

Au Pair Program

2020 Review Report



This study was completed in compliance with the International Quality Standard ISO 20252 for market, public opinion and social research, to which EurekaFacts is certified.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Exchange Visitor Program

The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act) was passed in 1961 to promote “mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange” to ultimately promote international cooperation and peaceful relations.¹

To fulfill this mission, the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) created the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), a non-immigrant visa program for work-based and study-based cultural exchange programs.² The EVP consists of 15 categories of J-1 visa exchange programs and provides opportunities to over 300,000 international visitors each year.² In the Exchange Visitor program, there are 13 private-sector exchange categories, of which the au pair program is one. There are also two categories that are publicly funded: International Visitors and Government Visitors. The U.S. State Department notes that it “designates at least 1,500 for-profit, non-profit, or federal, state, and local government entities to conduct the 13 private-sector programs. Exchange visitors on private sector programs may study, teach, research, share their specialized skills, or receive on-the-job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.”²

1.2 Overview of the Au Pair Exchange Visitor Program

For more than 30 years, the au pair program has connected U.S. families with young adults who provide child care services for U.S. host families all while continuing their post-secondary education and experiencing life in the United States.³ This is a mid-size public diplomacy program, hosting 21,551 au pairs in 2019.⁴ This puts it on par with the size of the camp counselor, intern, and secondary student programs.

Au pair program participants live with their host family, providing in-home childcare while taking courses at an accredited U.S. post-secondary institution. Through this cultural

¹ Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act, 22 U.S.C. §2451 (1961). [PDF FILE]. Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/fulbrighthaysact.pdf>

² U.S. Department of State/Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. (2019). *Exchange Visitor Program* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Exchange-Visitor-Program-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

³ Alliance for Internal Exchange. *U.S. Department of State Au Pair Exchange Program* (2020). [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.alliance-exchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AuPair_FactSheet.pdf

⁴ U.S. Department of State/Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. (2019). *Au Pair Category*. [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://j1visa.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Au-Pair-Flyer-2019.pdf>

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immersion, au pairs gain exposure to American culture, society, and families. Au pairs pay their own program fees and other required costs to come to the United States. After being accepted into the program, au pairs are matched with host families. Au pairs generally live with their host families for 12 months, but they have the option to extend their stay in the U.S. by six, nine, or 12 months.⁵

Au pairs improve their English skills, learn about typical American family dynamics, gain career and life skills, and experience daily life in the United States. Outside of their childcare duties, au pairs spend time on their educational studies and participate in cultural activities in their communities. These are additional avenues where au pairs meet American students, mentors, and community members and form life-long relationships with those in the U.S. Host families also provide cultural enrichment by engaging au pairs in family activities, travel, vacations, and exploration of destination sites (e.g., museums, parks, entertainment venues) to gain a broader cultural understanding of American people and customs.

Host families who join the program are often looking for an alternative childcare solution that meets their family's situation, needs, and budget. With the increased demand for child care services and desire for more personalized care, American families turn to au pairs as a flexible and affordable option that has additional benefits for their children not found in traditional childcare. Parents are able to raise their children as part of an "international family" by forming deep and long-lasting relationships with their au pair, learning and improving their foreign language skills, and gaining life-long skills for inter-cultural relationships and interactions through cultural exposure.⁵

As a result, au pairs and host families position themselves to have desirable skills in a global economy and society. Multiple language skills, leadership and cooperation abilities, and an aptitude for communication, problem solving, and compassion are attributes fostered in all parties. Together, au pairs and host families are invaluable components to international exchange and fostering international peace.

⁵ Alliance for Internal Exchange. *U.S. Department of State Au Pair Exchange Program* (2020). [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.alliance-exchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AuPair_FactSheet.pdf

1.3 *Au Pair Program Operation and Relationship Between Parties*

There are many entities involved in operating, overseeing, and executing the au pair program. The State Department provides the overarching regulations to protect au pairs and host families and further public diplomacy objectives. The comprehensive federal regulations governing the au pair program are contained in 22 CFR 62.31.⁶

Apart from ECA⁷, there are four main parties that compose the au pair program:

- **Sponsor Organizations:** U.S. organizations approved by the State Department to manage the federal au pair program.
- **Participants:** International young adults who come to the U.S. to participate as an au pair for 12 – 24 months at a time.
- **Host Families:** U.S. families with children under 18 who host au pairs.
- **Local Counselor/Program Coordinator:** A local representative lives within one hour of host families and conducts the initial orientation and all other regulatory required check-ins with the household.

The au pair program is a public-private partnership between designated sponsors and the Private Sector Programs of the State Department. There are currently 15 State Department-designated au pair sponsor organizations.⁸ Au pairs and host families pay for the program, and their fees fund sponsor costs for providing oversight and regulatory compliance. While temporarily residing in the U.S., the location of each au pair is stored and monitored in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database. The SEVIS fee is privately funded.

⁶ Electronic Code of Federal Regulations: Part 62 – Exchange Visitor Program. August 25, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=1bc531bf257789e45b3049bff8b50d64&r=PART&n=22y1.0.1.7.35#se22.1.62_131

⁷ The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State has a mission to increase mutual understanding between peoples of the United States and other nations by means of educational and cultural exchange that facilitate development of peaceful relations.

⁸ U.S. Department of State/Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. (2020). *Designated Sponsor Organizations*. Retrieved from <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/sponsor-search/?program=Au%20Pair>

1.4 *Research Objectives*

The Alliance for the International Exchange commissioned EurekaFacts to conduct primary research on the au pair program. EurekaFacts is an independent research organization that specializes in social science and policy research, with a background in providing research to international exchange organizations.

The research tasks included:

- Review of the history, current state, and common criticisms of the au pair program
- Primary research with au pair alumni through a survey
- Primary research with host families participating in the program through a survey and follow-up in-depth interviews
- Economic analysis of the reported spending of au pairs and host families

The primary research objectives and goals of this study were to:

- Determine the extent to which the program achieves its public diplomacy goals with a focus on alumni attitudes of the U.S. and relationships with those in the U.S. as well as impact of alumni on host family cultural exposure and understanding.
- Understand au pair motivations for joining the program and evaluate their overall experience with host families and in the U.S., satisfaction with the program, and educational and cultural exchange opportunities.
- Review the short-term and long-term benefits au pairs receive from their participation in the program, such as cultural exposure, educational advancement, personal and professional growth, and relationships and connections.
- Gather insight on the decision-making process of host families when determining to pursue the au pair program and satisfaction with overall program process and participation.
- Evaluate the benefits host families gain through the program, including the cultural exposure for themselves and their children, language opportunities and impact on work/life balance and relationships. Additionally, understand any potential barriers or challenges.
- Conduct a comparative analysis on key metrics between au pair alumni and host family attitudes, preferences and reported experiences
- Provide an economic analysis of the impact that all au pair program participants have on the U.S. economy. Analysis derived from the overall cost host families pay for an au

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pair's living and lifestyle accommodations and through measures of compensation/wages and spending patterns of alumni while in the U.S.

- Investigate criticisms leveraged against au pair programs including, in part; the extent of government oversight, protections against abuse or threatening situations, transparent recruitment fees, below federal minimum wage compensation.

2. Executive Summary

The findings presented in this report are based on:

- A document review and environmental scan of the U.S. State Department's Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) J-1 Visa Au Pair Program to conduct a multi-method study of au pair alumni and host family participants.
- Analysis of surveys and in-depth interviews on program impact, characteristics of international cultural exchange, relationship building, personal and career development, impact on children or family life, and economic growth.
- Web-based surveys of N=10,881 au pair alumni and N=6,452 host family representatives conducted simultaneously, April 15, 2020 – May 15, 2020. The surveys include host families living in the United States and au pair alumni recruited worldwide who participated in the J-1 Visa Au Pair Program within the last five years, representing a broad demographic cross-section of the host and au pair populations.
- A U.S. economic impact analysis calculated from average monthly expenditures from au pair and host family self-reported survey data over a four-year period of program performance (2016-2019). Domestic economic impact based on spending data for au pairs and host families was used to calculate average annual spending on a per au pair and per host family basis. Per capita findings were then extrapolated to the overall U.S. economy based on estimates of nationwide au pair and host family program participation.

This study presents an impact assessment of the Exchange Visitor Au Pair program from the perspectives of participating au pairs and host families based on representative survey and in-depth interview data from over 16,000 alumni and parents. The report reveals the breadth and depth of cultural exchange experienced and explored by au pairs and their U.S. host families, the life-long relationships established between them, and ways in which aspects of the au pair program further goals of U.S. public diplomacy. Overwhelmingly, the findings demonstrate positive program outcomes in the form of benefits for families and au pairs through their opportunities for personal and professional growth, family enrichment, and child development, while strengthening the U.S. image, local economies and views of Americans in the process.

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The findings from these surveys and in-depth interviews reinforce the success of the au pair program experience, goals and structure. Participants report high levels of overall satisfaction with the program, including 84% among au pairs and 85% among host families. From an overall program perspective, au pairs report having very positive experiences with their host families, sponsor organizations, and local program coordinators. Fully, nine-in-ten au pairs say that they recommend the program to friends and families.

A cornerstone of the program, the international cultural exchange between au pair and host family, is shared and reciprocated between the two parties as life-long relationships are forged. Near universally, host families share U.S. cultural activities with their au pairs (98%). Likewise, host families experience a wide spectrum of enriching cultural activities shared by au pairs from their native countries. The most common U.S. activities include shared celebration of American holidays (94%), exchange of stories (87%), and participating in outdoor activities (86%). Au pairs most commonly share food and cooking (88%), stories (85%), and traditions (80%) from their cultures. The international exchange program is allowing American families and their au pair guests to have new intercultural experiences. For example, that vast majority of au pairs describe the activities that they participate in with their host families as different from home, including community celebrations (82%), holidays (72%), travel destinations (71%), and volunteer activities (58%).

Experiences like these explain in part how the program's success helps to promote itself. Close to half of au pair alumni say that they originally learned about the program through friends or family. Among au pairs, the overwhelming majority say that they would recommend being a U.S. au pair to a friend.

For au pairs, the vast majority find and experience a wide range of opportunities for personal and professional growth, in part, because of their motivations to participate in the Au Pair J-1 Visa Program. Many say they initially saw the program as a very important opportunity to experience daily life in a different culture (77%), to improve English language skills (69%) or to interact with people from a different culture (63%). From the experience, more than eight-in-ten au pair alumni say that the program supported their career and educational growth and nearly all say they are applying the skills they learned from the program to their professional ambitions.

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For host families, the overwhelming majority have a strong experience integrating their au pair into the family setting and with communicating with their au pair (85% and 84%, respectively). For their children and the childcare provided, most families establish strong relationships with their au pairs and as many as eight-in-ten see the benefit of the relationship that develops between their children and their au pair. Three quarters of families say that they have benefited from building life-long relationships between themselves and their au pairs.

There is an overall positive impact for U.S. public diplomacy established through the bonds of long-lasting intercultural relationships between au pairs and their families. For au pairs, 85% say that they have established strong personal relationships with their host families and 86% say that they intend to keep them. The same is true of American friendships made during their stay. Most au pairs say that when they arrived in the U.S. they felt welcomed into their host family and more than half say that they are made to literally feel like a member of the family.

The study also finds visible evidence that the au pair program delivers on public diplomacy. Overwhelmingly, host families develop a better understanding of people from different nations. For example, two-thirds or more see the benefits of creating an American experience for young adult au pairs to bring home to their countries (71%). They also see the benefits of interactions with those from another country (67%) and encouraging inter-cultural engagement for their children (65%). These ambitions are realized in the form of nine-in-ten host families who say that they have developed an understanding of their au pair's home country and are better able to interact with people from other nations.

Overall, the au pair program helps to impart positive attitudes towards the U.S. and American culture. Most au pairs say that they enter the program with widely favorable attitudes towards the U.S. (88%) and of Americans (83%). Those views are reinforced and become more positive with the au pair program experience. Most au pair alumni say that they now have a more positive view of the U.S. (63%), the American people (66%), and of American culture (65%). Nearly all au pairs (94%) say that they are likely or very likely to return to the U.S. in the future.

3. Key Findings

Key Findings and Takeaways

The following is a summary of the major survey and interview findings presented in order of the detailed findings section for the au pair audience (section 6) and host family audience (section 8). Key takeaways from each sub-section are supported with selective percentages from the surveys. See the full discussion of the detailed findings for the complete analysis.

