

Sending Interview Packet

A Training tool and Reference Document for Sending Interview Volunteers

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Before a volunteer performs their first interview, they must complete the [Global Link Interview Training Module](#) under the Online Training section under 'Sending'. This packet contains supplementary materials for training and reference.

This packet is periodically updated. Please check back to download newer versions:
www.afswiki.org/index.php/How_to_Interview_American_Students

AFS Eligibility Requirements:

Age: Participants must meet the age requirements for the given program. Ages 15-18 for [High School Programs](#) Ages 18 and older: [Gap Year and Beyond](#)

Academics: Cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher. Academic programs include all Year and Semester length High-school and University programs, as well as Summer Language Study programs. All other AFS programs require that you have a passing GPA.

Health: Participants must be in good mental, physical, and emotional health to participate in an AFS program as in accordance with our Medical Evaluation Policy [Appendix C]

Program Availability: AFS accepts applications on a rolling basis. Programs may fill prior to the posted deadlines. Check the currently [Available Programs](#). Participants must complete the [sending online application](#), have an interview and submit the deposit to be considered for acceptance into an available program.

Language: Most AFS programs do not require previous study of the language, if you have a question about a specific country please check the program information on www.afsusa.org

Preparing for the Interview

Schedule the Interview

- Interviews should be done after a student starts the full application but before they submit
- Allot a minimum of 90 minutes for the interview. At least one parent must be present. Ideally, all family members are present to provide insight into family dynamics. It is helpful to set the expectation that part of the interview will be with the candidate only.

Prepare for the Interview

- Be familiar with AFS's history, mission and programs. Bring this interview packet.
- It may be helpful to have names of recent returnees in the area, especially ones who have gone to the same country that the student is interested in.

Conducting the Interview- Introductions

- Introduce yourself and meet the family members. You can share about your role in AFS as well as your own hosting and/or exchange experiences.
- Explain the purpose of the sending interview.
- It is helpful to ensure you are sitting across from the candidate because they are the focal point of the interview, not the parents.

Conducting the Interview

- Be sure to engage the candidate in a conversational dialog, not just a Q & A format.
- Allow for questions. When in doubt, direct student to www.afsusa.org or 1800-AFS-INFO
- Since the student's welfare is involved, we ask that you and the family be as open and candid as possible in discussing difficult subjects such as an impending divorce, a recent death in the family, medical condition, or financial needs for the program. All AFS interview forms are kept confidential.
- It may be helpful to interview the student ALONE for about 45 minutes. Sometimes students can be intimidated by answering probing questions in the presence of their family.
- The interview is a great time to encourage a family to host an exchange student or volunteer.
- Close the interview and thank the family for their time. Give students a timeline for next steps.
- AFS asks you to create an honest, clear, thorough picture of the candidate and his or her family relationships, using your best judgment and perspective.
- Transcribe your notes and type into the fillable [Sending Interview Form](#) and email it to: sendinginterviews@afs.org. Please do not fax or mail copies to Student Services. Typing into the Word document and sending by email increases the legibility of the form and makes it easy to track and retrieve interview forms, as well as translate.
- If you are reluctant to support the student in participating in an AFS program, learn more about the [Lack of Volunteer Support for Candidate Process](#).

Setting Expectations

Placement Realities: Students often ask: *Do I know which city I will be placed in? Can I request a city/region? Can I request a host brother or sister? Will my host family have internet?*

Answers/Talking Points

- AFS is most concerned with making quality host family and host school placements. By requesting a particular region/city or type of family, you will significantly limit the pool of potential host families and in some cases it may be impossible to accommodate.
- AFS Host Families come in many different forms, if a family is passionate about hosting a student and passes the screening and application process they can host. Many of our most beloved host families no longer have children living in the home.
- Since AFS host families are not paid, you can be confident they have good intentions at heart - they want your child to join their community and learn about their culture. Host families are screened and receive formal training from AFS.
- Students may share a room with a same-sex sibling.
- We cannot guarantee internet access in the host family's home

Restrictions Versus Preferences: Volunteers can help students differentiate between restrictions and preferences on student applications and in their answers to interview questions. On the interview form, volunteers should clearly indicate preferences versus confirmed restrictions. Restrictions require special accommodation and may delay or limit host family placements. Preferences are simply that – students should be willing to accept a host family placement without the expectation that preferences will be met. A student may state that their preference is a restriction (for example refusing to be placed in a home without pets, even without allergy). If this is the case, the student must be prepared for a longer wait for a host family placement.

Examples of restrictions	Examples of preferences
I am allergic to peanuts, shellfish	I would like to have access to a piano
I must attend a church of a specific denomination	I don't like to be around smoke
I am diabetic and need to live near a hospital	I would like to have a host sibling that is my age

Dietary Restrictions: Many students choose to follow a vegetarian diet in the US but expand their diet to include meat while they are studying abroad. Other students would like to continue their vegetarian diet while on program. While AFS does try to accommodate dietary restrictions, we cannot guarantee placement for these students. Some partners in the AFS network will not accept vegetarians (e.g. France, Argentina). Other programs are more flexible (e.g. Austria). Therefore if students are determined to be vegetarian while abroad, they must be flexible with their program destination as very few AFS partner countries can guarantee placement of vegetarians. If you find out a student is vegetarian, please use the opportunity to let them know their diet may limit their host family placement options and in some cases they will not be accepted.

