



## Important BridgeUSA Program Reminders Intern & Trainee Program Participants Essentials for a Great Experience

**Alliance Abroad Group (AAG) is your designated visa sponsor and is responsible for monitoring your health, safety, and wellbeing while on the program.** Our Support Department is dedicated to providing assistance to you throughout your program. Please reach out to us with any concerns you may have so we can better support you.

**Our Phone Number: 1-866-622-7623**

**Our Email: [Support@allianceabroad.com](mailto:Support@allianceabroad.com)**

- 24 Hour Support:** We can always be reached in the case of an emergency at 1-866-622-7623. If the call is not an emergency, a message will be taken and the call returned the next business day.
- Program Purpose:** The purpose of the Intern and Trainee Programs is to enhance the skills and expertise of the exchange visitors in their academic field (Intern) or occupation fields (Trainee) through participant in structured and guided work-based training and internship programs and to improve participants' knowledge of American techniques, methodologies and technology.
- Program Duration:** Please see your DS-2019 document and your Training Plan for the exact duration of your program. Maximum program duration for the Intern program is 12 months. Maximum program duration for Trainee program is 18 months (except for hospitality placements which can only be for up to 12 months).
- Research the city/town/area** where you'll be completing your program. Check to see average temperatures in the area and things and activities to do. Be prepared for local climate when packing for your trip!
  - Locate a Public Library in the area: <https://librarytechnology.org/libraries/uspublic/>
- Housing:** It is important that you have housing secured and confirmed prior to your arrival in the United States.
  - Participant Arranged Housing-** your Host Company has provided you with available housing options in the area. It is your responsibility to secure and confirm housing before you depart for the US.
  - Host Company Provided or Host Company Assisted Housing-** your Host Company has secured housing for you. You are expected in housing secured for you by your Host Company for the entire duration of your program. If you do not agree with this requirement, please select a different placement.
- Login to your profile in Participant Portal** and make sure you submit to AAG all the required information: <https://aag.hanovercrm.com/>
- Bring Enough Money:** AAG recommended amount is \$1,500 USD, plus any additional funds to cover your travel expenses and initial housing expenses (deposit and 1<sup>st</sup> month rent). The recommended \$1,500 USD is to cover your expenses while you wait for your first paycheck, which might take up to 4 weeks. Please see this website to know approximate cost of living in the area: [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country\\_result.jsp?country=United+States](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=United+States)
- Access to Finances:** You must have access to at least \$1,000 at any point during your program to cover any unexpected expenses and support yourself during any anticipated work interruption.
- Sign up for a Sable debit card** (see email from AAG about this), to make sure your paycheck is direct deposited into your account.
- Traveling to the US:** You must have the following documents on you when traveling to the US:
  - Passport with your J-1 visa
  - DS-2019 document
  - Job Offer Letter
  - DS-7002 (Training Plan)
  - Address where you'll be staying upon arrival
  - AAG 24/7 Emergency Line (1-866-622-7623)If you do not have your passport and DS-2019 with you when clearing U.S. Customs and Immigration, you will not be allowed to enter the United States.
- Program Start:** You cannot start training before your DS-2019 program start date or train after your DS-2019 program end date.
- SEVIS Check-in:** After arriving in the US, you MUST check into SEVIS by going your profile in Participant Portal: <https://aag.hanovercrm.com/>. You cannot check in with SEVIS before you arrive in the United States and before your DS-2019 start date. If you change your living address, email address, or phone number during your program, you must notify Alliance Abroad within 10 days of the change.

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13. **Social Security:** After you check into SEVIS, please wait 14 business days before contacting local Social Security Office and scheduling an appointment. Locate nearest Social Security Office: <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp> You will need to bring the following documents with you:
- Completed Social Security application:** <http://ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>
  - Passport/ Visa**    **Sponsor Letter**
  - DS-2019 document**       **Electronic I-94** (can be printed at the following link: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov> )

**Provide your Host Company address on the Social Security application form.** Keep your Social Security application receipt and show it to Host Company.

14. **Taxes:** As a BridgeUSA program participant, you must pay all local, state and federal taxes. You do not pay Social Security and Medicare taxes.
15. **Insurance:** Always call the insurance company **before** seeking medical attention, to ensure they locate and direct you to medical facility that accepts your insurance. If you do not contact insurance company first and receive approval, your medical claims might be denied

**Insurance Provider: Hollard Travel**  
**Insurance Phone Number: 1-877-826-2910**  
**Policy Number: AAG SA-AAG**  
**Deductible for Urgent Care/Doctor's office: \$100**  
**Deductible for Emergency Room at the Hospital: \$250**

Your coverage starts 5 days before your DS-2019 start date and ends 5 days after DS-2019 end date.

Your insurance does not cover regular check-ups, dental, vision, pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, pre-existing conditions, etc. For more specific details about your insurance, what is and is not covered, what to do when you need medical assistance please visit: <http://participants.allianceabroad.com/insurance>

For coverage during 30 day travel period, notify Alliance Abroad at least 3 weeks prior to your DS-2019 end date.

16. **Monthly Check In:** You are required to complete Monthly Check In every month during your program. We ask that you complete your Monthly Check In at the beginning of each month. Please use this opportunity to let us know about your program and what events and activities you've participated in. To complete Monthly Check In, please go to: <https://aag.hanovercrm.com/>
17. **Evaluations:** All Intern/Trainee program participants must complete program evaluations. The evaluations must be completed by both the Training supervisor and Intern/Trainee program participant.
- Midterm Evaluation must be completed at program half point
  - Final program evaluation must be completed before the program end date
18. **Training/Internship Placement Plan (DS-7002):** You have been issued a Training Plan that outlines your training phases and what skills you will be learning during your Training or Internship program. Please make sure to familiarize yourself with all the information listed on you Training/Internship Placement Plan.
19. **Stay in Touch:** As a BridgeUSA program participant, it is your responsibility to stay in regular contact with your sponsor. Please report any concerns to AAG by calling 1-866-622-7623 or emailing [support@allianceabroad.com](mailto:support@allianceabroad.com). You are required to check your email and respond to communication from Alliance Abroad within either 24 hrs or time frame given. Staying in touch will help us to better assist you during your program.
20. **Travel Validation:** If you decide to travel outside of the United States during your program, you must obtain permission from your Host Company and get your DS-2019 endorsed for travel by Alliance Abroad. AAG needs to receive your DS-2019 document in our office at least **3 weeks prior to your intended travel date**. For more information, please visit: <http://participants.allianceabroad.com/travel>
21. **Your Program Is About Cultural Exchange:** You are expected to take part in cultural exchange opportunities at work, in your community, and in your area. Each month, you will be expected to provide information about cultural events and activities you have attended. We'd love to hear about your experiences and see photos! You may also share your experiences and photos with AAG on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Remember to use the following hashtags: #AllianceAbroad and #intExchange
22. **Return Home after completing your Program:** You must depart the US within 30 days of your program end date.

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