



Pan Atlantic Foundation
High School in America
J-1 Host Family Handbook



Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	3
Program Overview	4
Lines of Communication	5
Important Information	6
Key J-1 Visa Guidelines	7
Preparing for Student Arrival	8
Travel/Finances	9
Problem Solving/ Monitoring	10
Problem Solving/Monitoring	11
Health/Safety/Insurance	13
End of Program	13

Welcome to Pan Atlantic Foundation

Dear Host Family,

Thank you for opening your home and your heart to a high school exchange student with Pan Atlantic Foundation. Host families are the foundation of a successful J-1 exchange experience, and we are truly grateful for your willingness to share your daily life, traditions, and values with a student from another country. The J-1 High School Exchange Visitor Program is sponsored by a U.S. Department of State–designated organization and is designed to promote mutual understanding between people of the United States and people of other countries. While students attend a local public high school, the true learning happens at home –around the dinner table, during everyday conversations, and through shared experiences.

This handbook is intended to support you throughout your hosting journey. It explains program expectations, answers common questions, and offers guidance to help you and your student have a positive and rewarding experience.

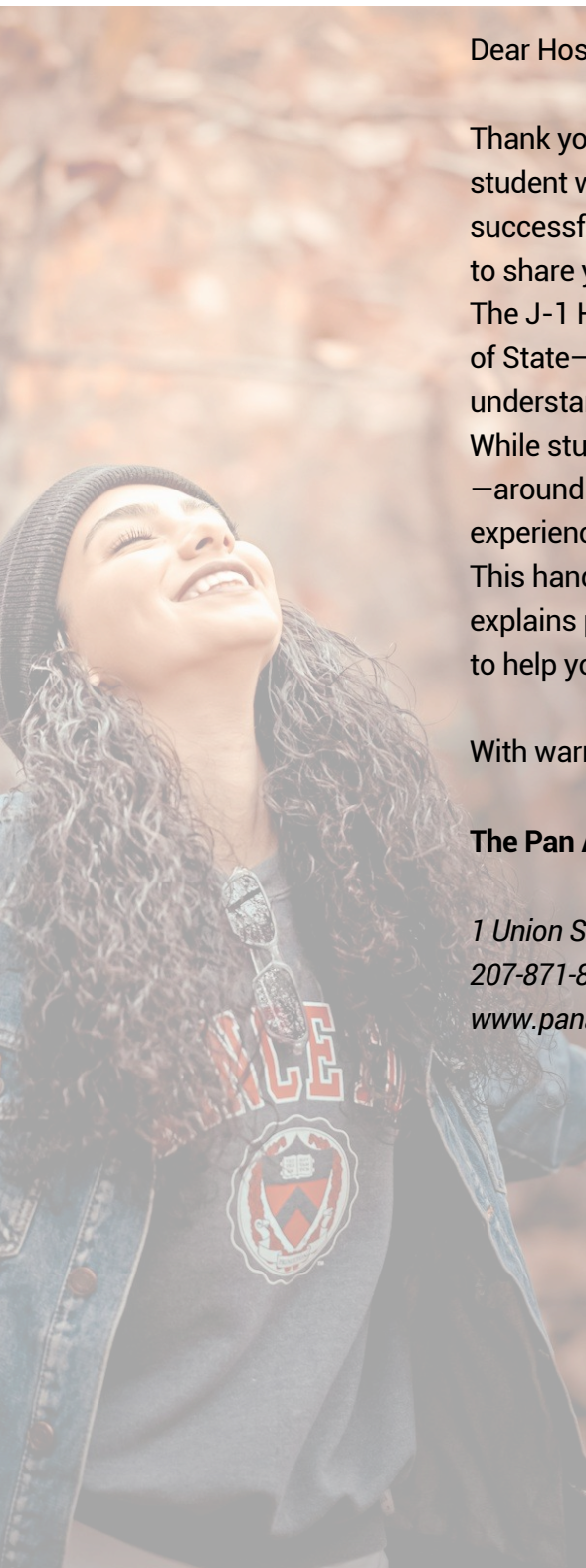
With warm regards,

The Pan Atlantic Foundation Team

1 Union Street, Portland, Maine 04101

207-871-8622

www.panatlanticfoundation.org



Program Overview

Program Purpose

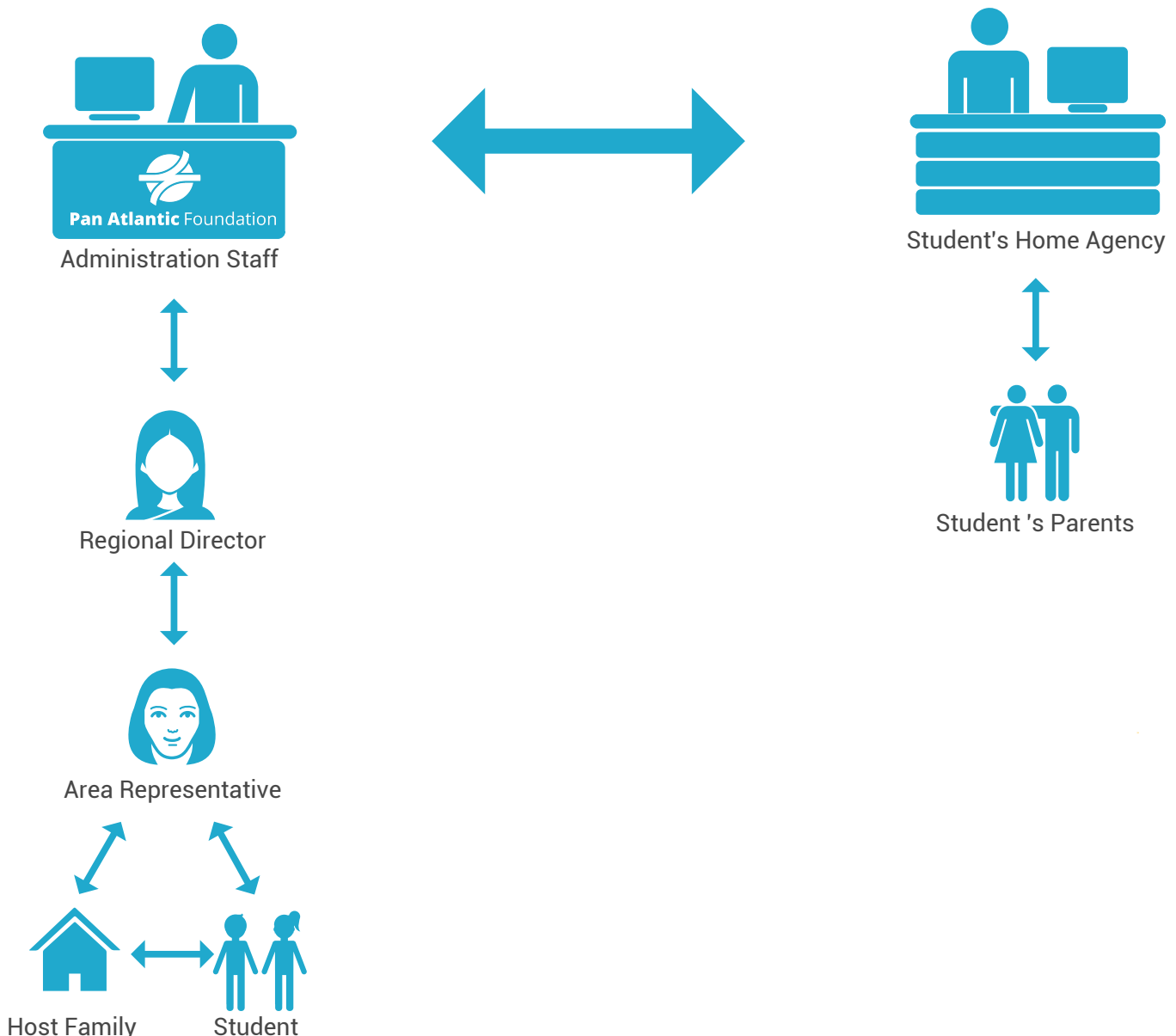
The J-1 High School Exchange Program is a cultural exchange program. Students are not tourists, employees, or long-term immigrants. They are young ambassadors who come to experience American family life, improve their English, attend school, and share their own culture with others.

Program Length

- One academic semester, or
- One academic year (the maximum length permitted under J-1 regulations)

Students must return to their home country at the conclusion of their approved program dates.

Program Lines of Communication & Key Contacts



Who's Who in the Line of Communication

Your Area Representative (AR) is an advocate for both you and the student. If you have any questions or problems, please call your AR. Your Area Representative should contact you and your student at least once a month. We encourage host families to reach out early and often. No concern is too small, and early communication helps prevent small issues from becoming larger challenges.

