asked Questions

What is Amity Institute?

Amity Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and designated J-1 visa sponsor. Founded in 1962, the Amity programs were based on the belief that language learning and cultural exchange are essential to building international friendship within our global community. This philosophy is still at the core of the organization.

Who are Amity Interns?

- They are students or recent graduates of institutions of higher education in their home country.
- Many are involved in the field of languages or are preparing to teach English as a Foreign Language.
- They often have some experience or have worked with youth.
- Interns are here to gain teaching skills through their assignments, to represent their language, culture and country, and to share their knowledge and ideas.
- They want to learn first-hand about American culture and improve their English.
- An Intern's first obligation is to complete their internship at the Host School.
- They are also volunteers who are role models, ambassadors of good will, active community participants, and integrated members of their Host Family or school environment.

How long will an Intern stay with our family?

Interns will stay with a Host Family for a minimum of eight weeks. They can stay longer, and Host Family assignments vary from school to school.

What will it cost?

Host Families are volunteers and provide free room and board to Amity Interns, along with 3 meals per day.

Has my Intern had a security or police background check?

Yes. All Interns have a clean police record in their home country.

What should we expect of our Intern?

They will participate in a cross-cultural exchange that will be a challenging and educational experience for all involved. The Intern and members of the Host Family must work to understand and communicate with each other. Hosts should remember that Interns have placed themselves in a foreign environment for the purpose of expanding their knowledge of education and culture. Their highest priority is the internship at school. Both the Host Family and the Intern will have their own initial expectations of what the experience will be like and should communicate openly with each other.

What happens if my Intern gets sick?

Each Intern must have sickness/accident insurance throughout the entire time they are in the U.S. Many use an insurance policy recommended by Amity. If Interns get sick or need medical attention, they should go to a local doctor, medical/emergency center or the emergency room at a local hospital that accepts their insurance. The Intern may have to pay out-of-pocket to cover some initial expenses. They will need to find out the exact procedure in regards to how to use their insurance and should carefully follow instructions provided by their insurance carrier in order to receive reimbursement. Also be sure the School Coordinator knows and your Amity Program Counselor are aware whenever your Intern is sick.

MOST IMPORTANT: If an Intern ever needs to be hospitalized, notify Amity **IMMEDIATELY**.

Can the Intern act as a babysitter/tutor?

Like any family member, Interns are expected to help out around the house. However, Interns are not live-in babysitters or tutors and shouldn't be expected to perform the duties appropriate for an au pair, such as child care, housesitting or housework beyond that of other family members.

Can the Intern use the family car?

Interns are permitted to drive only if they hold a valid driver's license. They may not drive their Host Family's car unless a prior written agreement has been signed between the parties, including insurance issues and potential damages.

Who can I contact if there is a problem?

Your local school Coordinator is your primary contact. Your assigned Amity Program Counselor is also available to answer your questions and assist with your concerns.

What can I do to make sure that our experience is successful?

Clear, positive communication is the key to success. Please do not assume that your Intern understands your expectations unless you have taken the time to discuss them directly.

What should we do if my Intern asks us to help him/her to stay longer in the U.S.?

The Educational Internship Program is limited to the original program dates stated on the Intern's J-1 visa sponsorship document DS-2019 and the T/IPP form DS-7002. All Interns have to return home at the end of their assignment. The program cannot be extended beyond the original term. If an Intern gets married or is asking about reasons to stay, you must contact Amity immediately.

What are the benefits to hosting an Intern?

Host Families play a vital role in the success of an assignment. By welcoming an Intern from another country into their home, volunteer host families gain friendship, understanding, knowledge and a connection to the world. They will experience new tastes and customs, and have the chance to practice their Intern's language. Their children will learn about different parts of the world from the Intern, and may receive extra help with their own language studies.

Long-lasting relationships that may develop between the family and Intern can lead to an ongoing exchange of friendship and hospitality. Children may also benefit from having an international friend and a foreign pen pal. Learning about another culture may create new interests in travel and international issues. Hosts may also gain a new perspective of Americans and American culture as seen through the Intern's eyes, leading, perhaps, to broadening their own opinions, beliefs and values.