AFS also encourages flexibility in diet while abroad, as possible, as part of intercultural immersion and learning. Volunteers may point out to applicants that meat can be an important part of traditional dishes in many cultures, and that meat is considered a special privilege in some places. Volunteers may even offer a positive personal anecdote of trying new foods from another culture to help applicants open their minds to new dietary customs while abroad.

Students will need to fill out a special dietary restriction form and are encouraged to be as flexible as possible (i.e. willing to eat chicken broth or food cooked with meat if meat is removed). This will help expand their placement options. Encourage the student to call 1800-AFS-INFO to discuss their dietary restrictions with someone in our office who can advise them on specific programs.

Medical Restrictions and Mental Health Issues: Encourage all students and families to read the Medical Evaluation policy (Appendix C). If the student has had recent medical or mental health treatment including mediations and counseling therapy, they may want to consider deferring enrollment in our programs to a later date depending on the treatment. AFS is conservative in enforcing its medical policy in the interest of students' wellbeing. The parent or student can call and speak with their office to learn more, after reading the policy.

Travel during Visa Application Period: Due to the length of the visa process for our semester and year programs, we strongly recommend students do not travel abroad within 3 months of their departure. If an in-person visit to the consulate is required or their passport is needed while they are out of the country, their departure on AFS programs will be delayed.

Characteristics of a Successful Exchange Student

- **Curious:** Students curious about the world beyond their front doorsteps
- **Open:** Meeting new people and making new friends is one of the most important parts of studying abroad.
- **Mature:** Showing maturity for their age and an understanding of themselves gives candidates the confidence during exchange
- **Communicative:** Being an advocate for oneself to adapt and overcome challenges.
- **Adventurous:** A willingness to take healthy risks leads students into unexpected adventures
- **Respectful:** Able to both establish their own and respect the boundaries of others.
- **Pragmatic:** Able to accept those things that cannot be changed.
- **Patient:** Demonstrating patience with themselves and others
- **Flexible:** Ability to cope with new and unfamiliar situations and “roll with it”
- **Persistent:** Setting goals and going after them despite adversity
- **Motivated:** Eager to get involved and take advantage of the many opportunities their experiences will provide.

Responsibilities of being AFSer

- Be flexible and adaptable
- Be open to the challenges of living abroad
- Be prepared to immerse themselves in their host culture
- Be open to learning about themselves and the community they are living in
- Be an ambassador for your home country and AFS
- Help create their AFS experience by actively engaging with their host community

Red Flags

- Expect an AFS program to be a vacation or who are looking for an escape.
- Exhibit extreme personalities: either totally independent, aggressive, arrogant or extremely withdrawn, passive, always trying to please
- Illustrate an unwillingness or inability to make emotional commitments and sustain positive interpersonal relationships
- Have overbearing parents who are pushing their children beyond their own interests or capacities.
- Or have parents who are overly protective and resistant to allowing their child space and independence.

Sending Interview Questions and Tips

Environmental information

This asks for a simple explanation of the student's hometown and demographic background.

Home environment

Description of the student's physical home, who lives at home, the general living situation (parents married, single, divorced, etc.), and education level of parents, and home atmosphere. Any information that may be vital for a staff member or volunteer in a partner country regarding this student's placement should also be recorded here.

Sample questions:

TO THE CANDIDATE:

- If this is a single parent home: "Could you talk about your other parent and your relationship?"
- "How would you describe your relationship with your siblings?"

TO THE PARENTS:

- "Do you both work outside the home? What type of work do you do?"
- "Have there been changes in your family recently, like an illness, that we should be aware of?"
- "Do you have reservations or fears about an AFS experience?"
- "Are there any specific questions you have that I might answer, or direct to an Admissions Advisor?"

Family communication/interests

Describe the family communication dynamics, whether either parent appears to be dominant, how the student relates to his or her parents and siblings, and what are the family values.

Sample questions for parents and candidate for parents and candidate:

- "How does your family spend time together?"
- "Describe any of your family's community activities (church, volunteer, school)."
- "Do you have an extended family?"
- "How are decisions made in your family?"
- "What are the working rules of your household? What happens when the rules are broken?"
- "Who makes decisions in the house?"

Candidate's personality

This section deals specifically with the student, and should be fairly detailed. The student's attitude toward school and extracurricular activities is important for staff and volunteers in assessing the student's application. Feel free to add comments, beyond the check-box answer options about the candidate's personality.

Sample questions:

TO THE CANDIDATE:

- "What is your favorite class in school? Least favorite?"
- "Have you ever had an unreasonable teacher? How did you deal with him or her?"
- "Describe yourself using [three adjectives](#), what do you consider the best thing about you?"
- "When you're alone during the day, what do you do?"
- "When you get frustrated or angry, what do you use as your escape valve?"

TO THE PARENTS:

- "Has the candidate had any recent challenges in school? How were they overcome?"
- "Describe the candidate using three adjectives."
- "What things about the candidate are you most proud of?"

Placement

This section deals with specific restrictions (dietary, medical, allergic, etc.) that AFS must take into account for placement purposes. Provide helpful details while keeping in mind the difference between preferences and restrictions. Also, give your opinion about the type of placement for which this student would be suitable. Having interviewed the candidate and family, you are the best position to voice any concerns or highlight any particular endorsements. Some of the answers to these questions may be best suited for the Other Comments section.

