

Welcome

Welcome to Sevier County (Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, and Sevierville)!

On behalf of the Sevier International Students Outreach Program! (SISOP), we would like to welcome you to our beautiful Smoky Mountain community. You are on your way to have an exciting summer experience and we hope your stay will be pleasant, full of new memories and friendships to last a lifetime!

Your sponsor, community members, host employers and housing providers, all have an aim to provide a safe and hospitable environment and enhance the cultural experience component of your program. This is why SISOP was created. To ensure you have a smoother adjustment, we have put together some useful information that you may need during your stay. Please feel free to contact any or all of them. The SISOP website is rich in tips and information, please refer to it. In addition, we are including at-a-glance information in this brochure.

Resources - > <http://j1sisop.com/>

If you should encounter a problem while you are here, first CONTACT YOUR SPONSOR (their phone number is listed on your DS-2019 form).

BE SAFE AND ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

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Your Program



→ Check In With Your Sponsor

Once you have arrived, you must check-in with your sponsor within 10 days of arrival in the United States, confirming your housing address as well as the fact that you have arrived at your place of employment.

Attention: Failure to Check-in within 10 (ten) days from arrival will lead to your program being “Terminated”.



→ Maintain contact with your sponsor

You must maintain contact with your sponsor for the entire duration of your program and you must report any change in the housing and/or work address within 10 (ten) business days, or any issues experienced while in the program.

Attention: Failure to report such changes in a timely manner will lead to your program to your program being “Terminated”. ❶



→ Inform your sponsor of your intention to take a second/additional job

Your sponsor must vet (verify) and approve any secondary/additional job before you may start work. Sponsors will normally vet such jobs within 4 (four) days.

Attention: If you start working in ant unverified and unapproved job, your sponsor will “Terminate” your program.



→ Take your monthly evaluations

You must participate in all aspects of the program, including the monthly evaluation. As required by the US Department of State, your sponsor will send a monthly evaluation request and you are required to respond within 10 (ten) business days. Check with your sponsor about its own policy,

Attention: Failure to reach out to your sponsor in a timely manner will lead to your program to your program being “Terminated”.



→ Termination is a Sanction!

Once “Terminated”, you will be required to return home within 48 (forty-eight) hours. Such action may create legal difficulties that will affect your future travel, study or work in the United States at any time in the future.



Host Employer

Know YOUR job offer terms and ask questions!

Few reminders to help your adjustments to the American Workplace:

- Your employment is seasonal and temporary in nature
- You are equal to the American counterparts
- You are an employee at will
- Attitude is everything: be positive
- Be ON TIME
- Respect your boss and co-workers
- Be polite: Please and Thank You



→ Minimum Wage under Tennessee Law:

The state does have a promised wage law whereby the employers are responsible for paying to the employees the wages promised by the employer.

Note: The Federal Minimum Wage is \$7.25/hour

Need Help? Wage and Hour Division Knoxville: 1-865-545-4619

→ Frequency of Pay:

Weekly or bi-weekly

→ Overtime:

The state doesn't address overtime, however federal law applies to eligible employees. According to deferral law, employees must get overtime pay of at least 1.5 times the employee's regular rate of pay if they work more than 40 hours per week.

→ Breaks:

State law requires that each employee scheduled to work six (6) consecutive hours must have a thirty (30) minute meal or rest period, except in workplace environments that by their nature of business provides for ample opportunity to rest or take an appropriate break.

→ Taxes:

Holder of a J-1 status, you are categorized as A Non-Resident Alien Authorized to work and you do not need to pay all of the Income Taxes. Ref: IRS Publication 515.

You are required to pay Federal and State Income Taxes. You do not have to pay Social Security and Medicare (FICA) and Federal Unemployment (FUTA)

→ W4:

- ✓ Check only "single" marital status on Line 3 (even if you are married or divorced).
- ✓ Claim only one withholding allowance on Line 5.
- ✓ Write "Nonresident Alien" or "NRA" on the dotted line on Line 6
- ✓ Do not claim "Exempt" withholding status on Line 7.

Housing

You must have housing arrangements prior to arrival.

Hotel/Motels:

Hotels and motels (less luxurious than hotels) range in price, from economical to deluxe. Please note that sometimes economical hotels and motels are not located in safe areas.

- Always use a central location.
- Some include meals or they have restaurants located on property or nearby.
- Extended Stay Hotels are recommended as they offer long-term deals.
- Rooms are typically rented weekly
- Usually 1 to 4 people per room
- Limited kitchen facilities
- Limited housekeeping service
- Damage deposit and late fees are accounted for

Housing provided by your employer:

Most employers will offer or arrange housing at an affordable cost, in a safe area. On the job offer, they will provide specific details about the living accommodations.