3.1 *Ratings of the Au Pair Program Experience and Satisfaction Scores*

- **Finding one: The vast majority of au pair alumni express satisfaction with their overall experience in the au pair program and would recommend the program to their friends and other potential participants.**
 - More than eight-in-ten (84%) au pairs say they are satisfied with their overall experience in the program, including 48% who are “extremely satisfied”. Likewise, overwhelming majorities of au pairs say that specific aspects of the program are “good” or “very good”, including; the applications process (95%), program orientation and training (84%), and the ability to build close personal connections to their host families (83%).
 - The majority of au pair alumni report having a positive experience interacting with their host families (83%), sponsor organizations (70%), and local coordinators (68%) during their time in the program.
 - Fully, 87% of au pairs say that they would recommend the program to a friend, including 60% who are “very likely” to endorse the program to others.

3.2 *Au Pair Experience in the Host Family Home*

- **Finding two: Most au pairs have a strong positive experience in the host family home.**
 - A solid majority of au pairs characterize the home setting as welcoming or “comfortable” (70%) and half (51%) say that they are made to feel literally like a member of the family.
 - Speaking to the strengths of the au pair recruitment process, and the orientation and training they receive, just one-in-four au pairs (23%) say that they need an “adjustment period” living with a host family.

3.3 *Motivations to Participate in the Au Pair Program*

- **Finding three: Au pairs are highly motivated to participate in the J-1 visa program, recognizing “very important” opportunities for cultural exchange, personal and professional growth.**
 - Two-thirds or more of au pairs see the program as providing “very important” opportunities for them to “gain new or improved personal skills” (77%), to

experience daily life in a different culture” (73%), to improve their English skills (69%), or to learn and interact with people from a different culture than their own (63%). Majorities see it as “very important” to gain new or improve professional skills (58%). Earning money is the least important motivation for participating in the program; just 25% it was “very important” to their decision.

- **Finding four: Past participants, both au pair and host families, widely promote the program through word of mouth and au pairs are highly likely to seek out the program independently.**
 - Four-in-ten (42%) au pairs say that they learned about the program from friends and family and another 19% learned from a former au pair. Close to half of au pairs sought out the program with an independent search online (46%).

3.4 Benefits Received Through Participation in the Au Pair Program

- **Finding five: Au pairs at all language skill levels make great strides in acquiring English language skills while participating in the program.**
 - Overall, eight-in-ten au pairs say that their understanding of the English language (79%) and speaking ability (80%) in the English language improved “a lot” from before they entered the program.
 - Au pairs at all language skill levels say they improved “a lot”, and especially among those arriving with basic skill level: 87% improved “a lot” in understanding, 80% in speaking, 60% in reading and 48% in writing.
- **Finding six: The overwhelming majority of au pairs gain experiences in the program to support their personal career and educational goals. Moreover, nearly all are able to put those skills to work in one or more professional sectors.**
 - More than eight-in-ten (84%) au pairs say that the program supports their career and educational goals and growth. Similarly, 80% say that the program provided practical work experience, including 38% who benefited a “great deal”.
 - Almost all (96%) au pairs say that they are applying the skills and experience they acquired through the program to their professional pursuits: 68% to the education sector, 50% to the childcare profession or industry, 42% to business, and another 20% to careers in cultural exchange.
- **Finding seven: The au pair program imparts a wide spectrum of life skills and opportunities for personal development to participants.**
 - Topping the list of skills, about eight-in-ten au pairs say that they developed greater confidence in communicating with others (83%) and learned to multi-task (79%). About half say that they learned to prioritize objectives or manage their finances (53% each) and half (50%) acquired leadership skills.

3.5 *Public Diplomacy: Au pair views of U.S., Americans and cultural experiences*

- **Finding eight: Au pairs view the U.S. and Americans very favorably. These affinities grow during their time in the program.**
 - When entering the program au pairs have widely favorable views of the U.S. (88%) and of Americans (83%). Those views change for the positive when it comes to assessing their experience with “the American people” (66% “more” or “much more” positive), “American culture” (65%), and the “U.S. in general” (63%).
 - Views of the American political system are mixed. The majority (58%) of au pairs say their views of the “American political system” during their stay are “about the same” (32%) or grew more positive (26%) compared with their initial impression.
- **Finding nine: Au pairs are introduced to a wide spectrum of American cultural activities and share many cultural activities from their native country with their host family and friends.**
 - Most au pairs (54%) participate in seven or more cultural activities while participating in the program, including American holidays (91%) and outdoor recreational activities (85%).
 - Au pairs see great novelty in the activities shared with them. Many activities are different from their native country, including community celebrations (82%), holidays (72%), travel destinations (71%), and volunteer activities (58%).
 - The cultural exchange between au pairs and host families is a reciprocal relationship. Most au pairs share food (89%), stories (80%) and cultural gifts (74%) with their host families and their friends. Overwhelming majorities of host families share these same activities in return.

3.6 *Au Pairs Establishing and Maintaining Relationships*

Finding ten: The majority of au pairs build lasting relationships with host families, fellow au pairs, and American friends.

- Au pairs build and maintain connections to a wide variety of people during their program. Most build relationships and maintain them with fellow au pairs (89% establish the relationship and 98% of those who establish relationships keep them), with host families (85% establish and 86% keep), and with American friends (67% establish and 93% keep).
- Nearly all au pairs (94%) say that they are likely to return to the U.S., including 79% who say they are “very likely” to do so.

3.7 Host Family Ratings of the Program Experience and Satisfaction Scores

- **Finding eleven: The vast majority of host families express great satisfaction with their experience hosting in the au pair program.**
 - More than eight-in-ten (85%) host families say that they are satisfied with their overall experience with the au pair program, including a majority (57%) who are “extremely satisfied”.
 - Likewise, 86% of host families say that they are very or somewhat likely to recommend the program to friends or family, including 65% who are “very likely” to do so.
 - Specifically, host families are highly satisfied with the au pairs themselves. Nine-in-ten host families report a “good” or “very good” experience establishing personal connections with their au pair and a “good” or “very good” experience with the childcare that their au pair provides (91% each).
 - Overwhelmingly, the experience of integrating au pairs into the family setting (85%), communicating with au pairs (84%) and changes to their finances for operating the household (68%) are excellent or good according to host families.

3.8 Host Family Motivations to Participate in the Au Pair Program

- **Finding twelve: Host family participation in the au pair program is most motivated by the opportunity for live-in childcare, the ability to develop a deeper level of trust with their childcare provider and for their family to engage in cultural exchange.**
 - Most (78%) say the program is an important opportunity for their family to engage in cultural exchange, including 42% who say this is “very important”. Two-thirds of host families see the program as a “very important” opportunity for them to have live-in childcare (68%) and to build deeper trust with a childcare provider (67%).

3.9 Host Family Benefits Received Through Participation in the Au Pair Program

- **Finding thirteen: The vast majority of host families see great benefits of the additional help with childcare as part of the program, while also highly valuing the au pair – family relationship, fostering a life-time friendship, and mentoring their au pairs.**
 - Fully, nine-in-ten (90%) of host families feel that they benefit from the additional help in caring for their children.
 - Most host families say they have established strong and beneficial relationships from the program. Fully, 82% recognize the benefit of the relationship between their children and the au pair and 74% of host families have benefited by fostering life-long relationships between their family and the au pair.

- **Finding fourteen: The cultural exchange of the au pair program is seen as highly beneficial among host families.**
 - Two-thirds recognize the benefit of interacting with individuals from other countries (67%), promoting inter-cultural engagement for their children (65%), developing an appreciation for other cultures (62%) and providing experiences for young people to carry home to their native country (71%).
 - About nine-in-ten host families now say that they are able to interact with people from other countries (92%) and about as many say they have developed a better understanding of their au pair's culture (88%).
- **Finding fifteen: The au pair program is seen as critical to host families and very difficult to go without.**
 - If the program were not available, seven-in-ten host families (71%) say that they would be adversely affected, including 55% who say "a great deal".
 - Most say it would be difficult to replace the flexibility that the program grants their family (77%), the trust and bond built with the au pair as caretaker in their home (66%), and access to cultural exposure and other customs (52%). That said, host families and au pairs make the most of their cultural exchange experience. Nearly all host families (98%) share cultural activities with their au pairs and overwhelmingly the au pairs reciprocate that exchange: 89% share foods, 80% stories and 74% cultural gifts from their home country.
- **Finding sixteen: Most host families say they would have difficulty locating suitable childcare for their kids without the au pair program and that they may have to pay more for childcare.**
 - Two-thirds say that they would likely not be able to find suitable care for their children (67%) and most would miss out on intercultural relationships (57%).
 - Fully, 84% of host families say that if the au pair program were not available to them, they would likely spend more money on childcare elsewhere, including 66% who say this is "extremely likely". They acknowledge those alternatives would or may not include the unique intercultural relationships at the center of the au pair program.
- **Finding seventeen: If the au pair program were not available many host families would face challenges for their career and lose quality time with family.**
 - More than one-third of host families (38%) say that they may need to change or stop their career if the au pair program were not available to them.
 - Most (71%) say they would not be able to spend quality time alone with their spouse if the au pair program were not an option for them.

3.10 Cultural Exchange is a reciprocal part of host and au pair relationship

- **Finding eighteen: Host families share and experience a wide spectrum of enriching cultural activities with their au pairs**
 - Nearly all (98%) host families participate in cultural activities with their au pairs. The most commonly shared U.S. activities are American holidays (94%), exchanging stories (87%), engaging in outdoor recreation (86%) or visiting sites or traveling (82% each).
 - As part of the cultural exchange they engage in, host families say that their au pairs share food and cuisine from their home country (88%), stories (85%), traditions (80%), and cultural gifts (75%).

4. Policy Research Review: Criticism of the Au Pair Program

The J-1 Visa Au Pair Program has received criticism from organizations claiming that the program falsely represents itself to prospective au pairs and host families, while failing to fulfill its primary mission of furthering public diplomacy through immersive cultural exchange, creating opportunities for educational and professional growth. This new report, based on a rigorous study design and data collection effort including over 16,000 participants in the au pair and host family communities, finds conclusively that these criticisms are unfounded. By contrast, au pairs and host families express overwhelmingly positive sentiment about the program, opportunities for cultural exchange and for educational growth. Much like the alarmist findings from critics, the data sources and research methods they use do not stand up to close examination.

For example, in 2018, the International Labor Recruitment Working Group⁹ published a report on the J-1 Visa Au Pair Program, consisting of data from only 16 interviews with current and former au pairs from just three east coast U.S. metro areas (Washington, DC; Boston, MA; and New York, NY metropolitan areas). The participants were hand-picked by affiliated labor organizations seeking insights from aggrieved au pairs.

Similarly, the work of the American University College of Law in a series of articles by Professor Janie Chuang¹⁰, question the legitimacy of the cultural exchange element of the program and instead contend the program is a government initiative to provide low-cost childcare. Yet, Professor Chuang provides no empirical evidence to support these claims. Conversely, most of the assertions are based on analysis of interviews with one program participant and argue that changes to U.S. labor laws for domestic workers might have changed the outcome for this singular participant. Counter to the claims of Chuang and others, the U.S. Congress has and continues to affirm that the au pair program is centered on cultural exchange.

These non-objective and non-empirical critiques of the au pair program, that are presented as quantifiable and representative research, introduce bias into the policy conversation by ignoring the regulatory framework in place to monitor and protect program participants. Moreover, these critical reports, leveraging very little supporting data from program participants, elevate the opinions of those whose experiences are the exception, and are at

⁹ International Labor Recruitment Working Group. (2013). The U.S. Au Pair Program: Labor Exploitation and the Myth of Cultural Exchange. *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 36 (2), 270.

¹⁰ Chuang, J. (2013). The U.S. Au Pair Program: Labor Exploitation and the Myth of Cultural Exchange. *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 36 (2), 270.

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odds with the vast majority of au pair experiences.

By contrast, according to the latest survey – that includes data from a representative cross-section of au pairs participating nationwide over the last five years – more than 80% of au pairs say that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in the program and almost nine-in-ten (87%) say that they would recommend the program to a friend. The vast majority of au pairs feel “welcomed” or “comfortable” in their host family homes and more than three-quarters have educational opportunities that improve their English language skills.

In their own words: From over 10,000 interviews with alumni participants, au pairs were asked ... Based on your experience in the au pair program, what is some advice you would give someone who is considering becoming an au pair?