Sample questions for the CANDIDATE:

- "Do you attend religious services? If so, how often? Would you mind living or attending a service with a family of a different faith?"
- "Do you have pets? Do you like animals?"
- "What are your favorite foods? Any you dislike? What is the most exotic food you've ever eaten?"
- "Describe any traveling you've done. What did you like most about place(s) you visited? The least?"
- "What do you hope to get out of the AFS experience?"
- "How did you hear about AFS? What made you interested enough to apply?"

TO THE PARENTS:

- “How do you feel about (candidate) being placed in a family of a different religion?”
- “How did you choose AFS over other types of programs (e.g. summer camps, sports camps, if a summer program)?”

Helpful Tips

- Use a "funnel" technique. Approach topics from a broad angle, narrowing down to more specific questions.
- Stick to one topic at a time. Follow up thoroughly before you go on to the next topic.
- Summarize a candidate's response in a simple sentence to be sure that you have understood what he or she was saying. This will give the candidate a chance to add to, or correct, what you understood.
- Go from easy, non-threatening topics to more difficult ones, building to a deeper discussion once you have established good rapport.
- You may need to use an indirect approach to difficult subjects (asking the candidate what he or she thinks others think about the subject rather than what he or she thinks) or a probing technique (“Why?” “How?”) if the candidate's responses are insufficient.
- Help the candidate feel secure by being relaxed and by showing that any response is permitted. Assure the candidate that all information is confidential.
- End with a casual conversation so that the relationship you have established ends on a relaxed note.

Admissions Process Timeline

Student submits Preliminary Application

- Student submits the [Preliminary Application](#) and pays the \$75 application fee.

Student submits Online Application [OA]

- Once the student completes the online application, they 'submit' their application online. Student will ideally have the interview completed at this time and the \$900 deposit submitted.
- Student receives email detailing any incomplete items in OA and student is then in "Returned" status until they press "Submit" again.
- Once the application is complete, AFS accepts the online application.

Student is accepted by AFS-USA (1 week)

- After thorough application review (and legal or medical review if applicable), AFS-USA will accept and transfer their application to the partner country and notify the student by email
- *Partner Review Mailing*: Student sent a letter informing them of their acceptance by AFS-USA. Mailing includes: Country Review letter, Letter to student about AFS Guide for Participants, Letter to parents about AFS Guide for Families of Participants, AFS Guide for Participants handbook , AFS Guide for Families of Participants handbook
- *Invoice*: Student/family sent invoice at this stage.

Student accepted by Partner Country (4-6 weeks) and Prepares for Departure

- Acceptance Email: Student sent email informing them of the acceptance by the partner country within 6 weeks of application being sent out.
- [AFS Student Account](#): Student can access the following information as it becomes available:
 - Visa Information - links to www.afsusa.org/applicants (departing student pages)
 - Country Information - links to www.afsusa.org/applicants (departing student pages)
 - Host Family Information (may arrive 1-10 weeks before departure)
- Travel Notification: Sent 4-6 weeks prior to departure via email. Includes:
 - International Itinerary and Gateway Orientation information
 - What do I do when I get off the plane in...
 - Takeoff booklet
 - Mailing: Travel Department mails:
 - Yellow luggage tags (2),
- Support Notification: Transition to Support Department letter sent 2 weeks prior to departure by US Mail.
- Full tuition amount payment must be cleared by the time student arrives at gateway orientation

APPENDIX

A. Commonly Asked Questions

B. Tuition, Scholarships and Fundraising

C. Medical Evaluation Policy

D. Visas Comparison Chart

E. Intensive Summer Programs that require Visas

F. Legal Signatures Chart

G. Sending Interview Form

Commonly Asked Questions About AFS Study Abroad

Located on website: <http://www.afsusa.org/study-abroad/resources/faq/>

Host Family and School Placement

- Can I request a placement in a certain city or region of the host country?
 - Will I be placed in a big city or a small town?
 - When do I find out the name and address of my host family?
 - What kinds of gifts should I bring for my host family and friends?
 - Can I get school credit from my study abroad?
 - Can I take my SATs while abroad?
 - Can I bring my laptop or cell phone on program?
 - I've heard that you can only have limited contact with your family and friends from home while abroad, is this true?
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Travel

- When do I find out my departure date?
 - Will I fly alone to the host country?
 - What should I pack?
 - How much luggage can I take?
 - What happens when I arrive in the host country?
 - How do I get to my host family's home?
 - Can I travel to other countries while on AFS?
 - Can my family and friends visit me during the program?
 - Can I come back to the United States for holidays?
-

Visas and Travel Documents

- What is a student visa and do I need one?
 - When should I apply for a passport?
-

Tuition and Costs

- I don't have much money and my parents can't pay the entire program fee. Can AFS help?
 - What is included in the AFS tuition and what am I responsible for?
 - Where does the money go?
 - When does the program tuition have to be paid?
 - How much spending money should I bring?
-

Safety and Health

- How does AFS provide for my safety and security abroad?
- Is there anything I won't be able to do abroad?

- [I'm insured by my family's medical plan. Why do I need secondary medical coverage?](#)
 - [Do I need to get any vaccinations before I go?](#)
-

Host Family and School Placement

[Can I request a placement in a certain city or region of the host country?](#)

No. Once your application is accepted by the host country, AFS staff and volunteers begin looking for a community and family that are just right for you. By requesting a particular region or city, you will significantly limit the pool of potential host families. We encourage you to be as open and flexible as possible when it comes to your placement.

[Will I be placed in a big city or a small town?](#)

Most students are hosted in small-to medium-sized towns or villages. Families in big cities often live in small apartments, so they don't have a lot of room. Also, outside the major cities you often get a better feel for what a country is really like.

