

Victims' Protection

If you feel that you are a victim, you should not be afraid to get help at any time during your program.

If you are a victim of abuse or trafficking you can trust law enforcement.



**National Human Trafficking
Resource Center (Polaris)**

[1-888-373-7888](tel:1-888-373-7888)

If you believe that you or anyone else may be a victim of trafficking, please contact the number above. This number is staffed 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. Operators can be reached via calls, live chats, and texts ([233733](tel:233733)); assistance in more than 200 languages is available.

BridgeUSA-Related Information or Questions

The website jvisa.state.gov can provide important information regarding your program. If you have questions, you may also contact a Department representative by email at jvisas@state.gov.

Temporary Workers' Rights

Information for this handout was adapted from the Rights and Protections for Temporary Workers Pamphlets (pamphlet), travel.state.gov. A copy of the pamphlet in your language can be found on this website.



BridgeUSA

**Exchange Visitors'
Rights & Protections**

The Exchange Visitor Program

BridgeUSA is an educational and cultural exchange program that is part of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 (as amended). BridgeUSA is a U.S. government program that is overseen by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State.

Role of the U.S. Department of State

The U.S. Department of State is responsible for overseeing your sponsor's administration of your exchange program. If your sponsor does not provide assistance for general issues regarding routine program administration, then you should notify the U.S. Department of State at jvisas@state.gov. If you have an emergency that requires immediate attention and you cannot reach your sponsor or your sponsor has not assisted you, then you should call:



Department of State
J-1 Visa Hotline
[1-866-283-9090](tel:1-866-283-9090)

The Role of Your Sponsor

Your sponsor is responsible for monitoring your wellbeing during your exchange program. Your sponsor is also responsible for providing assistance if problems arise with your program. You should notify your sponsor first if any part of your program or agreement(s) is not met. If this happens, your sponsor should be able to help you.

In an emergency you should contact police (to report a crime) or medical emergency services (for medical or health emergencies) as appropriate and then follow up with your sponsor. ***Dial 911 for all immediate emergencies and dangerous situations.***

Your Agreement(s)

You must have a written agreement with your sponsor about the terms and conditions of your program. Depending on your program, agreements may include a training plan, housing agreement, host placement agreement, and host family agreement, among others. You should request and keep copies of all your agreements.

Pay/Salary/Stipend

For programs that have a work component, your agreement with your sponsor (or host) will stipulate all applicable terms and conditions, including weekly work hours and rate of pay or stipend, which may vary by program and location. You should contact your sponsor if you have questions.

Discrimination/Harrassment

In the United States you have the right to be treated fairly. It is illegal for anyone to discriminate against you or harass you because of your race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, color, religion, or disability.

Retaliation

You have a right to complain if you are treated unfairly. It is unlawful for anyone to threaten to report you to "Immigration" or the police if you file a complaint about any aspect of your program. Seek help immediately from your sponsor if someone threatens you. If your sponsor cannot or will not help you, then contact the U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor Program Emergency Hotline.

Safe Conditions

You have the right to safe and clean housing (free from pests and mold), clean water, and medical treatment. You also have the right to clean and accessible bathrooms in your workplace as well as to personal protective equipment if you are using cleaning supplies, chemicals, or pesticides. You should be notified of any chemicals or pesticides used in your workplace or housing so you may avoid exposure.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking occurs when someone recruits, transports, or keeps someone against their will to exploit them using force, fraud, or coercion.

Traffickers often:

- use threats of physical or sexual violence.
- threaten to harm your family or others.
- threaten to deport you.
- deny you food, sleep, breaks, or medical care.
- restrict you from talking to your family or to people outside of your workplace or program.
- prevent your access to your personal identification and travel documents such as passports, visas, and birth certificates.
- make false promises regarding your work, living conditions, and/or pay.
- tell you to lie about your identity or to pretend that you don't understand English.
- tell you that you do not have rights in the United States and if you seek help no one will believe you.