*“I believe the **program can help everyone** who really wants to have an overwhelming experience and **improve their English** as well. I thought I knew English until I got there, the immersion of the program made you develop your speech and hearing with an extraordinary quality. My experience was incredible, my **host family is part of my real family today** and I will always feel part of that piece of America.” -Female, 30, au pair for 2 years*

*“The **program is excellent**. [It] is a great **opportunity to grow as a person and as a professional**. If you are disciplined, you will improve your level of English. Also, if you choose the right host family, you will have a second real family for the rest of your life.” -Female, 25, au pair for 1 year*

In their own words: From interviews with host families, the parents were asked ... Can you provide some insight on how you and your family made the au pair feel welcome?

*“**We treated them like family members from the start**. We made it clear it’s their house too. It was our rule too that they were always welcome to be with us, but never obligated to... having that flexibility made them feel comfortable. As a consequence, there was no awkwardness around it... Treat them like family not an employee, we were careful to do that.”
-Massachusetts, Father of 2*

*“Before they got here, **I made sure to know what they like**. As we go back and forth, and on their profile are photos, I’ll ask them to send me photos that are important to them and I’ll make a little photo collage for their room, so they don’t feel so homesick... I like to give them a longer period of time [than three days] to acclimate.”
-New York, Mother of 2*

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In their own words: Moreover, the experience of cultural exchange is fundamental to why many families continue to participate in the program:

*“My kids are getting older; we could probably stop, but really it’s the desire to have that cultural exchange. Having someone available in the house to help with the kids is not necessary anymore. It’s really about the cultural exchange. It’s really **important for my kids to understand how big the world is**, and for someone to live with us who is from the other side of the world helps ground them.”*

-Nevada, Father of two.

5. Methodology: Au Pair Alumni Survey

5.1 *Sampling and Data Collection*

A 15-minute online survey was designed and administered to au pair alumni who participated in the program within the last five years (completed no later than 2015). Au pairs were contacted directly by email through au pair sponsor agencies. A working group, consisting of representatives of Alliance member organizations and associated sponsors of the au pair program, for this project identified additional sponsor agencies within their network to contact au pair alumni in their database.

The alumni survey instrument topics and constructs were created through a combination of EurekaFacts' review of previous questionnaires conducted on various J-1 visa international exchange audiences and specific goals set forth by the working group representatives. The survey focused on topic areas such as motivations to participate in the au pair program, personal and professional impact of the program, overall experience during the program, satisfaction with the program, cultural experiences and exchange, views of the U.S., relationships with host family and others in U.S., and spending and economic impact of participating.

Data collection was conducted from April 15, 2020 – May 15, 2020 using a web-based survey platform (Verint EFM). The survey was accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week and was designed to save partial survey responses so that participants may return later to complete. In total, sponsor agencies contacted 62,539 au pairs based on their database records of who had participated in the past five years. Multiple reminder notifications were sent to au pair alumni over the four-week field period.

At the end of the field period, survey data was reviewed and cleaned to include only complete cases, defined as respondents who completed the full survey. The final sample size for the au pair alumni survey includes N=10,881 cases and a response rate of 17.4% (completed cases (10,881)/contacts made (62,539) = .1739). At a 95% level of confidence, the margin of error for the final sample is plus or minus 0.9 percentage points.

5.2 *Statistical Analysis*

Quantitative analysis of the au pair alumni survey mainly relies on descriptive statistics – frequencies of marginal results and crosstabulations of pairs of survey questions. Survey questions are crossed by other related survey questions to provide a deeper

understanding of overlapping alumni opinions and experiences. Response options are often collapsed, especially scales, for concise reporting of common assessments and perceptions (e.g., “very” and “somewhat” important may be collapsed into “net importance”). Additionally, analysis may focus on the most intense opinion in a scale to provide clear ranking of sub-items (e.g., “very important” vs. other response options). Furthermore, analysis of “select all” list items often include distribution of the number of items participants selected from the list (e.g., number of cultural experiences shared with host family).

An au pair English-language ability scale was created based on question 32 (see Appendix A). Au pair alumni answered whether their English abilities for “understanding”, “speaking”, “reading”, and “writing” were “basic”, “conversational”, “proficient”, or “native language” prior to entering the au pair program. Based on their initial ability levels, alumni are categorized into different tiers of English-language ability: All Basic (basic in all four language areas), All Proficient (proficient in all four language areas), Mix Skills (mix of basic, conversations, and proficient skills), or Native (native language skill in at least one area). This is used as an additional analytical point for question 33 (section 6.3.2) to gauge relative improvement in English-language ability after participating in the au pair program among alumni with initially basic, mixed, or proficient abilities. Those in the “Native” group were not used for this additional analysis.

Qualitative analysis of question 10 in the survey, an open-ended question asking to reflect on a takeaway from the program or advice to give anyone interested, was done to identify common themes and experiences among au pair alumni. Select quotes are presented as part of the policy analysis (section 4).

Economic analysis (section 10) is based on results from questions 55 - 58 in the au pair survey and aggregated based on when they reported finishing the program. A measure of central tendency for each question was identified for the overall sample as well as the yearly samples (e.g., mean amount spent per category). Outliers were eliminated using interquartile ranges. After these figures were normalized, the results for the yearly samples were multiplied by the total number of au pair alumni in each year (shown in Figure 10-1) or presented in per capital units (shown in Figure 10-2). The overall estimates are calculated using average monthly spending reported figures then multiplied by 12 months to represent the amount au pairs spent over the course of one year.

6. Au Pair Alumni Survey: Detailed Findings

The 10,881 completed au pair alumni survey responses were captured through structured survey questions. The respondents represent au pair alumni who completed the program within the last five years. They provided information and feedback regarding their experiences prior to, during, and after program participation, including experiences with their host family, the decision to become an au pair, and the impact on their life and career. This data was analyzed using frequency tables, crosstabulations and other statistical techniques to distill findings from survey responses. The margin of error assuming a 95% level of confidence around survey point estimates is +/- 0.9% points for each topline level percentage reported.

The results of this analysis are presented in this section and structured thematically:

1. Demographic overview of respondents, including basic information about their program participation.
2. Overall satisfaction with the au pair program, their host family, and the mechanics of the program.
3. Motivations for joining the program and benefits of participating, including variety of skills learned.
4. Initial impressions and the evolution of views among au pair alumni on the U.S., Americans and U.S. institutions, and how engagement in the program fosters public diplomacy and cultural understanding.
5. Relationships au pair alumni made during the program and maintained after the program ended.

6.1 Au Pair Alumni Demographic Profile

Au pair alumni who participated between 2015 and 2020 were placed with host families living in every state in the United States, including Washington, D.C. During this timeframe, au pair alumni most commonly completed the program in California (19%) or New York (16%). Additionally, 10% of alumni were placed with host families in Massachusetts.

Au pairs are generally women in their twenties who participate for one or two years. Currently, alumni are in their mid-to-late 20s (median age is 25 years old). Alumni who participated in the program through the years were overwhelming women (96%). About half (44%) of au pair alumni are currently 23 to 26 years old and one-third (32%) are 27 to 30 years old.¹¹ If they completed the program within the last five years, this indicates that most participated when they were in their early to mid-twenties. Of the alumni who completed the survey, the majority (61%) participated in the program for one year (61%); however, many extended their stay past 12 months, including 39% who chose to participate for a second year. Only 37% stayed in the United States no longer than 12 months while 56% extended their total time in the program and were in the United States for 13-18 months or 19-24 months (28% each). Only 7% of alumni spent more than 25 months in the United States.

Alumni came from a diverse language background. Nearly all (94%) alumni did not learn English as their native language. About half of au pairs knew either Spanish (26%) or German (26%) as their native language, followed by 13% whose native language was Portuguese.

¹¹ Per program regulations, active au pair participants are between the ages of 18 to 26. The survey includes alumni participants over the last five years, who may currently be over the age of 26.

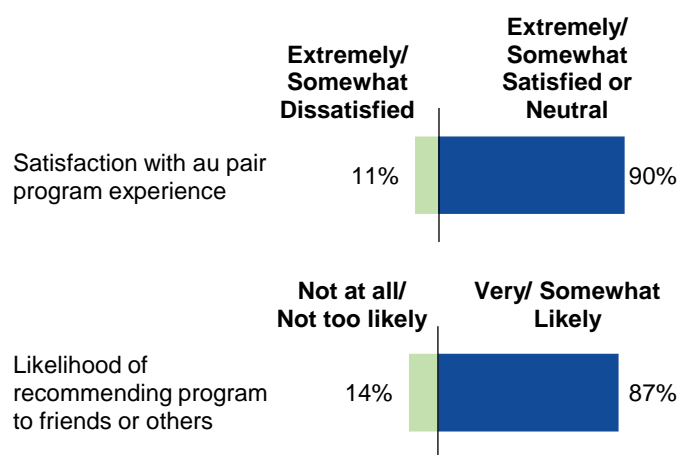
6.2 Au Pair Program Experience and Satisfaction

Au pair alumni express overall positive experiences with the international exchange program, including the procedures for joining and the social connections built during their participation. This includes the connections established with their host family and their experiences living in their home. Accordingly, most alumni are likely to recommend the program to others.

6.2.1 Satisfaction with Au Pair Program

Overall, au pair alumni are satisfied with the program and are likely to recommend it to others, including friends and prospective participants. Most au pair alumni (84%) are satisfied with their experiences in the program, including half (48%) who are “extremely satisfied” with their experiences. Few alumni are neutral (6%) or dissatisfied (11%) with their experience. Only 5% report extreme dissatisfaction with the overall program. This closely aligns with the proportion who are likely to recommend it to others. Nearly-nine in-ten (87%) are likely to recommend the program to their friends or other potential participants, including 60% who are very likely to do so.

Figure 6.2.1-1: Au pair alumni satisfaction with program and likelihood of recommending it to others



Source: Q4, Q9. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

Au pair alumni have high praise of their experiences with the program from the beginning procedures and logistics, to entering the program, to the social connections and to support from sponsor organizations and host families. Impressions of the overall application and training process are more positive for most than are ratings of on-going support throughout the program.

As seen in Figure 6.2.1-2, nearly all au pair alumni say their experience with the au pair program application process and the subsequent J-1 visa application process was “good” or

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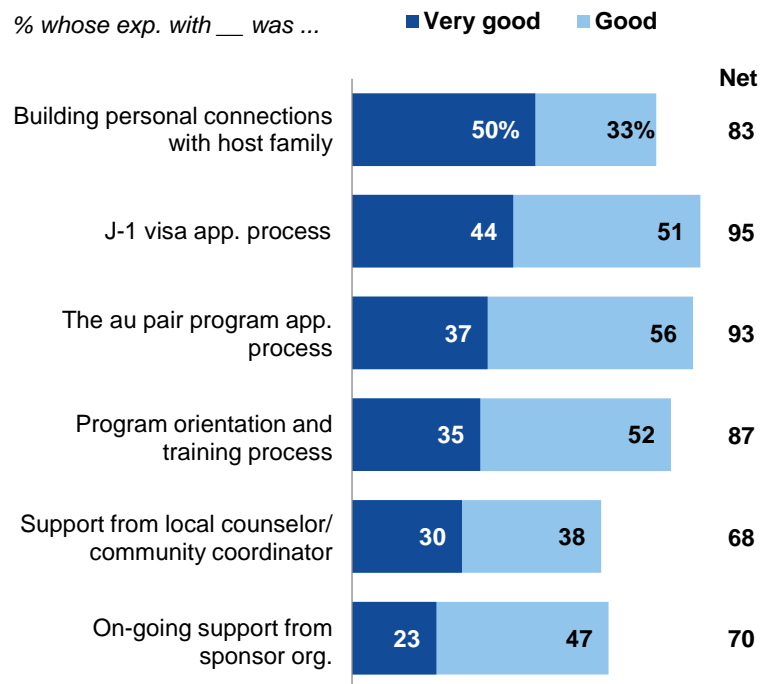
“very good.” The multiple-step application process for the au pair program includes the process of completing an initial interview, background check, and completing a health exam, among other regulatory requirements and steps that vary by sponsor organization. This process was a good experience for 93% of applicants, including 37% who say it was “very good.” Applying for their J-1 visa was also a “good” experience for most all (95%) alumni, including 44% who say it was “very good.”

Once the au pairs are accepted into the program, they complete program orientation and a series of in-person or online trainings provided by the sponsor organizations. Overall, 87% had a “good” or “very good” experience with this aspect of the program. Few alumni rate their experience poorly, with only 3% considering their experience to have been “very poor.”