[When do I find out the name and address of my host family?](#)

This depends on many different factors and is different for everyone. Some students learn of their placement soon after they are accepted into the program; some learn about their host community right before departure. However, most students learn of their placement about 1-2 months prior to departure.

The staff and volunteers in your host country are trying to find the best match for you and for the host family. They want this to be a positive experience for everyone and will work hard to make the best placement possible. Keep in mind that even if a great host family is identified for you, the placement won't be finalized until a host school placement or community service project is confirmed in writing as well. This process takes time. But rest assured that AFS will get your host family contact information to you as soon as it is available.

Note that if you have placement restrictions such as allergies to pets or to the environment, if you require access to religious services, or if you have any dietary restrictions, the placement process will likely take longer.

Although we do our best to provide you with host family information at least two weeks before departure, this is not always possible. In fact, some students do not receive their information about their host families until right before departure. But your acceptance into the program is our guarantee that you will have a great placement that meets our quality standards.

[What kinds of gifts should I bring for my host family and friends?](#)

It's a great idea to bring a few small gifts with you for your host family and new friends. You don't have to know your host family to start thinking about what to bring. Think of things that represent your community or state: a significant landmark, a famous local sports team, or a well-known company. Small gifts such as pins, pictures, mugs, t-shirts, or caps are popular items. Be careful not to overindulge. A small token of appreciation for your host family or new friend is plenty. Large and expensive gifts may make the receiver uncomfortable and should be avoided.

[Can I get school credit from my study abroad?](#)

Maybe, but we cannot guarantee it. The amount and type of credit you receive is determined by your high school in the U.S. It's important to talk with your teachers and guidance counselor before you depart to arrange your schedule. In most cases, AFS Participants have received language, history, or social studies credits. Be sure to keep a copy of any formal grades or transcripts you receive from your host school. It is your responsibility to obtain any written information about your attendance and grades in your host school before you return home. AFS cannot assist you with course or grade information after you complete the program.

Read tips on how to [Get Academic Credit for your AFS Experience](#).

[Can I take my SATs while abroad?](#)

Possibly, yes, but we don't recommend it. Other AFS Participants have reported that it's best to take the SATs or PSATs before you go or after you return. Besides the inconvenience of getting to the testing location, your scores might reflect that you haven't been speaking much English! To find out more about taking the SATs abroad, consult the [College Board](#) website.

Can I bring my laptop or cell phone on program?

We generally discourage students from bringing these items abroad for a variety of reasons. In the case of cell phones, rates may be very expensive or the phone simply may not work abroad. It is usually much easier for students to purchase cell phones or calling cards once they are already abroad.

In the case of having personal laptops, using them can lengthen the adjustment period for students and cause conflict with host families. Spending excessive amounts of time online can be a tempting escape during the cultural adjustment process and can cause students to withdraw from their host families. It often leads to students feeling more homesick or isolated. Excessive time spent emailing and chatting in English also delays the transition to fluency in the student's new language. Furthermore, laptops pose a risk for theft.

I've heard that you can only have limited contact with your family and friends from home while abroad, is this true?

While AFS does not put a specific limit on contact with friends and family back home, we do ask participants and their families to be conservative in their communications with each other while on program. As stated above, excessive telephone or online communications will often exacerbate a student's homesickness and make the adjustment period more difficult. We also highly discourage family visits during the student's time abroad as it is very disruptive to the student's immersion experience.

Travel

When do I find out my departure date?

AFS will purchase your international plane ticket and will notify you of your international travel itinerary approximately 6-8 weeks before the program begins. The travel dates listed on the website are approximate and subject to change by as much as 2 weeks so do not book your domestic travel based on those dates.

You are responsible for making travel arrangements to and from the International Gateway City (New York, Miami, Washington, D.C., or Los Angeles). The domestic travel costs are not included in your program tuition.

We will ask that you arrive one day prior to your international departure so that you can participate in an overnight Gateway Orientation with the other students in your program.

Will I fly alone to the host country?

No, after the overnight Gateway Orientation in your International Gateway city, you and the other participants in your program will fly together between the U.S. and your host country. In some cases you will travel with an adult chaperon, especially when there are more than thirty-five of you traveling together.

What should I pack?

Research your host country to learn more about the climate, how teens dress, and any school dress code that might be required. The best advice from other AFS Participants is to take things that you're comfortable wearing. Avoid trendy outfits—chances are they won't be in fashion in your host country and you may feel out of place.

We recommend that you pack a small carry-on bag with a change of clothes, a towel, and personal toiletries. In some cases access to your luggage is restricted during the arrival orientation and it's important to have these items with you.

Helpful hint: Clothes dryers may not be available in every household—drip dry is the way to go. Also bring one or two nice outfits for special occasions.

How much luggage can I take?

Once packed, weigh your luggage to make sure that it is **less than 44 pounds**. Even though most international carriers permit you to take more than 44 pounds of baggage, you may have to take a domestic flight within their host country. These flights often have more stringent rules regarding baggage. If you chose to bring additional or overweight bags, you will be responsible for all extra fees that may be charged by the airlines.

For safety reasons, most airlines have introduced stiffer carry-on baggage rules. Keep your carry-on bags limited to a backpack or something similar in size. **The carry-on bag is limited to 8 inches x 16 inches x 21 inches; and a weight of 22 pounds.** Most airlines will permit passengers to carry a purse, umbrella, or camera in addition to one carry-on bag.

