



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

# Talking Points for Repeat Host Families on New Regulations

In October of 2010, the Department of State published new rules governing exchange organizations like AFS. This document highlights some of the changes that will be part of your hosting experience.

The current rules can be found online at:

[http://exchanges.state.gov/exchanges/regs\\_and\\_resources.html](http://exchanges.state.gov/exchanges/regs_and_resources.html).

Look for [22 CFR 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)

A copy of the rules can also be found in the Appendix of the 2011-12 Host Family Handbook which is accessible via the AFS Wiki at:

[http://www.afswiki.org/index.php/Host\\_Family\\_Handbook](http://www.afswiki.org/index.php/Host_Family_Handbook)

## 1. Host Family Application

- a. There are new questions on the host family application. The State Department included questions that all sponsor organizations must have on their host family application. AFS already had many of these questions on our application but there are some new ones. (for example, "Would the family provide three square meals daily?")
- b. Previously, only the host parent(s) needed to sign the Host Family Agreement (Form F). Now, all adults (18 years and older) residing in your home must sign the Form F.
- c. Photos of the exterior of your home and grounds, the kitchen, living area, and the student's bedroom and bathroom are now a State Department requirement. AFS started to require this last year in anticipation of this final rule.
- d. The student's bed cannot be inflatable or convertible, and the student must have access to appropriate storage and study space. You may already be familiar with this requirement since AFS implemented it last year.
- e. There is an additional question on the Form D: Interview form for a single adult, without children, placement. A staff person must perform a secondary level of review of the file to ensure the applicant has demonstrated ties to the community.

## 2. Host Family Screening

- a. As in previous years, an AFS volunteer must interview you in your home with all family members present. If all family members are not present a follow up interview must be done with those members of the home.
- b. The Department of State requires all members of a household 18 years of age or older to complete a Criminal Background Check (CBC). Similar to last year, AFS is continuing to require all family members 14 years and above, and who are living in the home for more than 10 days during the academic year, to undergo a CBC. The Department of State requires any family member that turns 18 during the time the

- family is hosting to undergo a second background check as, depending on the state, some charges may only appear on a person's record once he or she has turned 18.
- c. As in previous years, you must provide the contact information for 3 references and a reference must be submitted from at least 2 of these individuals. The Department of State now also qualifies that references cannot be from a relative, nor an AFS volunteer or staff. This has been an AFS policy.
  - d. You are still required to complete a Host Family Orientation each year that you host. Unlike the past, however, this orientation must occur after the screening process is complete (including the application, in-home interview, references, and CBCs) and before your student arrives.

### 3. Student Selection

You will be able to read brief bios about incoming students, but the entire screening process must be complete before you may view any student photos, student applications, or student contact information.

### 4. School Placement

As in previous years, AFS must obtain the School Placement Acceptance Form (PAF) signed and dated by your school administrator before your student departs for the US.

### 5. Monthly Contact

- a. The Department of State continues to require that students and host families are contacted at least once a month by an AFS volunteer. Further specifications outlined in the new regulations include:
- b. The September monthly contact with the student must be in person.
- c. A volunteer other than the one who interviewed your family is required to visit your home within the first 30-60 days of your hosting experience.
- d. If you are a welcome family a volunteer, other than the one who interviewed your family, must visit the home within the first 30 days and every 30 days after that you continue to host as a welcome family.
- e. Your liaison will need to meet with you in person at least once in the fall (September – December) and once in the spring (January – June).
- f. As in the past, your liaison must live within 120 miles of your home.

### 6. Student Moves

Emergency and temporary families must complete the same screening process that temporary and permanent families do even if a fully registered volunteer lives in the home. So, if you are applying to be an Emergency or Temporary Family, you will need to complete all parts of the host family screening process before a student moves into your home.