Your Regional Director (RD) works for Pan Atlantic Foundation and works closely with your Area Representative. If you cannot reach your AR about a problem, call your Regional Director.

The Administrative Staff in Portland, Maine is made up of a team of individuals who will be communicating with your student's overseas agent prior to their arrival, and once they are on the program. You may hear from us from time to time, and we are always here to help! Our office phone number is **207-871-8622**. You can reach us on this number from 9 am to 5 pm EST. You can also email us at services@panatlanticfoundation.org.

Pan Atlantic Foundation Responsible Officer

Vickie McCormack 207-871-8622 ext 113
vmccormack@panatlanticfoundation.org

Alternate Responsible Officer #1

Laura Whelan 207-871-8622 ext 114
lwhelan@panatlanticfoundation.org

Alternate Responsible Officer #2

Katie Wheatley 207-871-8622 ext 125
kwheatley@panatlanticfoundation.org

Address for all officers: 1 Union Street, Portland ME 04101

If there is immediate danger, please call 911. Call Pan Atlantic Foundations' 24-hour emergency hotline at 866-227-5335 (TOM-BARK-DEL) if you feel your student is unsafe or needs to speak with someone immediately regarding sexual harassment or abuse, medical issues, or host family emergencies.





Important Information

Pan Atlantic Foundation

Address: 1 Union Street, Suite 202 • Portland, Maine 04101 USA

Tel: 207-871-8622

Fax: 207-772-4842

Website: www.panatlanticfoundation.org

Email: services@panatlanticfoundation.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm EST

24-Hour Emergency: 866-227-5335

Follow Us



PanAtlanticFoundation



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LiveLifeLikeNeverBefore



Your Area Representative:

Phone Number:

Email:

Legal & Regulatory Requirements (J-1 Program)

Because exchange students are minors participating in a federally regulated program, certain rules must be followed to protect both students and host families.

Key J-1 Guidelines

- Exchange students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.
- Students may not drive or operate motor vehicles
- Students must attend an accredited high school.
- Enrollment in online courses or schools is not permitted
- Host families may not charge rent or require services in exchange for hosting
- Participation is limited to one academic year maximum

These rules help ensure a safe, fair, and meaningful exchange experience for everyone involved.

The Role of the Host Family

Host families provide more than just a place to live—they offer guidance, structure, and emotional support. As a host family, you agree to:

- Provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive home environment
- Treat the student as a member of your family
- Offer appropriate supervision for a minor
- Ensure regular school attendance and participation
- Provide meals and a private bed
- Assist with or arrange transportation as needed
- Communicate regularly with program staff
- Notify the program promptly of concerns, rule violations, or changes in household circumstances



Student Responsibilities

Exchange students are expected to take an active role in their experience. Students agree to:

- Follow host family house rules
- Attend school regularly and on time
- Follow school policies and U.S. laws
- Communicate respectfully and honestly
- Participate in family life, including shared meals and basic chores
- Represent their home country, natural family, host family, and program in a positive manner

Preparing for Your Student's Arrival

Bedroom & Home Requirements

- A separate bed (not shared with another person)
- Reasonable privacy and personal space
- Storage for clothing and personal belongings

Preparing Your Family

- Talk openly with all household members about expectations
- Review family routines and house rules
- Discuss cultural differences and the importance of patience and flexibility

Arrival & First Week

- Meet your student upon arrival or arrange supervised transportation
- Give a tour of your home and neighborhood
- Review house rules and daily routines during the first week

Daily Life & House Rules

Clear expectations help students feel secure and supported.

Families should discuss:

- Curfews (school nights and weekends)
- Chores and household responsibilities
- Meals and schedules
- Technology, phone use, and screen time
- Friends, visitors, and overnight stays
- Dating expectations
- Religious or cultural practices within the home

Putting house rules in writing and reviewing them early is strongly encouraged.

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Never Before
www.iwanttohost.org

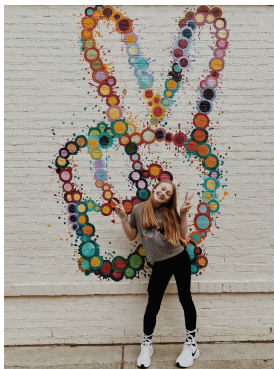
Travel & Transportation Guidelines

While students are on program, Pan Atlantic Foundation is responsible for knowing students' general location at any given time per Department of State regulations. If they would like to travel while on program they just need to inform their Area Representative and submit a travel request form before they depart on their trip.

