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# U.S. Department of State

## Summer Work Travel (SWT) Exchange Program

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Providing in-depth U.S. cultural exposure for future international leaders, and a window to the world for Americans

### Key program elements

- International students live, work, and travel in the U.S. during their home university summer breaks, for no more than 4 months.
- Students gain in-depth exposure to American culture and society, and underwrite program and travel costs, through temporary, seasonal employment, often in resort areas.
- Participants come from **100+ countries, including those important to U.S. national security like Brazil, China, Turkey, and Russia.**
- **Over the past 20 years, 1 million+ future leaders** have experienced American culture and values through SWT.
- **90+% percent of participants report a more positive opinion of the U.S.** following their programs (according to sponsor surveys).

### Facilitating a 360° cultural exchange

#### *In-depth exposure to the U.S. for international students*

SWT enables international students to learn about American culture by living in the U.S. and interacting with Americans on a daily basis. In most cases, student participants live and work in a single location for up to four months. As a result, SWT participants have a deeper, more substantial exposure to the U.S. than typical tourist visitors.

#### *A window to the world for Americans*

SWT allows Americans (co-workers, customers, and hosts) to learn about other peoples and cultures, thereby fostering mutual respect and understanding. A key purpose of the SWT program is to encourage meaningful interactions between visiting students and Americans.

#### *An exchange of language, culture, and business practices*

Work is an integral part of the cultural experience. International students learn about American business practices and work culture, interact with American co-workers and customers, improve their English language skills, and in the process earn money to help defray the cost of their participation. Outside of their work hours, students are encouraged to further learn about American culture by getting involved in their communities, as well as traveling and sightseeing, to gain a broader cultural understanding of the U.S., its customs, and its values.



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### **Supporting U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities**

SWT participants take home positive impressions of the U.S. and as university students, will move into a broad range of professions in their home countries. SWT creates a foundation for positive relationships with the next generation of leaders around the world, equipping them not only with favorable impressions of the U.S., but also increased self-confidence and improved English skills that will help them succeed as professionals. Over time, program alumni contribute to a reservoir of bilateral goodwill that will support U.S. interests in the future.

### **Helping American businesses succeed during peak seasonal times**

The SWT program engages American businesses as host employers. This collaboration helps these businesses—many of them small and family-operated—to fulfill short term, high volume needs during peak business seasons. These needs might otherwise remain unmet, resulting in decreased revenue for American businesses and a long term, negative economic impact on the communities in which they operate.

### **Protecting SWT participants and American workers**

SWT sponsor organizations are designated by the Department of State, which regularly monitors and makes adjustments to the regulations for the SWT program. The Alliance and its members support strong SWT regulations and the Department's on-going efforts to strengthen the program, and protect the interests of both SWT students and American workers:

- All SWT jobs must be entry-level, temporary in nature, and may not displace American workers.
- SWT host employers must pay international students the same wages as similarly situated American colleagues. The students are afforded a variety of additional protections, including the right to a healthy and safe workplace, the right not to be discriminated or retaliated against, and coverage under applicable state laws, among many other legal rights.
- All jobs must be fully vetted as suitable by program sponsors before students begin work. Jobs must provide international students contact with Americans, facilitate language learning, and offer cultural exchange opportunities.
- Sponsors must actively encourage and facilitate additional cultural exchange opportunities for participants, beyond the cultural exchange that occurs daily in the workplace.
- Sponsors are required to maintain monthly contact with each student, as well as provide 24/7 toll-free help lines.
- Sponsors actively protect the health, safety, and welfare of program participants, and take seriously their role facilitating experiences that will improve the image and influence of the United States abroad.