Helpful hint: Remember that you will have to carry your own bags. Once your bag is packed, try carrying it around the block twice quickly. If you can't make it, it's time to re-pack!

What happens when I arrive in the host country?

After you arrive in your host country, you and the other participants will collect your luggage and pass through customs. Once through, you will be met by AFS staff and volunteers in the host country who will escort you to the arrival orientation site.

You'll then take place in an international orientation that will help prepare you for your cultural adjustment. Depending on the host country and program, this arrival orientation can last anywhere between one day and one week.

How do I get to my host family's home?

This depends on the distance between your host community and the arrival orientation site. In some cases, you will be placed close enough for your host family to pick you up after the orientation. In others, you may have to travel by bus, train, or plane to your host community first. You'll often travel together with other AFS Participants placed in your community or nearby. AFS Volunteers and Staff are there again to meet you at the station or airport.

Can I travel to other countries while on AFS?

Travel to other countries is permitted only in special circumstances and with advance approval. The AFS program promotes learning about your host country and its people, and traveling outside of it can disrupt the AFS experience. In some cases you are allowed to travel with your school group or with an adult chaperon, but you must get permission from AFS-USA, AFS in your host country, and your parents.

Can my family and friends visit me during the program?

No. We've learned from experience that visits from home are very disruptive to your cultural immersion and adjustment.

In some cases, your parents may come visit you abroad but only after the program ends.

Can I come back to the United States for holidays?

We don't recommend it. Spending time abroad and with your host family during the holidays will give you a unique perspective on the cultures values of your host country.

Visas and Travel Documents

What is a student visa and do I need one?

A student visa is a stamp or other notation generally placed in your passport that will allow you to enter and temporarily reside in your host country during your program stay. A visa is required for most year and semester programs and for some short summer programs.

AFS will guide you through the visa application process and provide you with all the necessary forms and instructions. Click for more information about [Visas and Travel Documents](#).

When should I apply for a passport?

If you have not already applied for a passport, apply now! It can take six to eight weeks to receive your passport and you will likely need it in order to obtain your student visa. [Apply for a passport online](#) or at your local post office. If you already have a US passport, make sure it is valid for at least 6 months after the end of your program.

Tuition and Costs

I don't have much money and my parents can't pay the entire program fee. Can AFS help?

Yes, if you're willing to help raise the money you need. AFS offers a limited amount of need-based aid through our [Global Leaders Scholarship](#) program.

[Fundraising](#) is also important. There are many community organizations that will help a good cause (like your AFS experience), and we'll give you tips on getting their support. Garage sales, car washes, and letters asking for sponsors are just a few strategies that work. Check out the [AFS Fundraising Wiki](#) or join a [fundraising conference call](#) to learn even more fundraising tips.

What is included in the AFS tuition and what am I responsible for?

See the [What Your AFS Tuition Covers](#) in APPENDIX B

When does the program tuition have to be paid?

AFS requests that a \$900 deposit be submitted with your Full Application. Your application will be sent to the AFS host country only after your complete Full Application and \$900 tuition deposit have been received. AFS incurs expenses on your behalf and this deposit shows us that you are committed to participating. The remaining balance of your tuition must be received before you will be allowed to participate in the program. For more information, see our the Participation Agreement in your application.

How much spending money should I bring?

The amount of spending money you need depends on your host country and your personal spending habits. In general, AFS recommends approximately \$150 per month.

Safety and Health

Will I be safe during an AFS program?

AFS is an experienced, worldwide leader in high school student exchange that has an exemplary safety record for 60 years. Our primary operating value is concern for the welfare, safety, and security of our student participants. AFS has a professional network of experienced staff and volunteers who provide support in each country. An AFS Situation Response Management Team is in place at all times to monitor events throughout the world and respond in case of crisis. While some AFS programs are curtailed at particular times, AFS has run programs throughout the world, without interruption, since it was founded in 1947.

Read more about how AFS provides for your [safety](#) while abroad.

Is there anything I won't be able to do abroad?

Yes. AFS has three rules that all participants must agree to:

- No illegal drugs
- No driving
- No hitchhiking

All participants must be law abiding in their host country. There may be country-specific rules that apply. There also are limits on traveling independently. In a new environment, it's important to be more aware than you might be at home. And remember: you are a student ambassador for the U.S., so it will be important to act respectfully toward others and to give extra attention to being culturally aware. Students may be sent home for breaking rules or laws, or for persistent behavioral issues.

I'm insured by my family's medical plan. Why do I need secondary medical coverage?

It is part of our commitment to your safety and welfare. This additional coverage ensures that, in an emergency, you can be treated as soon as possible, anywhere in the world. This secondary medical coverage is a prerequisite for your participation and is included as part of your program tuition.

Do I need to get any vaccinations before I go?

The majority of AFS countries do not require special immunizations. AFS recommends immunizations based on the information provided by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#). All AFS Participants should be immunized against the seven childhood diseases: measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT), and polio. We recommend that you check with your family physician to determine which immunizations are appropriate based on your medical history.

APPENDIX B

AFS Tuition Includes...