Once accepted and matched with a host family, organizations sponsoring au pairs make themselves available for support and, in addition, assign a dedicated local counselor or coordinator (LCC) for guidance and assistance. This support structure aids both au pairs and host families. Simultaneously, au pairs build personal connections with host families.

The majority of alumni have positive social experiences with their respective host family (83%), sponsor organization (70%), and local coordinator (68%). Alumni are more likely to have a “very good” experience building personal connections with their host family (50%) compared to having a similar level of experience with support from either their local counselor (30%) or sponsor organization (23%). While a sizable minority had a “poor” or “very poor” experience getting the support and guidance needed from the sponsor organizations (30%) or designated

Figure 6.2.1-2: Au pair alumni experiences with procedural and social aspects of the program



Source: Q5. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.
Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

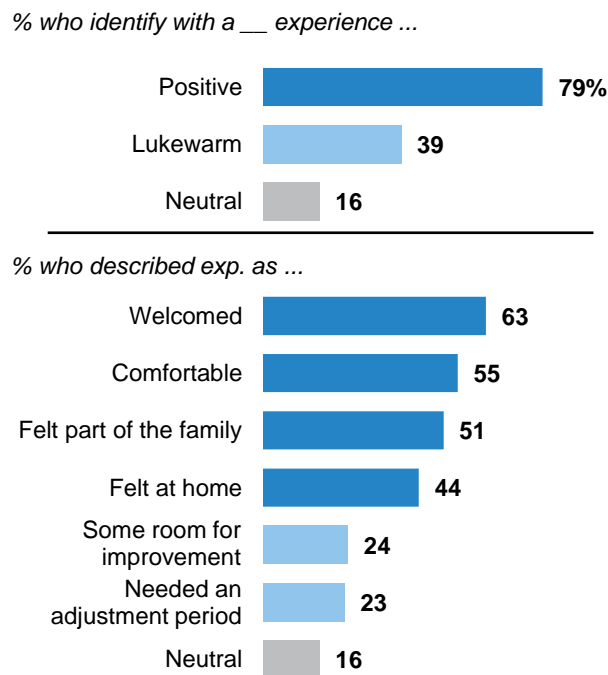
program counselors (33%), only one in ten have a “very poor” experience with either: 10% have a “very poor” experience with the organization, 13% with the local counselor.

6.2.2 Au Pair Experience in Host Family Home

More than three-quarters (79%) of au pair alumni associate one or more positive descriptions to their experience living with their host family. The majority describe their home setting as welcoming (63%) and comfortable (55%), and half (51%) agree they felt part of the family.

Most (60%) of those who initially had lukewarm feelings while adjusting to their host family also affirm positive living experiences with their host family. A sizable minority (39%), report that either they needed an adjustment period (23%) or that there was some room for improvement in their living situation (24%), yet many ultimately identify with positive experiences such as feeling “welcomed” and “comfortable” in the home. This affirms that some au pairs need time to adjust living with a new family in a new culture, but most have positive experiences living with their host families.

Figure 6.2.2-1: Description of au pair alumni experiences living with U.S. host family



Source: Q6. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.
Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

6.3 Motivations for Participation and Benefits of Involvement

Au pair alumni are independently seeking out the opportunity to join the program or hearing about it from those close to them. This self-motivation to join is reflected in the importance they place on personal improvement and cultural exchange as reasons they wanted to participate. Participation in the program provided au pair alumni with vast improvement in personal and professional skills, including enhanced English skills, communication skills, practical career skills, and self-confidence.

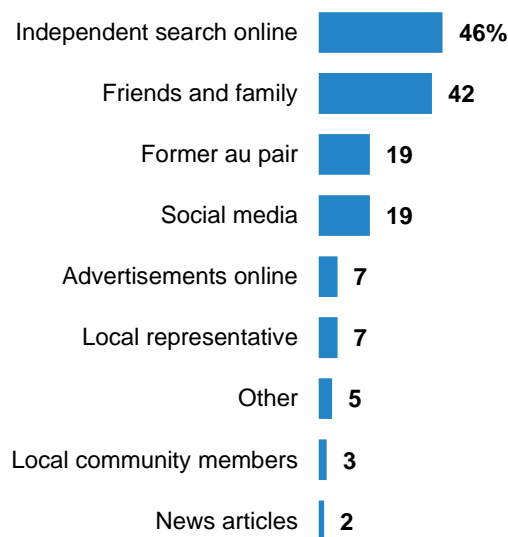
6.3.1 Decision to Participate in Au Pair Program

Au pair alumni primarily heard about the program through independent searching online (46%) and through word of mouth from family and friends (42%) and former au pairs (19%). Searching online is often in response to finding out about the program from a familiar source. About half (51%) of those who saw an advertisement online conducted their own independent search. Likewise, 43% of those that saw information from social media platforms also did an online search.

Recommendations from friends or family to join the au pair program and/or hearing about it from a former au pair are common and persuasive techniques for recruiting new au pairs. About half (47%) of those that heard about the program from a former au pair also say that the program was recommended by a friend or family member, suggesting that the au pair alumni have strong connections to those close to them and are effective at communicating their positive experience – an asset to successful and cost-effective recruitment of future au pairs.

Overwhelmingly, au pair alumni are motivated to participate in the au pair program because of the opportunity to improve personal skills and engage in cultural exchange; money is the least important reason. Nearly all (97%) affirmed that “gaining new or improving personal skills” was

Figure 6.3.1-1: Where alumni heard about the program
Au pairs mostly hear about the program through independent searches online and word of mouth

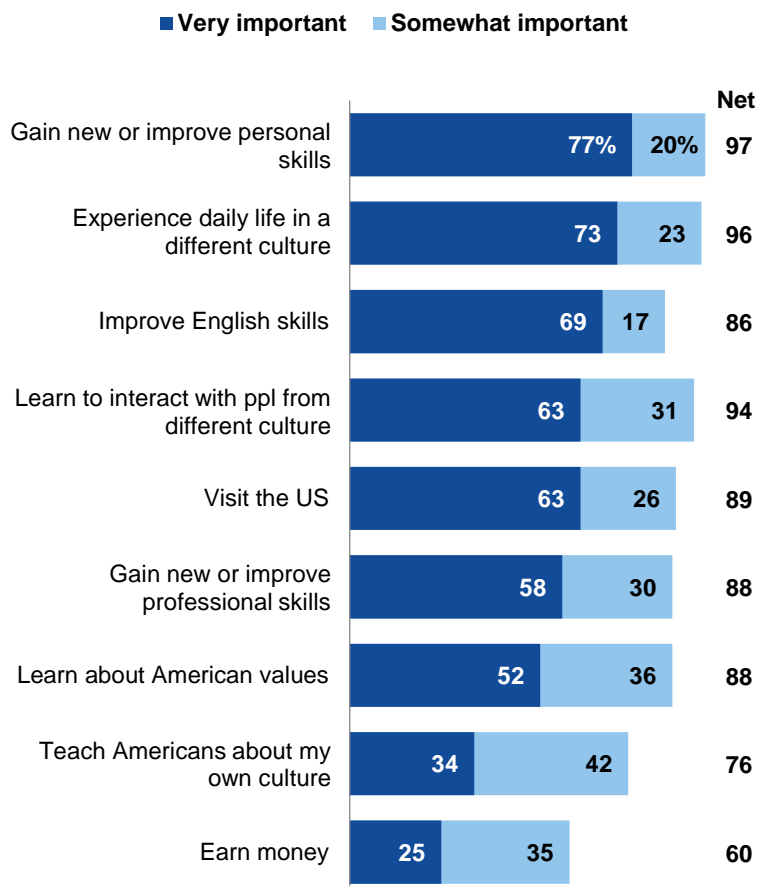


Source: Q3. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.
 Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

an important factor, including three-quarter (77%) who say it was a “very” important factor. This extends to “improving English skills” as an important reason for 86% of au pair alumni and “gaining new or improving professional skills” for 88% of alumni. Cultural exchange through “experiencing daily life in a different culture” and “interacting with people from another culture” are also important motivators for nearly all au pair alumni (96% and 94%, respectively). In fact, the majority see these as “very” important reasons to participate (73% and 63%, respectively). Earning money through the program is the least important reason for alumni, with 60% noting it as important to their decision and only 25% affirming it was “very” important.

Figure 6.3.1-2: Importance of reasons when deciding to participate in au pair program

Au pairs find importance in personal improvement and cultural exchange



Source: Q16. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.

Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

6.3.2 Benefits and Skills Acquired Through Program Participation

English Language Skills

Nearly all au pair alumni come from non-English language backgrounds; however, over the course of their stay they make great strides in improving their English-language abilities. When it comes to an au pair’s ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English, about half of au pair alumni (53%) entered the program with a mix of basic, conversational and proficient capabilities. About one-quarter (23%) of them started the program as proficient, while 7% only

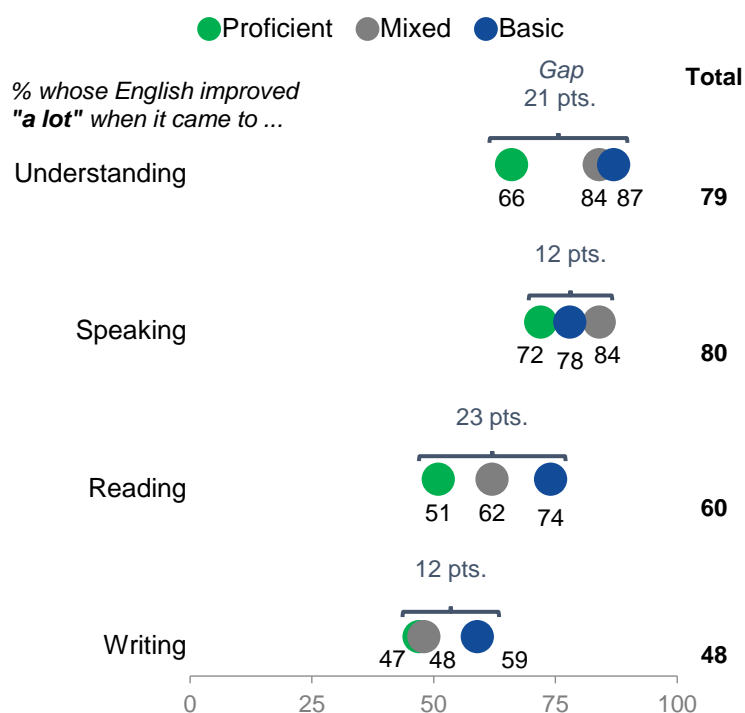
have basic proficiencies. The remaining 17% express having native-level capabilities in at least one of these areas.

Among those who have below native language skill levels for English, nearly all see an improvement in their abilities during their time as an au pair. Most alumni claim their English improved “a lot” when it came to understanding and speaking the language (79% and 80%, respectively). Overall English literacy also improved. Nearly all improved reading (90%) and writing (83%) abilities, including a majority (60%) saying they improved “a lot” in reading and 48% improving “a lot” in writing in English.

Great improvement in language ability is especially high for those who started with all basic or mixed capabilities compared to those who started as proficient across all English skills. The largest differences between these groups is in understanding and reading in English. While 66% of the proficient group improved “a lot” in understanding English, 84% of those with mixed abilities and 87% of those with only basic skills also improved “a lot”, which is 18% and 21% points higher than the proficient group, respectively. Similarly, 62% of the mixed and 74% of the basic skill groups improved “a lot” in reading English compared to 51% of the proficient group, which are 11% and 23% points higher than the proficient group. The groups make similarly high improvements in speaking and writing in English, with slightly more of the mixed and basic groups improving.

Figure 6.3.2-1: English skill improvement for non-native English language au pair alumni based on skills when entering program

Mixed and Basic initial skill groups overall improved English-language skills more over program duration compared to Proficient group



Source: Q32 and Q33. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=9044.

Career and Educational Benefits

Au pair alumni apply their experiences and skills learned through the program to their work, career, and education. Most (84%) affirmed that their experiences in the program have supported personal career and education goals and 80% agree the program provided practical work experience. Experiences in the au pair program encouraged the majority (52%) of alumni to expand their professional/educational goals beyond their country's borders, and about half (48%) discovered and defined their specific career goals. Au pair alumni also reflect that their experience provided direct benefits in the workplace as 39% believe they are now a more competitive candidate in their field of interest and 26% affirm their experience helped them acquire a job or gain a promotion.

