Home Hosting - Frequently Asked Questions

Transportation

Am I required to transport my guest(s) to their meetings during the program days?
No. Hosts are asked to drop their guests off in the morning prior to program start (usually around 8:00am and to pick them up at the end of the program day (usually around 5:00pm). Drop-off and pick-up times are flexible to accommodate hosts’ work schedules. Pick-up may be later if there is a scheduled evening activity. On evenings when there are activities that finish late, we can always work with you to arrange transportation to your home.

My son or daughter is under 18, but has a driver’s license. Are they allowed to transport my student?
Anyone with a legal driver’s license and permission to carry passengers in their car is able to transport your guest(s). Hosts should consider the driving ability and responsibility of anyone who will be transporting their guest(s) and use their discretion.

I had an emergency and won’t be able to pick-up my guest(s)-what should I do?
Please let our staff know as soon as possible and we will work with other hosts or our staff to arrange transportation for your guest(s).

Program Activities

What will my guest(s) be doing during program days?
As a requirement of the program, all participants will have four months after program completion to organize a project that addresses a social problem in their home community. Your guest(s) will be participating in highly-academic and interactive leadership seminars, project-planning sessions, community organization visits and team-building activities that prepare them to be successful at this task.

Do my family and I need to attend all the cultural activities?
No – we understand that families have evening activities or may just want a night in, so we do not expect all hosts to attend the pre-arranged optional cultural activities (the Aces ball game and bowling), though we are always very glad to have hosts if they can make it. We attempt to provide entrance fees for any host family member who attends an optional cultural activity, though for the Aces game and bowling, we can only provide dinner for program participants.

We do ask that at least one family member attend the opening barbecue (June 18 at 6:00pm) and the closing ceremonies (June 28 at 6:00 pm), as these events are very exciting for and important to your guest(s). For these events, we provide dinner to any host family member who attends.

General Hosting and Visitor Questions

Does my family need to include high school-aged children to participate in this exchange?
No though your guest(s) are high-school aged, it is not required that you have high-school or even school-aged children for you family to participate in the exchange. We have had many wonderful youth hosts in the 11 years that we have run this program whose family does not meet this description. Individuals, couples with grown children, couples without children, etc. and welcome to participate in this opportunity.

**Will guest(s) speak English?**
Yes—it is a requirement of the U.S. Department of State, the program sponsor, that all activities take place in English. Students have been in-person interviews to ensure that they can speak English at a high enough level to participate in a highly-academic program entirely in English.

**What is the time commitment for hosting?**
Guests will be in host homes you for a total of 12 days. During that time, hosts provide a bed for each guest (guests can share a room with other youth-Algerian or American-of the same gender), any meals that are served while your guest(s) is in your home, and daily transportation to and from UNR. Your guest(s) will not be in your home at any time during weekday working hours, as they will be participating in workshops at UNR. All food and transportation will be provided by the program during that time. Furthermore, dinner will be provided for your guest(s) at any pre-arranged cultural event (four cultural events are scheduled while the group is in Reno).

This means that guests are with hosts twelve mornings (and breakfasts) before 8:00am, eight afternoons (and dinners) after 5:00pm and three weekend days (when all three meals are provided). For a breakdown of these days, please see the draft 2019 Algerian Youth Leadership Program calendar (please note that dates, activities, and times are subject to change).

The point of cultural exchange is for participants to see what a host family does in their day-to-day life, so do not feel pressure to have every minute planned. We will provide a suggested list of activities that you can use during weekends and evenings, and would also be glad to arrange for other hosts to take your guest(s) if there are any times that you cannot be with them. Your guest(s) may also have evenings when they wish to meet up with other program participants or host families. Many past hosts have commented that they expected to be “on” and entertaining constantly while their guest was with them, but that, due to program “homework,” pre-arranged cultural activities and side activities arranged by guests or other hosts, they found that not to be the case.

**Is there compensation for hosting?**
Hosting is a volunteer activity and, as such, there is no formal compensation. Whenever possible, we provide dinner or activity entrance fees to our hosts as a token of how much we appreciate you volunteering your time and resources to welcome a visitor to our community.

**Can I pick the gender and age of my guest(s)?**
Yes—you will have the opportunity to select a gender preference when you fill out a 2019 Youth Programs Home Host Application. You can also let our staff know if you would prefer a certain age. We can generally accommodate these preferences.

**What will my family need to do in order to accommodate a visitor’s religious or cultural practices?**
Well before the program starts and at the program pre-departure orientation, we discuss at length with visitors that they will be experiencing another culture in which some things may be very different than
their home country. The most important piece of cultural exchange is getting to see how another culture is in day-to-day life. As such, hosts are not expected to alter their lifestyle (wine with dinner, eating pork) in any way. You’re a guest may have a religious dietary restriction (a halal diet, which is similar to but less restrictive than a kosher diet. We place the burden on the guest(s) to ensure that they are checking ingredients, but we will go over the diet and give you resources to accommodate your guest(s) at the home host orientation. We will also provide a supply of food for guest(s) wishing to eat halal meat.

The principal time of worship for Muslim guests is Friday around noon, so any guest wishing to visit a mosque will be taken by program staff. Your guest may wish to pray in several mall intervals throughout the day; however, prayers can be done at any time, so this typically does not interrupt activities that you may wish to do with your guest.

Our family loves to be outdoors with our dogs on the weekends. What if we are placed with a student who doesn’t like outdoor activity or who is allergic to dogs? We take great care in learning about and understanding the preferences, interests, and lifestyle of each host family and of each guest so that we can make appropriate home placements. Any food, pet, or other allergy is taken into account when placing guests. Relevant medical conditions will be communicated to hosts as well.

Safety

Are visitors background checked? Yes. As visitors are part of a U.S. Department of State program, they are background checked prior to being invited to participate, as well as when they apply for their J-1 Visas.

Why is my family asked to do a background check and home visit? The U.S. Department of State requires that every host family member over the age of 18 be background checked and that every home be visited prior to the guests’ arrival for to ensure the safety of all visitors. If your home has certain activities available (such as a pool or trampoline), our staff must document that we talked to your family about safety procedures surrounding these activities. We also are required to make sure that all pets are safe for guests.

The home visit also provides our staff an opportunity to get to know a bit more about your family, so that we can better match a guest or guests to your interests and lifestyle. For this reason, we ask that all family members be present for at least a portion of the visit.

What happens if my guest gets injured or falls ill? Will they have medical insurance? All guests have comprehensive medical insurance through the U. S. Department of state. In the case that your guest is injured or has a medical emergency, our staff will be your first point of contact. During the program, a staff member is available 24 hours a day in case your guest requires care. The staff member is also trained in providing the correct insurance information to ensure that no medical bill comes to you.
There are certain high-risk activities (skiing, trampolines, ATVs, boating) that are not covered by guest insurance. A list of these activities can be found [here](link to activities list).