Travel is only permitted:

- With adult host family members
- With the Area Representative
- With the school or organized sponsored trips
- With Belo USA

Students must obtain written permission from Pan Atlantic before booking flights or participating in any travel that results in more than one school day of absence.



Finances & Expenses

Host Families Provide:

- Room and 3 meals a day
- Utilities and normal household expenses
- Reasonable transportation

Students Provide:

- Personal spending money
- School lunches if they do not choose to pack a lunch
- Activity fees
- Medical fees and expenses

Host families may not request payment or services from students.

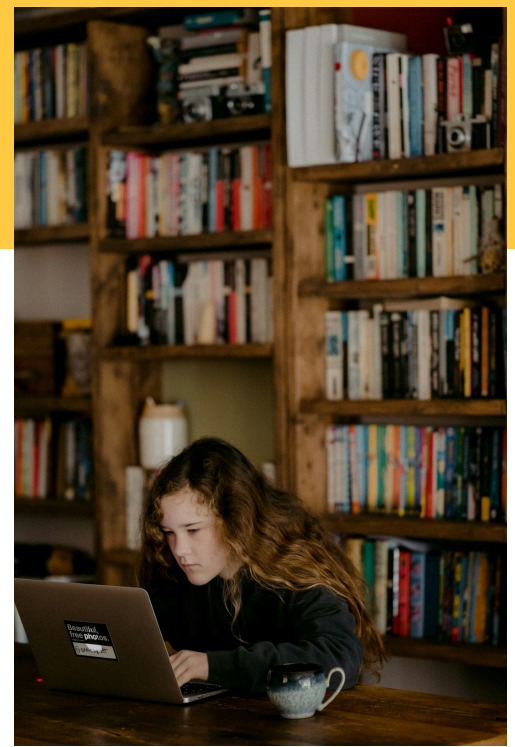
School & Academics

Students will attend a local high school arranged by the program.

Important notes:

- Academic credit transfer to the student's home country is not guaranteed
- Daily attendance and classroom participation are required
- Students should make a genuine effort in all classes
- Tutoring or academic support may be recommended if challenges arise

Host families are encouraged to share academic concerns with the Area Representative, who can help guide next steps.



Cultural Adjustment & Emotional Support

Adjusting to a new culture takes time. Students may experience homesickness, frustration, or emotional ups and downs.

Common stages of adjustment include:

- Initial excitement ("honeymoon phase")
- Culture shock
- Gradual adjustment
- Feeling at home

Host families can help by offering encouragement, listening with empathy, maintaining consistent expectations, and involving students in everyday family life.

Behavior Expectations & Supportive Discipline

Students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct. When issues arise, the goal is always education and support.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Additional guidance or check-ins
- Probation
- Host family change or early program conclusion in serious cases

Host families should contact the program promptly if behavior concerns arise so issues can be addressed early.



Communication & Problem Solving

Open, respectful communication is the key to a successful hosting experience.

We recommend:

1. Discuss concerns calmly and privately with the student
2. Contact your Area Representative if concerns continue
3. Document serious incidents when appropriate

You are never expected to handle serious situations alone.

Monitoring, Check-Ins & Compliance

To meet federal requirements and ensure student well-being:

- Monthly contact with the Area Representative is required
- Home visits and student check-ins will take place
- Serious concerns must be reported immediately

These check-ins are designed to support both students and host families.

Emergencies & Mandatory Reporting

Host families must immediately notify the program of:

- Medical emergencies or hospitalizations
- Missing or runaway students
- Abuse, neglect, or serious safety concerns
- Arrests or law enforcement involvement

The 24/7 emergency contact number should be used whenever urgent assistance is needed.

Community Service

While students are on program they should complete at least 8 hours of community service per semester. Some ideas for community service include:

- Host family's church, community or organizations
- Student's school, sports or school organizations
- YMCA, Scouts, food distribution or other community events

Health, Safety & Insurance



Medical Insurance

All Pan Atlantic students are covered by health insurance arranged through Pan Atlantic Foundation called Envisage Global Insurance (EGI) for the duration of their program.