Nearly all (96%) au pair alumni have applied the skills learned during the program to at least one professional sector, often multiple sectors. Three-in-ten (30%) apply their skills in one sector and two-thirds (66%) of alumni apply their skills in multiple sectors, usually two or three sectors (33% and 21%, respectively). Education and childcare are the most popular sectors where au pair alumni apply the skills they've learned (68% and 50%, respectively). Three-quarters (76%) of those that believe the program provided practical work experience went on to apply their skills in the education sector. The business sector and careers in cultural exchange are also common professions where alumni apply their skills (42% and 20%, respectively). Other industries where alumni apply their skills include information technology (11%), philanthropies (6%), NGO's (5%), and government (5%).

As noted, the increased ability with English language and literacy is an opportune skill for alumni to leverage. Nearly all non-native English speakers were able to apply their English language

Figure 6.3.2-2: Application of skills learned from au pair program to professional sectors

% who say ...	%
Program provided practical work experience	80
A great deal	38
Somewhat	42
<hr/>	
% who applied skills in ...	%
Total	96
Education	68
Childcare	50
Business	42
Careers in cultural exchange	20
Information technology	11

Source: Q53, Q51. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Q51 percentages are from one half of a scale. Q51 percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Figure 6.3.2-3: Au pair alumni interest in learning new language

% who ...	%
Developed interest in learning another language	60
<hr/>	
% interested in learning ...	%
Spanish	59
French	25
German	15
Chinese	7
Italian	5

Source: Q36, Q37. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881 (Q36); N= 6,456 (Q37). Note: Q37 percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

skills in their school or workplace and highlight that skill on their job and school applications (87% each), and about two-thirds have done this often since participating (63% and 64%, respectively). Because of their time in the U.S., the majority (60%) developed interest in learning another language. The majority of those looking to expand their educational goals and learn another language are interested in learning Spanish (60%) and one-quarter (25%) are interested in French.

Life Skills and Personal Development

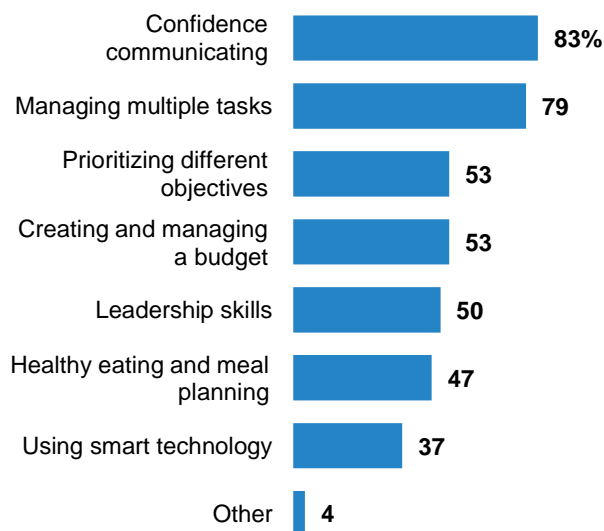
Beyond the educational and career benefits au pair alumni receive from their experiences in the program, alumni also improved in overall life skills: this includes practical skills (household and task management), interpersonal skills (communication), reasoning skills (problem solving), and personal growth (confidence and self-expression).

Living with a U.S. host family provided most au pairs with an opportunity to develop skills related to running a household that can be applied in many situations. For example, most (79%) learned about managing multiple tasks

and about half (53%) learned about prioritizing different objectives. These are important for running a busy household and can be applied in other contexts (e.g., at a workplace). As young people, observing a family helped about half learn about practical adult tasks such as creating and managing their budget and savings (53%) and healthy eating and meal planning (47%).

Communication is a commonly noted skill au pair alumni developed and improved as a result of participating in the program. In fact, “confidence in communication with others” is the most common skill alumni learned from their host families (83%). Accordingly, as shown in Figure 6.3.2-5, 95% of alumni say participating in the program helped them improve relating to and understanding others and 85% have improved interacting with their own family and friends, including 60% and 49% who improved “a lot” in each of these areas respectively. Nearly all

Figure 6.3.2-4: Life skills developed by au pair alumni by living with host family



Source: Q49. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.
Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

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(98%) alumni agree that the au pair program has helped them interact with others from different cultures, including 68% who strongly agree with that sentiment.

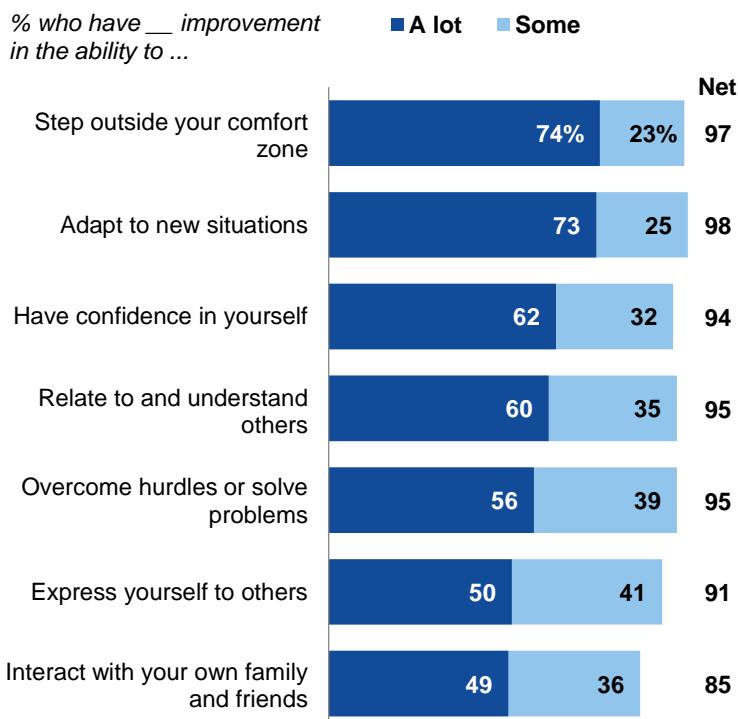
The challenges and experiences of the au pair program helped alumni develop reasoning skills. Nearly all improved their ability to adapt to new situations (98%) and overcome hurdles and solve problems (95%), including the majority who improved “a lot” in these abilities to make decisions (73% and 56%, respectively). Interacting with their host family helped half (50%) learn better leadership skills. These skills together aid alumni in their ability to evaluate situations, problem solve issues, and be adaptable to new circumstances.

Finally, au pairs experienced personal growth through their experiences in the program. Nearly all say they improved their ability to step outside their comfort zone (97%), have confidence in themselves (94%), and express themselves to others (91%).

Many of these improvements across life skills stem from what au pairs learn from their host families. For example, the majority (77%) of those that learned how to manage multiple tasks from their host families say they improved “a lot” in their ability to adapt to new situations, compared to 55% of those that did not acquire multiple skills from host families and say the same. Additionally, there is a 33%-point difference between those that did and did not learn from their host families about confidence when communicating with others and whether they improved “a lot” in having confidence in themselves (67% and 34%, respectively).

Figure 6.3.2-5: Program impact on improving au pair alumni life skills and personal growth

Au pairs improved most on handling new situations and self-assurance



Source: Q50. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.

Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

6.4 Public Diplomacy

Au pair alumni arrive in the U.S. with overall favorable views about the country, and during their stay become more positive about many aspects of American culture. There is an equivalent cultural exchange between host families and au pairs sharing traditions and gifts, engaging in activities and learning new languages. These all lend to alumni having an overall positive experience in the U.S. and enhanced cultural competencies.

6.4.1 Impact of Experience on Views of United States

The au pair community entered the program with overwhelmingly favorable views of the American people and of the United States as a whole (83% and 88%, respectively) – including 31% who viewed Americans very favorably and 40% who viewed the U.S. very favorably.

Figure 6.4.1-1: Initial favorability of U.S. and Americans

Prior to entering au pair program, what was overall view of US/Americans

% who say ...	NET favorable		NET unfavorable	No opinion	
	<i>Very</i>				
The United States	88	<i>40</i>	9	4	=100
Americans	83	<i>31</i>	12	5	=100

Source: Q17 and Q18. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read across and may not total to 100% due to rounding. Italicized % to show intense opinion and is not part of row % calculation.

Compared with their initial impressions, au pairs’ attitudes towards American life are now more positive upon completion of the program. About two-thirds have a more positive view of the “American people” (66%), “American culture” (65%), and the “U.S. in general” (63%) and half (50%) are more positive about the “American family structure”. Change in views of the “American political system” is more mixed. The majority (58%) of au pairs view the institution “about the same” (32%) or are more positive (26%) compared to their initial impressions.

Figure 6.4.1-2: Change in perception of American institutions

Compared to your initial view, how have your views changed regarding ...

% who say ...	NET positive	Much more	About the same	NET negative	
	%	%	%	%	
American people	66	32	22	12	=100
American culture	65	27	26	10	=100
U.S. in general	63	29	25	11	=100
American family structure	50	22	25	25	=100
American political system	26	9	32	42	=100

Source: Q24. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read across and may not total to 100% due to rounding. Italicized % to show intense opinion and is not part of row % calculation.

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Overall, 90% of au pair alumni had either an “excellent” or “good” experience in the U.S.

There is a strong correlation between ratings of the U.S. overall and more positive views about American life and institutions among alumni. For example, among those who say

that their views on three or more aspects of American life have changed for the positive, three-quarters (73%) rate their U.S. experience as “excellent”. By comparison, among those who report no positive change when it comes to views of American life, just 31% say they had an excellent U.S. experience.

How an au pair adjusts to their experience in the U.S. also has a strong relationship to how they rate their overall experience with the au program. Nearly all (92%) of those who say they were comfortable adjusting to American culture had an “excellent” or “good” experience in the U.S. overall. Only half (49%) of those not comfortable adjusting had at least a “good” experience – a difference of 43% points.

The cultural immersion of the au pair program promotes public diplomacy on a personal level. Because of the program, nearly all alumni (98%) feel more able to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, 97% better understand American culture. In addition, 88% of alumni better understand American values, such as the emphasis of freedom and independence. Most (87%) are now more aware of aspects of their own culture through teaching others about their home country – continuing the cycle of public diplomacy.

Figure 6.4.1-3: Overall experience in the United States

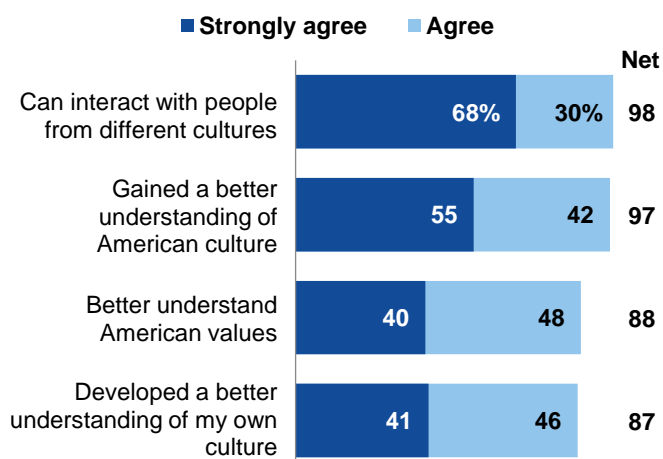
Those with more positive view changes also had overall better experience

% who say overall U.S. experience was...	Total	Based on number of positive view changes of U.S. institutions		
		0	1-2	3-5
Excellent	60	31	56	73
Good	30	38	35	23
Fair/ Poor	<u>11</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100

Source: Q24 by Q26. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read down and may not total to 100% because of rounding.

Figure 6.4.1-4: Program participation effects on alumni cultural interaction and understanding

Because of the au pair program, I ...