- Rented weekly or monthly per person
- Basic furnished
- Typically includes a full kitchen and bathroom
- Usually does not have laundry machine
- No housekeeping service
- Damage deposits and late fees are accounted for
- Utilities may not be included

When Searching for Housing:

You should consider the following crucial aspects of finding housing:

- **Budget** – How much I can afford to pay, considering my income, deducting all the expected expenses?
- **Lease** – What is the length? If you have questions about the lease, you can call the city's Office of Landlord-tenant Affairs.
- **Payment schedule** – Is deposit needed? When and how much? When is the rent due?
- **Utilities** (*heat, electricity, water, cooking gas, cable, Internet, etc.*) – Are utilities included in the rent? If so, which?
- **Safety of the place and neighborhood** – Google Earth/Maps
- Proximity to work, stores, public transportation, recreation facilities, etc.
- Furnished or unfurnished

Housing Tips to avoid Fraud

Tips to avoid problems with your housing:

- Before making any commitment, ask to see the property you wish to rent.
- Check for existing damages or problems and make a list of these items. If you decide to rent the property, discuss your list of problems and damages with the rental manager.
- Carefully read and listen to all landlord terms and rules. After signing and paying a deposit, you are expected to honor your agreement. Follow all rules.
- Pay your rent on time and ensure that you always get a receipt for money you have paid. Not paying your rent on time could result in you not getting your deposit refunded. You can also be evicted!
- Do not damage your apartment, appliances or furniture. Damaging the apartment could result in you not getting your deposit refunded. You can also be evicted!
- Do not overcrowd your apartment with extra students. This is usually a violation of city building and fire codes. Overcrowding could result in you not getting your deposit refunded. You can also be evicted!
- Do not move out without first informing your landlord
- Damaging the apartment, overcrowding, and not paying your rent on time could result in you not getting your deposit refunded. You can also be evicted!
- If you are having a problem with your rental, report any housing issues to their sponsor



Information about housing codes can be found at the following link http://www.nchh.org/Portals/0/Contents/HH_Codes_TN_1-15-08.pdf



Safety comes FIRST!

Keep Your Documents Safe

- NEVER give your passport or documents to anyone to keep
- Make a copy of your passport and documents and keep them in a safe place
- Report your lost/stolen documents immediately



Pedestrian Safety

- Cross the street only at market crosswalks
- Hitchhiking is prohibited in the US. It is VERY dangerous, NEVER do it



Hot Weather

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Replace salt and minerals (sport beverages)
- Wear appropriate clothing and use sunscreen
- Schedule activities accordingly and pace yourself



Bike Safety

- Wear a properly fitting helmet and stay visible at all times (bright colors)
- Do not wear earphones, talk on the phone or text message while biking
- Inflate tires properly and check the brakes before riding
- Make your bike has rear reflectors and headlight.
- Obey all traffic laws, signs, signals and lane markings, which are the same as the traffics laws for drivers of motor vehicles.
 - Bikes and cars drive on the right side of the road
 - Never ride against the traffic
 - Do not turn left from the right lane
- Look, scan for traffic, signal and look again before lane changes or at road crossings. Use hand signals and establish eye contact with the drivers.
- Choose the best way to turn left. There are two choices: (1) Like an automobile: Signal to move into the left turn lane and then turn left. (2) Like a pedestrian: Ride straight to the far side crosswalk. Walk your bike across
- Stop and look in all directions before entering a street
- Keep both hands ready to brake. You may not stop in time if you brake one-handed. Always allow extra distance for stopping in the rain
- Expect the unexpected (for example, cars exiting driveways, cars turning during red light, road hazards such as a debris, sand, ice etc.)
- Never ride your bike on high speed limit roads (50 miles per hour or higher). Find alternate routes on Google Map



For life threatening emergencies in the United States, please always call **911 (nine-one-one)**

You can **TRUST the police officers** in the United States. They are public servants and their job is to maintain law and order and to assist citizens and visitors in any difficult situation. **DO NOT HESITATE** to ask them for help.



Nations4Christ is a global network of churches and volunteers from Sevier County, Oak Ridge, and Knoxville and all over the United States and the Globe.

→ **Arrival and Orientation Pick-up**

Pick-up Locations: airport and bus station

Pick-up Time: 12pm (noon) until evening

Instructions: Participants must reach out for contact with minimum a week prior to arrival.

Contact Name: Alexei Kotchan

Contact Email: russia4christ@yahoo.com

Contact Skype: alexei.kotchan

Contact Phone: 1-865-232-2904

Languages Available: English and Russian

→ **Facebook Group with Opportunities**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/882013301925303>

→ **Blog**

<https://studentcenterpf.wordpress.com/>

→ **Webpage**

www.setalight.org

→ **International Student Center (staffed by volunteers)**

Location: *First Baptist Church* - 3290 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN 37863

Opening Days and Hours: Monday to Friday, 12pm-4pm

Facilities: Internet-capable computers, free WIFI, laundry and lounge

Important Calendar of Free Events:

JUNE – every Wednesday

- SSA Office Trips to Knoxville: every Wednesday
- Shopping Trips to the Mall: every Wednesday
- Free Buffet Style Dinner: Oak Ridge Church, every Wednesday

JULY – every Wednesday

- Group field trips, picnics, shopping tours and much more: every Wednesday

Sponsors

PLATINUM LEVEL



CSB International, Inc.

☎ 1-877-669-0717

✉ support@csb-usa.com

www.csb-usa.com

SILVER LEVEL

COLLIER RESTAURANT GROUP

Collier Restaurant Group

473 Old Douglas Dam Road

Sevierville TN, 37876

☎ 865-774-8004

www.collierrestaurantgroup.com

BRONZE LEVEL



CCI Greenheart

☎ (non-emergency): 1-866-684-9675

✉ workprogram@ccigreenheart.org

www.ccigreenheart.org

WISE Foundation

☎ 1-888-242-7456

✉ worktravel@wisefoundation.com

www.wisefoundation.com