- **Professional guidance and support** throughout the application process and during your program.
- **Placement with a carefully selected volunteer host family** who will provide you room, board, and guidance.
- **Placement with a host school** or community service organization. For programs that don't include school, refer to the program description for other covered activities.
- **Round-trip international travel** with your AFS Group between the International Gateway city in the United States and your host country.
- **Orientations** prior to departure and after your arrival, including room and board during multi-day orientations that occur throughout the program - ranging from a few days to a few weeks.
- **Comprehensive secondary medical insurance.**
- **Visa information** and application assistance.
- **Access to a support network** that includes AFS Professional Staff in the U.S. and your host country, plus thousands of trained volunteers worldwide.
- **24-hour emergency assistance.**

Student is Responsible For:

- **Program tuition** and \$75 non-refundable application fee.
- **Domestic travel** to and from your hometown to the U.S. International Gateway city (New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., or Miami)
- **Visa and passport fees** as well as any travel *costs for an in-person appearance at a consulate* within the United States, if required by your host country's visa application process.
- **Spending money** for personal expenses, such as gifts, long-distance calls, sundry items, etc. Depending on the cost of living in your host country, costs could range \$100-\$300 per month.
- **We reserve the right to add a fuel cost surcharge**, if warranted due to increases in transportation costs.

Scholarships and Fundraising:

- Limited need-based aid available for students who qualify. Sometimes additional scholarships for specific program (Vaya, Yoshi/Tanaka).
- Be aware of any restricted funding that is unique to your local area
- Fundraising ideas/resources available on <http://afsfundraising.wetpaint.com/>
- If you look at our most expensive programs (\$13,000), the daily cost ends up being about \$40 a day. Now, compare this to what your family spends each year on your transportation, food, extracurricular activities and school supplies. Here is a link to other reasons why AFS is worth the investment http://www.usa.afs.org/usa_en/news/local/7291



AFS Medical Evaluation Policies

While the AFS program is an invaluable experience and a time of tremendous growth for participants, it is important for candidates and their families to understand that by its nature, the AFS program can also be both emotionally and physically demanding. Being immersed in a different culture, placed in an unfamiliar host family, school and community often involves emotional stress during an adaptation period that varies from person to person. **If a candidate is experiencing current medical, emotional, psychological, or family difficulties or has only recently recovered from such difficulties, the adjustment demands of the AFS program can severely exacerbate such difficulties or even be cause for a relapse.** For this reason AFS requires a thorough and accurate profile of each candidate's health status. The following guidelines are used by AFS in determining a candidate's medical qualification for the AFS program.

1. If the candidate has a history of, or presents evidence of a medical condition, the application must show evidence that:
 - The candidate has a full understanding and knowledge of the previous or current condition.
 - The condition has been stable for one full year prior to application.
 - There has been no major change in therapy or prescribed medication for the current condition within one year prior to application.
 - There has been no emergency treatment or hospitalization related to the condition within one year prior to time of application.

Please note that while the above items constitute our basic guidelines, each applicant's medical, emotional, or psychological history must be evaluated on a case by case basis. It is possible that certain applicants who meet the above guidelines might still be rejected if AFS determines that an applicant's specific history, on-going condition or prescribed medications, or some combination of the three would in the opinion of AFS pose significant risk for the applicant or the organization if he or she participated in one of the AFS exchange programs.

2. If a candidate has had a history of, or presents evidence of, an emotional, psychological, learning or eating disorder, the AFS application must include Form 3C, in addition to meeting the criteria above. Form 3C needs to be completed by the health specialist who is either currently treating or has treated the candidate in the past for this condition. The purpose of Form 3C is to obtain the health specialist's evaluation of the candidate's ability to manage potential adjustment anxieties and stress in a foreign environment in light of his or her current or previous condition and treatment. **Please note that a recommendation by a psychotherapist or medical doctor does not guarantee acceptance by AFS-USA or another AFS country.**
3. If a candidate's health is dependent on regularly administered medication, or facilities are required for treatment of a chronic ailment or a physical condition, in addition to the criteria mentioned above, the candidate's application must show evidence of self-reliability to comply with prescribed treatment and required self-administered medication.
4. AFS is committed to providing opportunities for students with physical disabilities to participate in programs abroad. In order to realistically assess the feasibility of finding a placement that can accommodate the needs of the candidate, the Health Certificate included in the AFS Application must be thoroughly completed. In addition, the health specialist currently treating the candidate must provide a written statement explaining any limitations the candidate might have and any special arrangements such limitations require.
5. In addition, candidates could be medically disqualified if their applications reveal other conditions, such as:
 - A chronic condition with disturbing symptoms which the attending physician(s) have not been able to diagnose at the time of application.
 - A hospitalization or emergency treatment related to an unstable or undiagnosed condition within one year prior to application.
 - A hospitalization or emergency treatment for life threatening allergic reaction within one year prior to application.

Note: In addition to assessing a candidate's overall suitability for the AFS program, AFS must also determine suitability for specific programs and specific countries. **Some conditions cannot be accommodated in certain countries or areas of a country; therefore candidates may be accepted to the AFS program but only offered placement in a limited number of programs or countries.**

Disclaimer

The medical review process may take up to several weeks, depending on the follow-up that is required in each case. Most of the delays are due to difficulties contacting the mental health professionals or medical doctors that completed the forms.

In order to avoid unnecessary delays, we encourage parents/legal guardians of students who require special medical review to contact the relevant professionals to explain the importance of their returning calls made by the AFS staff handling the review process.

Since AFS-USA must meet deadlines set by partner organizations in the hosting countries, in some cases it is necessary to continue with the application process while the medical review is underway. Students going to countries with complicated and lengthy visa application processes may even be asked to begin the visa application process before the medical review is finalized. This is necessary in order to increase the possibility of their traveling as scheduled, should their medical review allow them to participate in the program.

