

J-1 Visa exchange visitor program



J-1 VISA

EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

J-1 Visa Basics

The Exchange Visitor (J) non-Immigrant visa category is for individuals approved to participate in work-and study-based exchange visitor programs. Participants are integral to the success of the program.

Programs

The J-1 Visa provides countless opportunities for international candidates looking to travel and gain experience in the United States. The multifaceted programs enable foreign nationals to come to the U.S. to teach, study, conduct research, demonstrate special skills or receive on the job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.

Programs

- Au Pair
- Camp Counselor
- College and University Student
- Government Visitor
- Intern
- International Visitor
- Physician
- Professor and Research Scholar
- Secondary School Student
- Short-Term Scholar
- Specialist
- Summer Work Travel
- Teacher
- Trainee

Participant Experiences

Participants discover first-hand the J-1 Visa's enriching cross-cultural opportunity to gain mutual understanding of diverse backgrounds and customs. Read their stories and share in their personal journeys.

Earning her expertise



Anna Karlsson, Trainee

After studying tourism and marketing in her native country Sweden, Anna Karlsson was eager for a chance to broaden her experience. She found just such an opportunity when she came to New York City to spend a year as a trainee in the office of VisitSweden. "After three years of studying tourism and marketing, I wanted to develop my skills in these subjects by practice. Since VisitSweden is the marketing and communications company for Sweden, I felt being a trainee would be perfect for me," she said, adding: "I have always wanted to visit New York, so the opportunity to live there while working as a trainee felt like a dream opportunity."

As a trainee at VisitSweden, Anna has been encouraged to participate in a variety of tasks, from writing a newsletter to helping set up a sweepstakes event. "I'm learning new things every day at the office and my hopes are that after this year I'll have learned even more that I can apply to my future career," she said.

She encourages anyone interested in gaining more real-world experience to consider becoming a trainee. "I have not met any trainee who regrets going to the United States," she added. "It really is a wonderful experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. To be here is a great opportunity to develop both in your career and personally. You can create a great network here for friendships and also for business."

Better than the movies



Szonja Gagyor, Camp Counselor

Szonja Gagyor hoped her experience as a camp counselor in New Jersey would resemble the American life she'd seen portrayed in Hollywood movies back in Budapest, Hungary. "I was really interested because I had a dream about seeing New York City one day and going to the 'new world' I knew from the movies. But at that time it was nearly impossible for students to go overseas and travel around because it was expensive and it wasn't easy to get a visa either," she remembered. "This provided a great opportunity and it has become much more than just being a tourist in the Big Apple."

Szonja spent the past four summers at a Christian day camp in New Jersey where she led sporting activities, arts and crafts programs and games for the campers. "I had my same group of girls for all four years so I basically saw them growing up. It was an amazing experience," she said. "It took time to adjust to the cultural differences and we had some misunderstandings too, but we became more patient and tolerant," she added. "I liked the positive attitude I saw wherever I went, and most of the people were welcoming and helpful."

Now Szonja said she has a much better understanding of day-to-day life in another culture.

"I've learned that movies are fictional," she said, laughing. "I became familiar with the history, the traditions and the way of living in general. I really like the mentality of the people. I made many friends and I keep in touch with my closest ones year around."

She encouraged others to apply for this 'awesome adventure.'

"Leave your preconceptions behind, forget the movies' idealistic pictures and get ready for something better but real," she said. "It was one of the best decisions in my life when I applied, and I have never regretted it. In fact, I give thanks for it day by day."

What is said about the J-1 Visa programs?

They offer possibilities for

- foreign people who want to work and study in the USA as a visitor.
- foreign young people who want to visit the USA as a tourist.
- young people who want to go to the USA to live there.

Anna is positive about her time as a trainee with a J-1 Visa.

What has made her so enthusiastic?

- She has been able to improve herself personally and professionally.
- She has gained so much life experience by living for a while in the US.
- She needed the practical experience after her studies in Sweden.

In the part starting with "As a trainee at VisitSweden ...", Anna talks a lot about her experiences with the J-1 Visa program.

Why does she say all this?

- to convince and instruct
- to enthuse and convince
- to enthuse and instruct

What did Szonja find out during her time as a camp counselor?

- Girls in America are actually not so different from girls in Hungary.
- Her ideas about America from the movies did not match reality.
- Misunderstandings made it difficult to adapt to the American lifestyle.