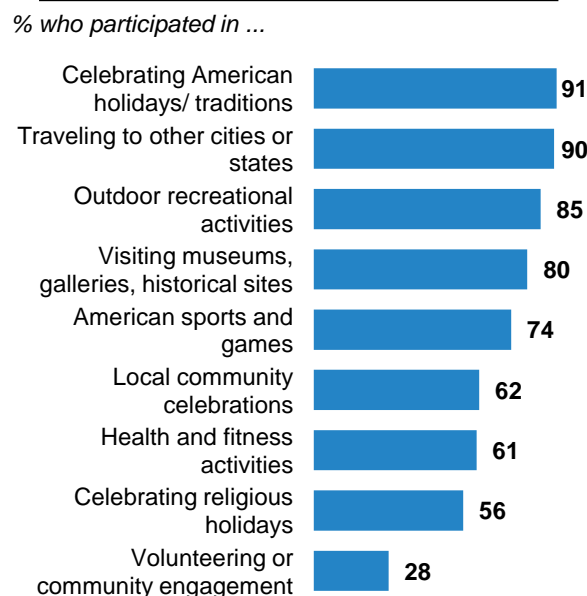
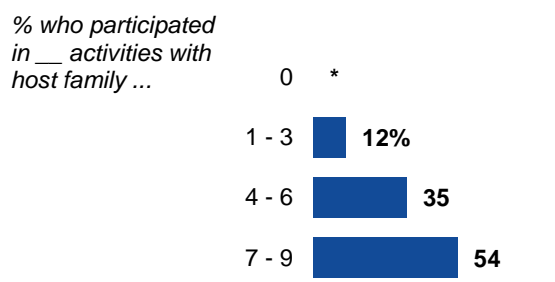
Source: Q25. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

6.4.2 Participation in and Sharing of Culture and Cultural Activities

Sharing of cultural activities in the au pair program has a reciprocal relationship for alumni and their host families, each often engaging and sharing multiple traditions, activities, and items with the other.

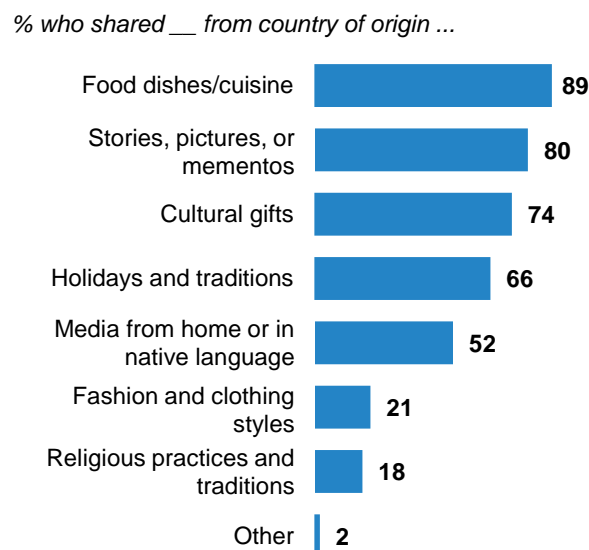
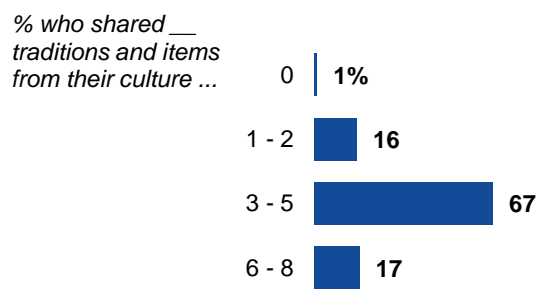
While in the U.S., au pairs participate in a wide variety of American cultural activities with their host families. A majority (54%) of au pairs say that they participated in 7 or more of the cultural activities tested in the survey. Nine-in-ten au pairs celebrated American holidays (91%) or traveling to other cities/states and three-quarters or more participated in outdoor recreational activities (85%), visited museums or historical sites (80%), or attend a sports event (74%). Nearly three in ten (28%) au pairs participated in volunteer or community engagement activities.

Figure 6.4.2-1: Cultural activities au pair alumni participated in with host families



Source: Q21. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Figure 6.4.2-2: Cultural activities alumni shared from their home country with host family and friends



Source: Q23. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

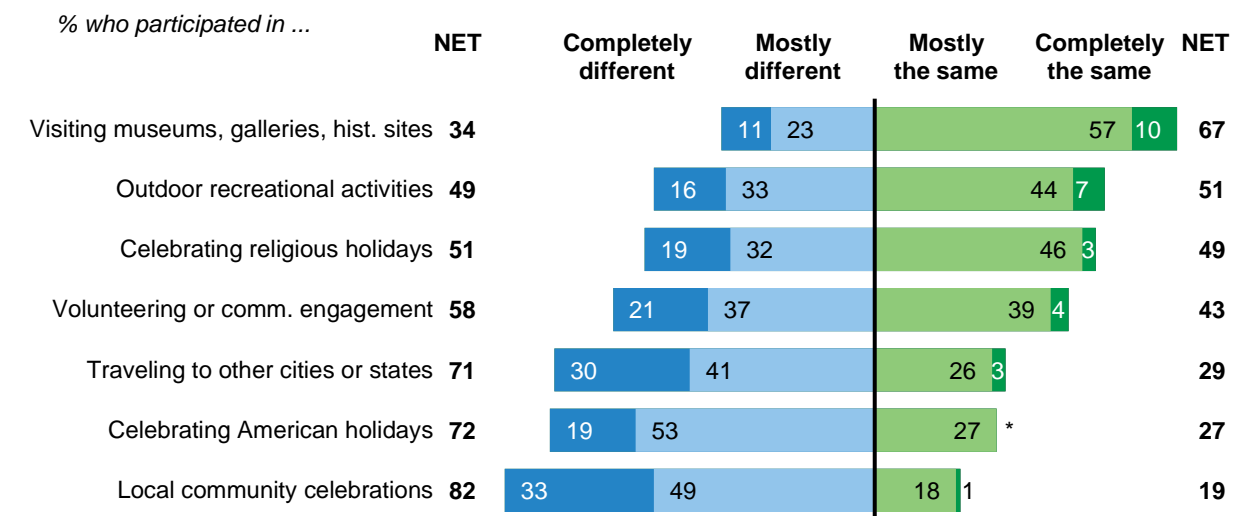
Review of Au Pair Program

In return, most (84%) alumni shared at least three traditions or items from their own culture. Most commonly sharing food dishes (89%) stories or pictures (80%), or cultural gifts (74%) from their country of origin with their host family or friends.

Highlighting the rich cultural exchange imparted through the au pair program, with few exceptions, most au pairs say that the U.S. cultural activities they participated in are “mostly” or “completely” different from the complimentary activities in their own culture. For example, majorities say that “local community celebrations” (82%), “celebrating American holidays”, (e.g., Independence Day) (72%), “traveling to other cities or states” (71%), or volunteering (58%) are different from their own culture. Even for the few activities that alumni noted as being similar in their own culture, no more than one-in-ten assessed the activity as being “completely the same,” indicating that alumni still experienced a difference from their own culture. For example, two-thirds (67%) who visited museums, art galleries, or historical sites said the experienced was similar to their own culture: the majority (57%) said it was “mostly the same” and only 10% said

Figure 6.4.2-3: Comparison of U.S. activities and traditions to au pair’s own culture

Of the activities you participated in, how different from your own culture would say each event/activity is?



Source: Q22. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

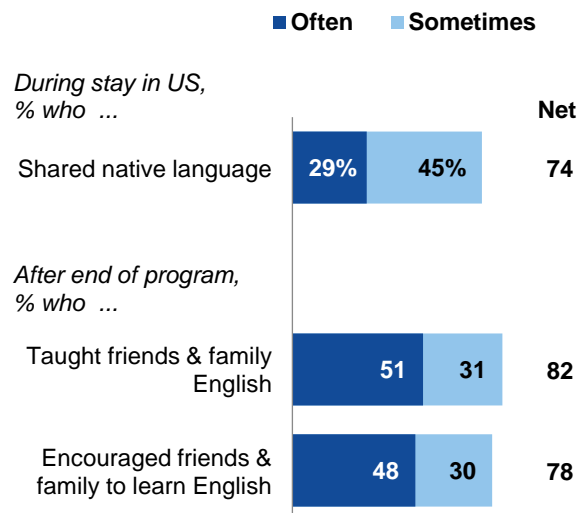
it was “completely the same” as their own culture.

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Language Exchange

In addition to cultural traditions and activities, au pair alumni shared their native language with host families and shared English with their friends and family in their own country. Three-quarters (74%) of non-English-speaking alumni taught their host family or American friends words, phrases or engaged in conversations in their native language, including 29% who “often” did this. After participating in the program, most either “often” or “sometimes” taught their friends and family in their home country English words or phrases (82%) or encouraged them to learn English (78%). About half engaged in these behaviors “often” (51% and 48%, respectively).

Figure 6.4.2-4: Language exchange of au pair language and English



Source: Q35. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,143.
Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

6.5 Establishing and Maintaining Relationships

Au pair alumni were able to build connections with different groups of Americans and au pair program participants. Alumni go on to keep in touch with both personal and professional connections they made after leaving the program. Nearly all alumni agree these relationships benefited their personal and professional growth, especially with the more connections they made during their stay in the U.S.

6.5.1 Forming and Maintaining Connections

One of the most critical relationships built is with the host family, which alumni found to be one of the best experiences of the program. More than eight-in-ten (83%) alumni said that building a personal connection with their host family was at least a “good” experience, including 50% who said it was a “very good” experience. Ultimately, 85% felt they built a connection to their host family, and 86% of those alumni keep in touch with them to varying frequencies.

During the au pair program, au pair alumni successfully built connections to a wide variety of Americans and fellow au pair program participants. About half (47%) built connections with three or four groups of people; one-third (32%) made connections with five to eight groups. Maintaining relationships is more difficult. Most commonly, alumni only keep in touch with one (35%) group or no group at all (33%); however, some alumni keep in touch with two groups (22%) or three or more groups (11%) after leaving the program.

Alumni easily form connections to the people immediately around them and consistently meeting. Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) formed a connection with their fellow au pairs. Nearly all keep in touch with the other alumni they befriended, including 50% who often contact each other. Two-

Figure 6.5.1-1: Relationships au pair alumni developed during program and maintained after leaving

	% who built connections with ...	% who keep in touch with this group ...	
		NET Yes %	Often %
Fellow au pairs	89	98	50
Your host family	85	86	34
American friends	67	93	38
Neighbors and local community members	47	56	6
Local au pair counselor(s)	47	37	4
Academic professors and staff	24	46	5
American mentors	13	77	18
Professionals in a field related to your career goals	10	76	16

Source: Q41, Q42. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Follow up question % is based on those that selected each category. Percentages do not add to 100%.

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thirds (67%) of au pair alumni also built connections with American friends and nearly all (93%) of them keep in touch (38% keep in touch often). Nearly half of au pair alumni formed connections with neighbors and community members and their local au pair counselor (47% each); however, fewer keep in touch with this group and it's not often they reconnect.

While academic or professional connections are less common than relationships with the host family or other au pairs, for those who do make the former type of connections, the overwhelming majority maintain those relationships. Fewer than one-quarter of alumni established relationships with academic professors (24%), American mentors (13%), or professionals in their chosen career field (10%). About three-quarters of those with relationships to mentors or career professionals continue to keep in touch with them (77% and 76%, respectively). About half (46%) of those with connections to academic professors still communicate, but not as frequently.

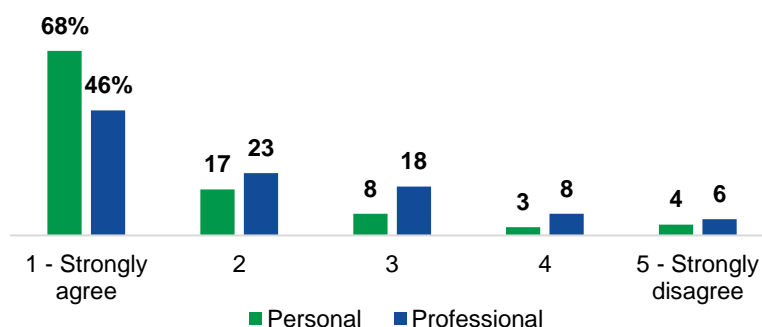
After the program is concluded, au pair alumni continue to make new social connections using their enhanced English-language skills they developed while in the U.S. Since their time in the program, 83% have used these skills "often" or "sometimes" to meet new people (online or in-person), including 56% have used these skills "often" to this effect. Additionally, three-quarters (75%) have used these skills "often" (47%) or "sometimes" (28%) to make new professional connections.

6.5.2 Impact of Relationships Formed During Program

Majority of alumni agree that the relationships and connections they formed during the program benefited their personal and professional growth. On a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), two-thirds (68%) of alumni

Figure 6.5.2-1: Impact of program relationships on personal and professional growth

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: “The relationships I built during my participation in the au pair program were beneficial to my ___ growth”



Source: Q25. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.

strongly agree that relationships they built benefited their personal growth, followed by 17% who agree but not as strongly. Likewise, about half (46%) agree their relationships benefited their professional growth, followed by 23% who also agree with that sentiment.