Medical Care

- Seek immediate care in emergencies
- Follow insurance procedures for non-emergency care
- Notify your Area Representative as soon as possible after any medical visit

Safety Expectations

To ensure student well-being, the following are strictly prohibited:

- Alcohol, drugs, and misuse of prescription medication
- Smoking or vaping
- Weapons of any kind
- Driving or operating motor vehicles



Important Insurance Information

- Non-Emergency Care - students should go to a walk-in clinic or urgent care.
- Emergency Care - Students going to the ER will be charged \$350 for each visit that is not a hospital admission. Please only use the ER for emergencies.
- Telemedicine a virtual doctors visit, is available to all students via the Student Zone*
- DialCare a virtual counseling service, is available to all students via the Student Zone
- Students must pay for prescriptions upfront directly to the pharmacy. They need to keep their receipt and prescription label to submit to claims for reimbursement.



Insurance Helpline 24/7

USA Toll Free (855) 731-9445
USA Direct +1 (317) 927-6806
customer care@imglobal.com



*Student Zone

<https://egi.zone/pan-atlantic-foundation/>



Find a Doctor/Hospital

- For minor or non-emergency medical care, your student's plan includes free access to the Teladoc Virtual Telemedicine platform, allowing them to seek medical care online. You can learn more about how to use Teladoc on our website.
- If you need to seek in-person medical care, your plan uses the "UnitedHealthcare Network" inside the USA.
- You can search for providers online, or call the number on the back of your ID card.
- ONLY use the Emergency Room (ER) in true emergency situations.
- As part of your insurance plan, you have access to a discount prescription drug program that will greatly lower the cost of many medications.

My IMG- Student Account

We strongly recommend students register for their MyIMG account as soon as their coverage starts (the day they enter the US). Once they have registered, any future updates on the status of their claims will be sent to them via email, making it easier for them to track their claims.

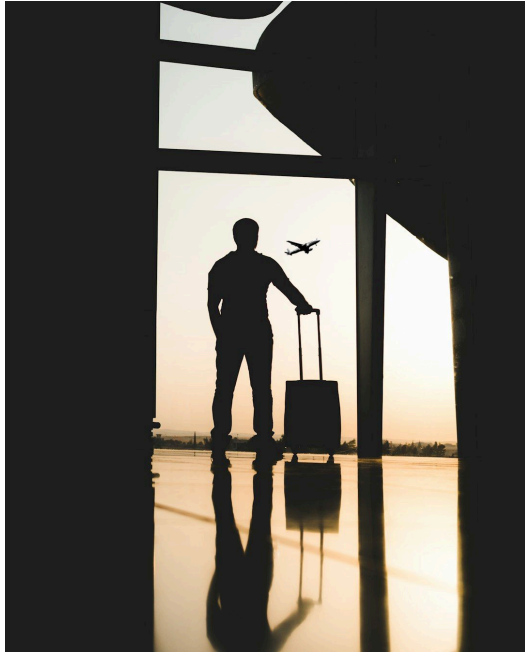


Your student's insurance plan through IMG includes access to MyIMG- the online account center to submit and manage their claims. Through MyIMG they can:

- Submit claims online
- View and track claim status
- Download and view their Explanation of Benefits (EOB)
- Secure message the claims team



<https://www.imglobal.com/member/login>



End of Program & Saying Goodbye

As the exchange program comes to a close, this period can be both meaningful and emotional. Many host families and students find it difficult to say goodbye after sharing so many memories together. While this transition can be challenging, it is also a time to reflect on the growth, connections, and cultural understanding gained throughout the year. We hope that many host families and students will continue a lifelong relationship long after the program officially ends.

End-of-Program Planning & Travel

All end-of-program plans must be coordinated in advance with your Area Representative.

Host families and students are required to:

- Report all end-of-program travel plans to the program, including:
 - Return flights to the student's home country
 - Natural parent visits or pick-up arrangements
 - Any approved alternative departure plans
- Coordinate all plans with Area Representative prior to finalizing travel

Departure Timeline Requirements

- Students must depart the host family home within two (2) weeks of the last day they attend classes.
- A student's J-1 visa expires 30 days after the last day of class. This 30-day period is intended only for departure from the United States and approved travel related to program conclusion.
- Departure may occur through:
 - A scheduled return flight home, or
 - Pick-up by a natural parent, with prior program approval

Students may not remain with the host family or travel independently beyond these approved timelines.