Regardless of how advanced the application process may be, the acceptance of students might be reverted at any time should the medical review fail to clarify concerns regarding the suitability of any student to participate in the exchange program.

APPENDIX D

Country	Entry Visa Required	In Person Visit Required	Visa Processing Time	Cost of Visa	Level of Documentation Required
Australia School Program	YES	NO	approx 1 month	\$	Moderate
Australia Community Service	YES	NO	approx 1 - 2 months, depending on project assignment and whether or not additional docs are needed	\$\$\$	Moderate to High, depending on project assignment additional medical or police records may be required
Austria Year	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but detailed documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$\$	High
Austria Semester	YES	NO	approx 1 - 2 weeks	\$	Minimal
Argentina	YES	Some Consulates; Houston & DC	approx 3 days for visa issuance once authorizations and docs from Argentina have arrived	\$\$\$	High
Belgium	YES	NO	2 - 3 weeks	\$\$	Moderate
Brazil	YES	YES, but applicants may use visa service	2 - 3 weeks	\$\$\$	High
Chile	YES	YES; most Consulates	4 - 5 weeks	\$\$\$	High
China	YES	NO	1 - 2 weeks	\$	High. Students should have passport early
Costa Rica	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but detailed documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$\$	High. Several detailed documents with multiple certifications are required. Difficulty and amount of time can vary depending on state of residence and custodial situation.
Czech Republic	YES	NO	Approximately 12 weeks	\$\$	High. Valid passport is needed early.
Denmark	YES	NO	2 - 3 months	\$	Moderate.
Dominican Republic	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but some documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$	Minimal to Moderate. If students want grades validated/transcript more documentation is needed and costs are higher.
Ecuador	YES	YES; SOME CONSULATES	1 - 3 weeks	\$	High.
Finland	YES	NO	can take up to 12 weeks	\$	Moderate
France	YES	YES; ALL CONSULATES	Varies 1 day to 3 weeks	\$\$	High

Germany	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country. Small quantity of documents required.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$ - \$\$	Minimal
Ghana	YES	NO	approx 1 week	\$	Moderate; yellow fever immunization required
Honduras	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but some documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$	Moderate
Hong Kong	YES	NO	can take 2 to 3 months	\$	Moderate
Hungary	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country. Small quantity of documents required.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$	Minimal, but passport must be valid for at least 6 months after return from US.
Iceland	YES	NO	3 months	\$	Moderate. Must be in possession of valid passport in early April.
India	YES	NO	1 - 2 weeks	\$\$	Minimal
Indonesia	YES	NO	1 - 2 weeks	\$	Moderate. Valid passport is needed 3 months before departure.
Italy	YES	YES; most consulates	Varies 1 day to 3 weeks	\$\$	High
Japan	YES	NO	approx 1 week	\$	Minimal
Latvia	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but some documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$	Moderate
Malaysia	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country. Small quantity of documents required.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$	Minimal, though valid passport is needed early.
Netherlands	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but detailed documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$\$	Moderate
New Zealand	YES	NO	approx 3 weeks	\$	Moderate. Timing of supporting documents from partner office can create time crunch.

Norway	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country. Small quantity of documents required.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$	Minimal
Panama	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but detailed documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office	\$\$	Moderate
Paraguay	YES	NO	approximately 1 week	\$	Minimal. Passport needed early.
Peru	NO. Residence Permit requested in host country, but some documents must be prepared in advance.	NO	residence permit requested in host country with assistance from partner office. NOTE: Process has changed recently and may still be in transition. April 2010	\$	Moderate
Portugal	YES	YES, some Consulates	approximately 4 weeks	\$\$\$	High
Russia	YES	NO	approximately 1 week	\$\$\$	Moderate to High. Passport needed very early.
South Africa	YES	NO	approximately 2 to 3 weeks	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	Moderate to High.
Spain	YES	YES, ALL CONSULATES	4 - 6 weeks	\$\$\$	High
Sweden	YES	NO	2 - 3 months	\$	Moderate. Valid passport needed early.
Switzerland	YES	NO	approximately 1 - 3 weeks	\$	Moderate
Thailand	YES	NO	approximately 1 - 2 weeks	\$	Minimal
Tunisia	YES	NO	approximately 1 - 2 weeks	\$	Minimal
Turkey	YES	NO	approximately 2 weeks	\$	Minimal

GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	IMPORTANT THIS INFORMATION REVERS ONLY TO YEAR AND SEMESTER PROGRAMS	KEY FOR VISA COSTS	KEY FOR DOCUMENTATION
			<p>Additionally, this information refers only to US passport holders</p>	<p>NOTE: Estimate of costs for visa includes the actual cost of visa application, but may also include travel, mailing, document certification, and visa extension costs.</p>	<p>MINIMAL</p> <p>MODERATE</p> <p>HIGH</p>

INTENSIVE SUMMER PROGRAMS THAT REQUIRE VISA AND/OR HIGH FEE

*Note: The following countries require a visa for U.S. passport holders to enter for a stay of 90 days or less, or require an entry fee of more than \$50 US Dollars. Please see the **Visa Cheat Sheet** or **Lotus Notes Visa instructions** for more information, if needed.*

Australia

Argentina – no visa, but \$131 reciprocity fee upon arrival

Brazil

Chile – no visa, but \$131 reciprocity fee upon arrival

China

Egypt

Ghana

India

Paraguay

Russia

Thailand

INTENSIVE SUMMER PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE VISA

*Note: U.S. passport can enter most of the countries below with **no visa** and **minimal, if any, fees**. A few may require small immigration fees, tourist card, or airport tax upon arrival or departure. Please see **Visa Cheat Sheet** or **Lotus Notes Visa Instruction** document for more details.*

Costa Rica

Ecuador

Finland

France

Hungary

Italy

Japan

Latvia

New Zealand

Panama

Spain

Tunisia

Turkey

Please remind students that all visa information is subject to change at any time and DOES NOT INCLUDE participants who are NOT U.S. CITIZENS.

