

Dear Sponsors,

The Department appreciates your continued efforts to address the health, safety, and welfare concerns of your exchange visitors during this challenging time. This email contains important information for sponsors regarding the placements of individuals seeking to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program.

At this time, there is still no definitive date when Embassies will resume regular visa interviews; however, a number of program applicants have already obtained visas and may wish to start their programs. The Department asks that sponsors be particularly careful in vetting potential host placements, both to ensure exchange visitors' health, safety, and welfare and to protect the Americans with whom they come in contact. In addition, sponsors must continue to bear in mind that exchange visitor programs are first and foremost cultural and educational exchange programs and not intended merely to supply host organizations with labor. Any allegations that programs may be undercutting local labor would be taken very seriously.

As your exchange visitors' start dates approach, the Department advises sponsors to reconfirm *all* placements. In addition to the vetting requirements set forth in category-specific regulations, the Department strongly urges sponsors to ask each host employer the following questions:

- Is the host open for business, or when does the host plan to reopen?
- Is the host able to confirm that it is/will comply with local requirements for resuming operations? If the host laid off workers in recent months will it rehire all American staff before accepting exchange visitors?
- Has there been a change in the number of exchange visitors the host can place?
- Has there been a change in the number of hours exchange visitors can expect to work?
- Has the host advertised the vacancies to American workers?
- Will the host follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control on social distancing, the Department of Labor's "Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for Covid-19," and any other state/local government requirements?

We understand that it may be difficult to answer these questions, and that the answers may change as conditions change. To that end, the Department recommends that sponsors ask hosts to promptly inform them of any changes in their plans. Also, there could be forthcoming Executive Orders that affect exchange visitors' ability to enter the United States. We will keep you apprised of any such changes.

Once again, thank you for your work, patience, and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Sincerely,  
Office of Private Sector Exchange