

Host Family Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Amity Institute?

Amity is a nonprofit organization that builds international friendship and cultural understanding through teaching exchange. Founded in 1962, the Intern Teacher program is based on the belief that language learning and cultural exchange are essential to building international friendship within our global community. Interns are here to bring their languages and cultures to life, to engage and motivate students and leave them with new confidence in their ability to communicate across borders. Interns inform and inspire, helping students better understand other parts of the world. Our Interns will shape your community's perspective on their country, its culture and people.

Who are Interns?

Interns are single and between the ages of 20 and 30. They are students or graduates of institutions of higher education in their home countries. Some of them have teaching experience or have worked with youth. The personal qualities we seek in Interns are friendliness, openness, maturity, adaptability, motivation and enthusiasm.

Why are Interns here?

Interns are here to represent their language, culture and country, to share experience, to contribute knowledge and ideas, to learn first-hand about American culture, and to improve their English. Interns are considered teaching assistants and/or temporary faculty of the Host School. Interns are volunteers who are role models, ambassadors of good will, active community participants, and integrated members of their Host Family or school living environment.

How long will an Intern stay with our family?

Interns will stay with a Host Family for a minimum of nine weeks. Interns can stay longer and Host Family assignments vary from school to school.

What will it cost?

Our Host Families provide free room and board to the Intern. Costs will include food, utilities, and minor incidental expenses.

Has my Intern had a security or police background check?

Yes. All Interns must submit a police or security background. Additionally, before Interns receive their visas, they are run through an international security database.

What should we expect of our Intern?

Amity Interns will participate in a cross-cultural exchange that will be a challenging and educational experience for all involved. Both the Intern and members of the Host Family must work to understand and communicate with each other. Always remember that Interns have placed themselves in a foreign environment for the purpose of educating others and expanding their own knowledge of education and culture. Both the Host Family and the Intern will have initial expectations of what the experience will be like and should communicate openly.

In general, Interns are expected to:

- Live a new way of life
- Be flexible in adapting to new circumstances
- Organize their own social lives

- Get involved in their local communities
- Be self-reliant and take care of their own personal needs
- Deal with any problems constructively
- Help as much as possible

With their Host Family, Interns should be willing to:

- Become a part of the family
- Help with household chores
- Do their own laundry
- Follow house rules
- Adjust to the Host Family's schedule
- Participate in family activities if invited
- Prepare a meal from their home country on occasion
- Keep the Host Family informed of their plans
- Live with more than one family
- Take the initiative to spend time with the family
- Share their culture
- Build a relationship with the Host Brother/Sister

What are the Host Family's responsibilities?

The Host Family is the Intern's substitute family and an essential part of his/her assignment. Your presence, particularly in the early weeks, will help the Intern feel at home and soothe any feelings of anxiety, insecurity or homesickness. Most Interns look forward to a genuine family living experience; they want to be included in family life and feel that you take interest in them.

Host Families provide:

- Free room and board for the Intern should be arranged with an American Host Family/individual in the community or on-campus housing
- Interns must have a private room
- The Host Family provides all meals except lunch on school days, which the school covers
- Interns may not live with their Supervising Teacher and, ideally, should not live with their School Coordinator
- Interns can live with multiple families, but each family must host for a minimum of nine weeks

The School Coordinator must visit each prospective home to discuss arrangements, clarify expectations and confirm living conditions.

What is the Intern's role at the school?

At the Host School, Interns are expected to:

- Work under the guidance of their Supervising Teachers
- Accept all assigned duties with a positive attitude
- Take responsibility for assigned work
- Show initiative in planning lessons
- Assist with activities outside the classroom
- Attend personal study classes
- Dress and behave in a professional manner

- Build relationships with school staff
- Adjust to teaching methods/educational philosophies
- Address inaccuracies/stereotypes about their culture diplomatically
- Receive a monthly stipend

What happens if my Intern gets sick?

Your Intern must have health insurance throughout the entire time they are in the US. Many Interns use a health provider offered by Amity. If your Intern gets sick or is in need of medical attention, they should go to a local doctor, medical/emergency center or the emergency room at a local hospital that takes their health insurance. The Intern may have to pay out-of-pocket to cover some initial expenses. They will need to find out the exact procedure in regards to how to use their insurance and should follow instructions provided by their health insurance carrier in order to receive reimbursement.

Can the Intern act as a babysitter?

Interns are expected to help out around the house, but should not be expected to act as a nanny or full-time babysitter. Intern should be considered temporary family members. Interns are not live-in babysitters and should not be expected to perform the duties appropriate to an au pair, such as childcare, house sitting or housework beyond that of other family members.

Can the Intern use the family car?

Interns are permitted to drive only if they hold a valid driver's license. Interns **may not** drive their Host Family's car, unless a prior **written agreement** has been signed between the parties, including insurance issues and potential damages.

Interns who choose to drive a vehicle in the US are solely responsible for their own actions. Neither Amity nor the Host School will pay for any damages.

If my Intern gets homesick or suffers from culture shock, how should I handle it?

Culture shock and homesickness are part of the natural process of international exchange and living and working in another country. The Intern has taken a big risk by agreeing to fulfill this assignment. As much as he/she may have looked forward to coming to the US, it usually does not take very long until the first excitement makes room for an experience called culture shock.

If your Intern shows some symptoms of culture shock, please remind him/her that this is normal for everyone living in another culture. The best remedy for culture shock is to keep busy, meet people, make friends, and get involved in school and local activities. What he/she will need most is a sense of belonging and deeper understanding of the culture. Participating in some activity or joining a group will give him/her this sense. In extremely rare cases, the Intern cannot overcome homesickness and adjust in a reasonable time. The only solution is then to return home to familiar surroundings.

Who can I contact if there is a problem?

Your Amity Program Counselor is always available to assist you. Program Counselors work directly with Interns, Host Schools and Host Families to facilitate the Intern's assignment. You will be able to reach your Program Counselor by phone or email.

Please keep in touch with your Amity Program Counselor and the Host School during your Intern's stay. Because of the Intern's different cultural background, you might need some assistance hosting him/her. Maintaining consistent communication is essential to productively addressing issues that may arise.

What can I do to make sure that our experience is successful?

Communicate, communicate, communicate!!! Clear, positive communication is the key to success. Please do not assume that your Intern understands your expectations from the beginning. Please make sure to have an open communication with your Intern.

-What should we do if my Intern asks us to help him/her to stay longer in the US?

Please know that the Amity Intern Teacher Program's main goal is for our Interns to share what they learned in the US with their communities in their home countries. All our Interns are required to return home at the end of their assignments. If you have any concerns or questions about this matter, please contact Amity immediately.

What are the benefits to hosting an Intern?

This experience will allow your family to ***develop a meaningful relationship with someone from another culture***. Interns will interact with your family, friends and neighbors, creating international friendship and cultural understanding on a local level. Your memories will last a lifetime!

It provides the opportunity for your family to ***learn about another country and culture*** through food, music and personal interaction with your Amity Intern.

By opening your home you will ***create an unforgettable experience for your Amity Intern*** allowing him or her to see the best that US culture has to offer.

The Intern program allows you to ***support your local school*** and help to create a rich, engaging foreign language program. By volunteering your home, you are allowing many students to benefit from having an Amity Intern.

Finally, hosting an Intern allows you to ***learn about yourself and your culture*** and see the US through the eyes of an international visitor, creating an invaluable educational experience for yourself and your family.