This information sheet will be updated each year to reflect changes prior to the NH cycle.

APPENDIX F

FORM 10 SIGNATURE GUIDELINES

Parents:	Family Situation:	Signatures Required:	Additional Documents Required:	Legal Review Required?
Married	Birth Mother and Birth Father are married and live together with the Candidate	Both legal guardians	None	
Divorced	Birth Mother and Birth Father have joint custody	Both legal guardians	None (<i>NOTE: Step-parents cannot sign in the place of birth parents unless they have legally adopted the student</i>).	
	One parent has primary custody and the other parent has only visitation rights	Both legal guardians	None	
	One parent has sole custody and the other parent has NO visitation rights .	Custodial parent's signature	Copy of court decree of sole custody awarding.	YES. Submit to Stephanie Cashmore
Never Married	Birth Parents were never married but both parents are listed on birth certificate	Both legal guardians	None, unless one parent is estranged/has abdicated responsibility, see below.	
	Birth Parents were never married and ONLY MOTHER listed on birth certificate	Mother's signature	Copy of student's birth Certificate	
Adoptive	Student is adopted and lives with adopted parents	Both legal guardians	Copy of re-issued birth Certificate with adopted parents listed, OR adoption paperwork if birth cert. still lists birth parents.	YES. Submit to Stephanie Cashmore
Deceased	One Parent is deceased	Custodial parent's signature	Copy of Death Certificate of deceased Parent	
Estranged*	Both parents on Birth Certificate, one Parent is Estranged or missing, and no custody documents exist to prove custodial guardianship	Custodial parent's signature	Notarized statement from custodial parent answering the following questions: How many years have the parents been separated? Where does estranged parent live? When was the last time the estranged parent saw the child? When did the estranged parent last pay child support? Helpful to include any court documents showing missing child support, or estranged parent's absence in court.	YES. Submit to Stephanie Cashmore

*If dealing with estranged parent, keep in mind that many VISA processes require both parent signatures, and stu's may need to provide additional docs later to apply for visa. In some cases, it is preferable to choose a country that does not require Parental Consent Form. Consult w/ Visa Coordinator.

For situations not listed here, consult with Stephanie Cashmore and obtain any legal documentation available, in addition to a clear explanation from the student and guardian(s) of custody situation.



8 Confidential Placement Summary

Important for Hosting Committees: This form is NOT TO BE SHOWN TO THE HOST FAMILY AND THE CANDIDATE AS IT CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Please provide additional information on a separate piece of paper if you wish.

USA

Candidate Name (First/Middle/Last)

Home Country

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION: CHECK BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES CANDIDATE'S AREA OF RESIDENCE

Urban Suburban area Small town Rural area

What is the neighborhood socio-economic level: Upper Medium Lower

Name of closest large city

Distance

Population

HOME ENVIRONMENT

Who lives at home?

Comment on any situation within the family which is important to know for placement purposes (e.g. if this is a single parent home, please talk about the child's other parent and the relationship.)

Please comment on the cleanliness and organization of the home.

Education level of parents: Some secondary school Completed secondary school College Graduate level

FAMILY COMMUNICATION/INTERESTS

Please check all that apply:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother-dominant | <input type="checkbox"/> Permissive | <input type="checkbox"/> Noisy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports-oriented | <input type="checkbox"/> Community-oriented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father-dominant | <input type="checkbox"/> Strict | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual pursuits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shared parental responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Children independent | <input type="checkbox"/> Casual | <input type="checkbox"/> Education valued | <input type="checkbox"/> TV-centered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal | <input type="checkbox"/> Career-oriented | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Undemonstrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Protective | <input type="checkbox"/> Busy | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s) | | | | |

What are the family's shared activities?

USA

Candidate Name (First/Middle/Last)

Home Country

CANDIDATE'S PERSONALITY

Comment on the candidate's attitude towards school:

What are the candidate's main activities and how many times a week are they pursued?

Please check all that apply:

- Introverted Studious Loner Talkative Patient Group oriented Musical
- Extroverted Flexible Shy Late night person Moody Independent Artistic
- Fun-loving Easy to please Organized Early to bed Leader Computer interests Reader
- Adventurous Noisy Untidy Individual pursuits Follower Service oriented Religious
- Humorous Quiet Listener Group activities Eager to please Dancer
- Other(s) _____

PLACEMENT — PLEASE CHECK BOX OF ANY CANDIDATE RESTRICTIONS LISTED BELOW:

- Dietary Medical/allergies Smoking Religious access

Where a box has been checked please provide additional details:

Please comment on the type of placement that would assist the candidate to have a successful AFS experience:

Do the volunteers in your area recommend this candidate for an AFS program? Yes No

Was an in-home informational interview conducted with the candidate and family? Yes No Date: _____

Other comments:

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____ Phone: _____

Volunteer Name Printed: _____ Email: _____

Please email this form to sendinginterviews@afs.org