

## Fact Sheet: Presidential Proclamation Suspending Immigration

On April 22, the White House issued a proclamation suspending some immigrant visas for 60 days over concerns about the potential impact on the labor market. We are concerned that Section 6 of the proclamation directs an Administration review of nonimmigrant programs within 30 days that broadly seeks to restrain visas that may affect the United States economy. The U.S. Department of State oversees many educational and cultural exchange programs under the J-1 visa, which have a significant economic benefit to the United States. Among these programs, the Exchange Visitor Program allows people from around the world to come to the U.S. and offset the cost of their cultural exchange through a work placement, regulated by the U.S. Department of State. The Exchange Visitor Program is an important cultural exchange program, not a work program, and should not be included in any future executive action suspending employment-based immigration.

**Exchange programs should restart in alignment with the White House's phased guidelines for "Opening Up America Again."** We support the U.S. Department of State taking into consideration the situation on the ground in the United States and abroad when it decides how to enable international exchange programs. Decisions about travel from countries abroad and the viability of programs here in the United States should continue to be tied to how those respective areas are dealing with COVID-19.

**The Exchange Visitor Program is a cultural exchange program.** On average, 88% of Exchange Visitor Program participants cite the cultural exchange component, not the work component, as the primary factor in taking part in the program.\* Exchange visitors develop a more positive view of the United States, maintain friendships here for years to come, and often come back for visits. As states and localities decide how they will begin reopening their economies, reestablishing people-to-people diplomacy should be part of that effort for communities and host organizations.

**The Exchange Visitor Program supports United States national security interests.** Many international exchange participants become community, business, and political leaders when they return home. 75% of cultural exchange participants, on average, developed a more positive opinion of the U.S. in general after their program experience.\* Their understanding and affinity for the United States supports our diplomatic efforts worldwide, which is especially important during challenging times.

**Cultural exchange programs positively contribute to the United States economy.** Exchange Visitor Program participants support year-round American jobs in local communities. Participants also help support and create American jobs by enabling businesses to operate at full capacity. These programs are important to American businesses as many host employers have unique needs, such as being located in rural, low population areas. Cultural exchange programs such as Camp Counselor, Intern and Trainee, and Summer Work Travel combined contribute more than \$1.2 billion to the economy each year.\*

**The Exchange Visitor Program addresses unique needs in the United States.** Au pairs fill a unique need in the United States for families that are seeking live-in support and cultural enrichment simultaneously. Intern and Trainee participants experience an individualized training and cultural exposure, while increasing their career readiness. Camp Counselor and Summer Work Travel positions are typically in locations that have challenges, such as a limited local workforce for entry-level positions. By regulation, these positions do not displace American workers and must work side-by-side with Americans.

*\*Please see <https://www.alliance-exchange.org/info-and-issues/> for EurekaFacts reports and fact sheets on Camp Counselor, Intern/Trainee, and Summer Work Travel programs.*