There is a positive correlation between the number of categories/types of people alumni formed connections or relationships with while in the U.S. and the degree to which they strongly agree that relationships built during the program benefited their personal and professional growth. The more relationship types alumni formed, the more likely they were to strongly agree that it benefited their personal or professional growth. For example, only 31% of alumni who formed one type of relationship strongly agree it benefited their personal growth, compared to 67% of those forming three connections and 86% who connected with eight different types of relationships. This is also true for benefiting their professional growth. Less than two-in-ten who formed zero connections (13%) or only one connection (19%) strongly agree relationships benefited their professional

Figure 6.5.2-2: Impact of number of relationship types on alumni personal and professional growth

% who strongly agree relationships benefited ___ growth	Personal	Professional
	%	%
Total/ All numbers	68	46
<i>Number of relationships</i>		
0	19	13
1	31	19
2	55	32
3	67	42
4	73	47
5	79	55
6	80	61
7	84	68
8	86	73

Source: Q41 by Q43a & Q43b. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Independent percentages per column.

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growth, compared to 32% of those who formed two connections, 47% who formed four connections, 61% who formed six connections and 73% who formed eight connections.

Forming a connection with their host family is the most impactful relationship on personal and professional growth for au pair alumni. Three-quarters (74%) strongly agree relationships benefited their personal growth if they formed a connection with their host family, compared to 40% of alumni who did form a connection with their host family who say the same – a difference of 34% points. Similarly, there is a 25%-point gap between these groups of alumni regarding professional growth (49% vs 24%, respectively).

Figure 6.5.2-3: Impact of specific alumni relationships on personal and professional growth

<i>% who strongly agree program relationships benefited ___ growth</i>	Personal %	Professional %
Total/All relationships	68	46
<i>Connection with (% of total)</i>		
<i>Host family</i>		
Relationship (85%)	74	49
No relationship (15%)	40	24
<i>Fellow au pairs</i>		
Relationship (89%)	70	46
No relationship (11%)	57	42
<i>American friends</i>		
Relationship (67%)	72	50
No relationship (33%)	60	37
<i>Local au pair counselor</i>		
Relationship (47%)	74	51
No relationship (53%)	63	41

Source: Q41 by Q43a and Q43b. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881.
Note: Independent percentages per column.

Other foundational relationships au pairs form during their time in the program contribute to personal and professional growth. Alumni who built connections with their fellow au pairs, which nearly all did, were more likely to agree program relationships benefited their personal growth compared to the 11% who did not connect with their fellow au pairs (70% vs 57%, respectively). For the half (47%) of alumni who formed a connection with their counselor, they were more likely to agree they grew personally and professionally. Outside of the immediate program, the two-thirds (67%) of alumni who made friends with other Americans were more likely to agree that relationships provided them with personal and professional growth compared to those that didn't made American friends (72% vs. 60% and 50% vs. 37%, respectively).

These overall positive experiences in the U.S. and lasting relationships they built have encouraged nearly all to want to visit the U.S. again. Nearly all (94%) say they are likely to return for a visit, including eight-in-ten (79%) who say they are “very likely” to return. In fact, 83% of alumni who formed a relationship with their host family are “very likely” to return to the U.S. compared to 57% of those that did not form a meaningful relationship with their host family.

7. Methodology: Host Family Survey and Interviews

7.1 Sampling and Data Collection

Quantitative Survey Methodology

A 15-minute online survey was designed and administered to host families who participated in the program within the last five years (last hosted no later than 2015). As with au pairs, host families were contacted directly by email through au pair sponsor agencies. The project's working group, consisting of representatives of Alliance member organizations and associated sponsors of the au pair program, for this project identified additional sponsor agencies within their network to contact host families in their database.

The host family survey instrument topics and constructs were created through a combination of EurekaFacts' review of previous questionnaires conducted on various J-1 visa domestic hosting audiences and specific goals set forth by the working group representatives. The survey focused on topic areas such as motivations to participate in the au pair program, personal and professional impact of the program, impact on family and children, overall experience during the program, satisfaction with the program (process and au pair), cultural experiences and exchange, and spending and economic impact of hosting an au pair.

Data collection was conducted from April 15, 2020 – May 15, 2020 using a web-based survey platform (Verint EFM). The survey was accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week and was designed to save partial survey responses so that participants may return later to complete. In total, sponsor agencies contacted 46,011 host families based on their database records of who had participated in the past five years. Multiple reminder notifications were sent to host family contacts over the four-week field period.

At the end of the field period, survey data was reviewed and cleaned to include only complete cases, defined as respondents who completed the full survey. The final sample size for the au pair alumni survey includes N=6,452 cases and a response rate of 14.0% (completed cases (6,452)/contacts made (46,011) = .1402). At a 95% level of confidence, the margin of error for the final sample is plus or minus 1.2 percentage points.

Qualitative In-Depth Interview Methodology

EurekaFacts conducted a total of twelve individual semi-structured interviews with one parent from a host family. This qualitative component was conducted to supplement and contextualize survey results, provide detailed understanding of the motivations to use an au pair

over other child care services, provide concrete examples of the personal, professional, and family impact of hosting an au pair, and better understand the dynamic between the host family and the au pairs they hosted.

EurekaFacts developed a protocol guide based on the survey topics to conduct the interview sessions on the focus topics (see Appendix E). Specific topics covered included motivations for participation, experience with sponsor organizations and matching process, overall experience and satisfaction with au pairs, impact of program on family relationships and careers, challenges to participation, importance of program for family, cultural enrichment and exchange (language, events, etc.), and costs and accommodations for au pair.

Survey participants provided their contact information upon completion of the host family survey if they were interested in participating in an interview. Outreach for screening, selection, and scheduling of interviews was conducted via email. Interviews were conducted between May 25, 2020 – June 3, 2020 by phone (Skype) and lasted no more than 45 minutes. In order to capture diverse perspectives about the program, host families selected for an interview are from across the U.S. regions with varying family situations and lengths of program participation.

7.2 Statistical Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the host family survey mainly relies on descriptive statistics – frequencies of marginal results and crosstabulations of pairs of survey questions. Survey questions are crossed by other related survey questions to provide a deeper understanding of overlapping host family opinions and experiences. Response options are often collapsed, especially scales, for concise reporting of common assessments and perceptions (e.g., “very” and “somewhat” important may be collapsed into “net importance”). Additionally, analysis may focus on the most intense opinion in a scale to provide clear ranking of sub-items (e.g., “very important” vs. other response options). Furthermore, analysis of “select all” list items often include distribution of the number of items participants selected from the list (e.g., number of cultural experiences shared with au pair).

Qualitative analysis from the host family in-depth interviews centers on topic area of the questions. Pertinent quotes and summative findings are presented in the related sections of the detailed discussion of host family survey findings (section 8). The quotes are used to illustrate or further characterize survey findings. Additionally, quotes are used in the policy analysis (section 4) and economic analysis (section 10) to provide further support within those sections.

Economic analysis (section 10) is based on results from questions 40 - 43 in the host family survey and aggregated based on when they reported last hosting an au pair. A measure of central tendency for each question was identified for the overall sample as well as the yearly samples (e.g., mean amount spent per category). Outliers were eliminated using interquartile ranges. After these figures were normalized, the results for the yearly samples were multiplied by the total number of host families in each year (shown in Figure 10-1) or presented in per capital units (shown in Figure 10-2). The overall estimates are calculated using average monthly spending reported figures then multiplied by 12 months to represent the amount host families spent over the course of one year.

8. Host Family Survey: Detailed Findings

The 6,452 completed host family survey responses were captured through structured survey questions. The respondents represent host families who hosted an au pair for the duration of the program within the last five years. They provided information and feedback regarding their experiences serving as a host family with the program, including their decision to seek an au pair, and impacts on their family and community. These data are analyzed using frequency tables, crosstabulations and other statistical techniques to distill findings from survey participant responses. The margin of error assuming a 95% confidence level around point estimates is +/- 1.2% point for each topline level percentage reported.

Additionally, qualitative findings and quotes from the 12 in-depth interviews conducted with a member of a host family are included across sections to provide deeper understanding of the host family experience.

The results of this analysis are presented in this section and structured thematically:

1. Demographic overview of respondents, including basic information about their program participation.
2. Overall satisfaction with the au pair program, their au pair, and the mechanics of the program.
3. Motivations for joining the program and benefits to their family, including the impact if the au pair program were not available.
4. Cultural exchange activities that host families engaged in with their au pairs, including engaging in enrichment activities and forming relationships with au pairs.

8.1 Host Family Demographic Profile

Between 2015 and 2020, au pair program participants were placed with American host families in every state in the nation and the District of Columbia. Placements were somewhat higher, during this timeframe, in the Northeast (33%) and West (31%) regions of the United States. The two states with the highest placement rates reported are California (16%) and New York (10%).

The majority (90%) of host families have 3 to 6 people living in their homes, but most commonly (69%) have 4 to 5 people. Including, on average, one infant, two children, and two adults. Majority (90%) of the children are two years old or under. Less than one-third (31%) of the au pairs was responsible for taking care of more than one child, children with special needs, or children with health-related needs.

About one-in-ten (11%) host family representatives are either a veteran or currently in active duty or national guard (7%, 3%, and 1%, respectively). Overall, most (60%) of host families have participated in the program for three or fewer years.

8.2 Overall Host Family Experience and Satisfaction

Host families, from both the survey and qualitative interviews, are extremely satisfied overall with the au pair program. They are most pleased with the personal connections and relationships they build with au pairs. Host families are also highly satisfied with the au pair sponsor organizations but identify some areas for improvement.

8.2.1 Satisfaction with Overall Au Pair Program Experience

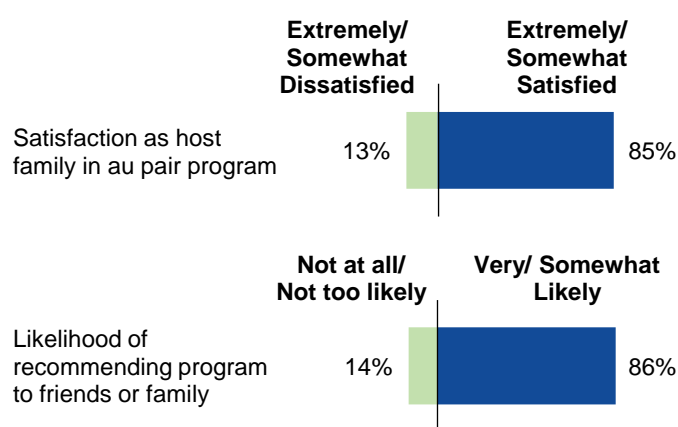
Overall, host families are satisfied with the program and are likely to recommend it to others, including friends and family. Most (85%) host families are satisfied with their overall experience with the au pair program, including the majority (57%) who are “extremely” satisfied with their experience. Few host families are neutral (2%) or dissatisfied (13%) with their experience. Accordingly, 86% are likely to recommend their friends and families to become host families in the program, including two-thirds (65%) who are “very” likely to do so. Additionally, more than two-thirds (68%) of those still eligible to participate say they are at least “somewhat” likely to participate as a host family again, including a majority (52%) who are “very” likely to do so.

Qualitative interview participants all attest to their overall satisfaction with the experience as a host family, mostly accredited to the quality childcare and strong relationship developed with the au pair. For host families participating for multiple years, they were most often satisfied with the care and interaction provided by the au pairs. Any source of dissatisfaction usually arose from communication issues with the au pair agency, while issues with au pairs were rare.

Several host families note their happiness with the program:

*“I think that the au pair program is **phenomenal**, and the potential of the program is amazing” -Tennessee, Father of one.*

Figure 8.2.1-1: Host family satisfaction with program and likelihood of recommending it to others



Source: Q4, Q7. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages read across and may not sum exactly due to rounding.

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*“[We’re] very [satisfied]. Very. We’re just completing our first year without an au pair after **15 years of continuous au pair presence** at our house. We made the most of the program.” -Massachusetts, Father of two.*

*“Overall, I’m very happy with the program. I know I told other people about it while I was going through it. Not a lot of people knew about it. I was **very happy and would recommend it.**” -North Carolina, Mother of three.*

Overall, host families positively view key experiences across the duration of their participation. The positive experiences across the program resulted in 88% affirming having at least a “good” experience with the cultural exchange and learning that occurred because of their participation.

Host families are most satisfied with the au pairs themselves. Nearly all affirm they had a “good” or “very good” experience building personal connections with their au pairs and that the care provided by the au pairs was “good” or “very good” (91% each), including a majority who say these experiences were “very good (62% and 58%, respectively). Most (85%) also assessed the childcare related household support provided was also “good” or “very good”.

Qualitative interviews also support deep connections that host families make with au pairs.

*“Some of our au pairs were here for ‘life cycle’ events. One of [our] au pairs was here for my son’s bar mitzvah. Our au pairs all joined us for family events. One of them lived longer here and stayed in touch with my mother. [Most meaningful] was **establishing meaningful relationships** with these women. In one case the young woman’s own mother passed away, but we developed a relationship as meaningful as someone you would have met in [a] non-business relationship. Having these girls live in our home was very meaningful.”*

-Illinois, Mother of four.

*“My children really bonded well with both of the au pairs we hosted, and the au pairs continuously gave us feedback about their positive experience. It was a **good experience for everyone.**” -Ohio, Father of two.*

Beyond the connections formed between parties, host families are positive about the cultural exchange and learning experiences provided by the program. Nearly nine-in-ten (88%) survey respondents had at least a “good” cultural exchange experience. This is confirmed by the qualitative interviews where they express excitement about “having a little bit of Mexico in Chicago.” The experience of cultural exchange and learning is fundamental to why many of

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these families continue to use the program.

This sentiment is expressed by one host family with older children:

*“My kids are getting older; we could probably stop, but really it’s the desire to have that cultural exchange. Having someone available in the house to help with the kids is not necessary anymore. It’s really about the cultural exchange. It’s really **important for my kids to understand how big the world is**, and for someone to live with us who is from the other side of the world helps ground them.” -Nevada, Father of two.*

About eight-in-ten of host families had “good” or “very good” experiences with various procedural aspects of the program and interactions with the sponsor agencies, including communications with the local representative (84%), the resources provided to the family (82%), general communication with the agency (81%), the overall matching process with the au pair (79%), and how concerns were addressed (75%).

However, host families did not express intense positive feelings about all aspects of the program. Host families were least likely to have a “very good” experience with having concerns addressed (24%). That said, better experiences communicating with program staff increased the likelihood of a better experience with answering their questions. Most of those who had a “very good” experience communicating with the local representative (77%) or communication with the sponsor agency (71%) had a “very good” experience having their concerns addressed.

Figure 8.2.1-2: Host family experiences with procedural and social aspects of the program

% who say ...	NET good/ very good %	Very good %
Building personal connections with au pair	91	62
The care provided by the au pair in your home	91	59
Cultural exchange and learning	88	36
Childcare related household support	85	45
Communication and interactions with local rep.	84	39
Resources provided (e.g., guidelines, tips, support)	82	26
Communication and interactions with the sponsor agencies	81	27
The matching process of the au pair with your family	79	26
How your concerns, if any, were addressed	75	24

Source: Q5. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Net percentage is one half of a scale, inclusive of “very good” column.

8.2.2 Navigating Program Logistics and Potential Challenges

Host families overall had a positive experience with handling program logistics associated with working with the sponsor agencies and integrating an au pair into their home, and often able to manage these experiences with minimal challenge.

Au Pair Sponsor Agency

The majority of the host families had “good” or “excellent” experiences with the application process and interacting with their local au pair representative. Host families reflect most positively about the communications they had with their local au pair representative: 40% say this was “good” and 37% say this was “excellent”. Similarly, about eight-in-ten (78%) say that navigating the application process was “excellent” (23%) or “good” (55%).

Host families are also overall positive about their experience being matched to an au pair for their families: 72% saying this was a “good” or “excellent” experience. During interviews, host families acknowledged the matching process to be effective, but several noted it could be tedious to look through so many applications. One mother noted the matching process is “part organic and part science” and several stress the importance of video-chatting with candidates to better understand them. Additionally, another mother explained that each sponsor agency she worked with had a different matching procedure, influencing the experience each time.

Several host families note the positive experience working with someone from the agency during the matching process. One host family recounted their positive experience:

*“[The representative I talked to] did a great job... **helping me identify some candidates, narrow down how to do that. They worked hard to help and be supportive.** It is a major undertaking to take a young person into your own home, with your own kids. [They] did a good job about it.” -Illinois, Mother of four.*

Figure 8.2.2-1: Host family experiences with au pair sponsor agency

% who say ...	NET good/ excellent %	Excellent %
Navigating the application process	78	23
Communications with your local au pair representative	77	37
Orientation experience with your local program representative	74	29
Finding the right au pair to match the needs of your family	72	29
Communications with your sponsor agency	68	20
Your sponsor agency’s response to concerns, if any, that you raised	65	23

Source: Q15. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Net percentage is one half of a scale, inclusive of “excellent” column.

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While overall satisfied with their experience with the sponsor agency, host families are least positive, relative to the other aspects of the program, communicating with the sponsor agency overall (68%) and how the sponsor agency responded to concerns (65%). This is reflected in the qualitative interviews as well where host families were consistently express their happiness with their communicated with the local representative but did not always receive as much support or information from the agency as they may have wanted. Nevertheless, host families were able to successfully navigate the program requirements and participated multiple times because of their positive experience.

Au Pair Assigned to Host Family

Most host families had positive experiences – “good” or “excellent” – establishing a relationship with their au pair, including integrating and engaging them in their home (85%), communicating with the au pairs (84%), and establishing household rules (83%). Logistically, the changes to the host family’s costs to operate their household with a new member was least positive, but still positive for many (70%).

Based on the qualitative interviews, even the most challenging aspect – adapting household expenses to include another person – was easily solved as many of the expenses are explained up front by sponsor agencies. Unforeseen expenses tended to be small, such as paying for additional meals when eating out or replacing an au pair’s broken glasses, as illustration. Host families who are a part of the program for many years note that accounting for additional expenses over time becomes very easy and “basically imperceptible” once a budget is made.

Figure 8.2.2-2: Host family experiences with an au pair in their household

% who say ...	NET good/	
	excellent	Excellent
	%	%
Integrating the au pair into your home and engaging with them	85	41
Cross cultural communications between au pair and household	84	34
Establishing household rules for the au pair in your home	83	32
Changes in cost to operate household with additional member	70	19

Source: Q17. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Net percentage is one half of a scale, inclusive of “excellent” column.

8.3 Motivations for Participation and Benefits of Involvement

Host families heard about the au pair program primarily through word of mouth. They decided to follow through and join the program because the structure and costs of the program were ideal for their family. Additionally, many were interested in having their children involved in a culturally enriching experience. Ultimately, all members of the host family benefited from having an au pair in the home, and many acknowledged the detriment of potentially losing the program.

8.3.1 Decision to Participate in Au Pair Program

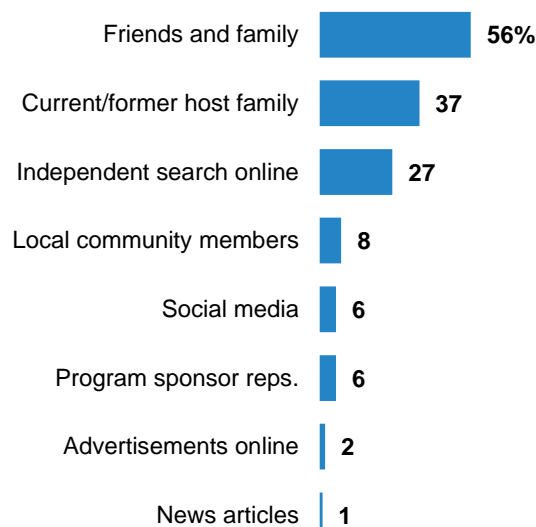
Host families were most likely to hear about the program from either a recommendation from a friend or family member (56%) or information from a current or former host family (37%). About one-quarter (27%) heard about it through searching online. As noted in the qualitative interviews, families will often do extensive research into the program and sponsor agencies after hearing about this opportunity to determine if they want to participate.

Host families found many aspects of the program important to their decision to participate in the program. The opportunity for live-in childcare (89%) where families could establish a deeper level of trust with the provider (90%) were some of the most important factors. In fact, more than two-thirds said these were “very important” to their decision to join the program (68% and 67%, respectively). Additionally, 85% needed childcare services that offered cost-savings.

This is exemplified in one mother’s explanation of how she and her husband needed to find childcare to fit their situation and was cost-effective. She explained:

Figure 8.3.1-1: Where host families heard about the program

Host families mostly hear about the program through word of mouth from friends, family, or current/former host families



Source: Q2. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452.
 Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Review of Au Pair Program

*“My husband and I had triplets, and the doctors told us when we were pregnant that we couldn’t put them in daycare, but both of us work full-time. **We knew we needed in-home care for our girls** when they came home after they were born, but we knew we couldn’t afford a nanny in our area. The **au pair program was one of the best options** for us.”*

-Delaware, Mother of three.

The vast majority (78%) note the importance that the au pair program was a cultural exchange opportunity for their family, including 42% who said this was “very important” to them. Additionally, half (50%) said it was at least “somewhat” important to them that this opportunity provides a chance for their child to learn a foreign language.

One parent noted that many factors contribute to deciding to participate in the program, and the opportunity for cultural exchange is a major reason:

*“I liked the idea of having a young person from a different country. I liked the idea of **cultural exchange**. I like the idea of having childcare but having something **beyond just childcare**, and I liked the idea of having a live-in.”*

-New York, Mother of two.

On joining and then continuing with the program for multiple years, while parents do consider the financial implications of childcare services (daycare vs. nanny vs. au pair) and the logistics of having someone in the home, they continue to participate in the program because of the cultural exchange and relationships their family builds.

One father summarizes this shift in priorities, as such:

*“Most of us come into this with the cost aspect, but once we start to see all the benefits, **cost goes way back on the back burner**. Once you see having this person, this cultural exchange, **this bonding that happens** between not only the child and the au pair but between the young lady and the host family. I think it’s something everyone should participate in at some point in their lives.”*

-Virginia, Father of two.

8.3.2 Benefits of Participating as a Host Family

Overall, host families felt they received multiple benefits from participating in the program, acknowledging both main benefits for their families, children, and public diplomacy from overall participation as well as personal benefits for the parents.

Main Benefits

Beyond benefiting from the extra help with their children (90%), most are grateful for the relationships they built, including 82% who developed a relationship with the au pair and their family, 74% who said this fostered a life-long friendship with the au pair, and 65% who are now mentors for their au pair.

Host families also enjoy forming “unique relationships” with the au pairs they bring into their household. Many of them enjoyed having another person in the home for their children to form connections with.

One mother explained the on-going relationship between her family and the multiple au pairs they hosted this way:

*“We are still in touch with all three of our former au pairs. **We keep in touch with two very, very frequently**, and the other less frequently because she was getting married. Of all of them, we had one who really connected with my daughter and the rest of us loved her.”*

-Illinois, Mother of four.

Additionally, they noted the benefits of cultural exchange they experienced and are fostering, including the benefit of interacting with people from other cultures (67%), promoting cultural engagement with their children (65%), appreciating other cultures (61%), and providing experiences to young people to take back to their home countries (71%).

Figure 8.3.2-1: Main benefits experienced as host family from program participation

% who ...	
Experienced __ main benefits	%
0 – 5	31
6 - 8	29
9 - 11	40
	100
<hr/>	
	%
Have additional help with children	90
Relationship between the au pair and the children	82
Foster life-long friendships between family and au pair	74
Provide life-changing experiences for young people to take back to their home countries	71
Interact with people from different cultures	67
Promote cultural engagement with your child and the au pair	65
Became a mentor to your au pair for personal development	65
Gain an increased sense of appreciation for other cultures	61
Exposure to a foreign language	54
Gain other perspectives and norms on child rearing	36
Feel an increased sense of pride/appreciation for the U.S.	34

Source: Q29. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Review of Au Pair Program

Multiple host families note the ongoing intercultural relationships the program fosters and how it is continually impacting their children. As one father noted:

*“It was great. We made **great relationships** with the girls who came. We have friends in other countries now. They Facetime with my daughter. One of them **traveled back to visit us** during the holidays this year. Overall, it was a great experience for our family on a personal level and from the au pair’s standpoint... Knowing that there is this **family member halfway around the world**, when my daughters get older **we will travel and see them** and they can share their homes with us.”*

-Tennessee, Father of one.

Benefits to Parents

Parents also felt they specifically benefited personally, socially, and professionally as a result of the program.

Nearly all host family parents agree that the program provided the opportunity to interact with people from different countries (92%), and they now better understand the culture of their au pair (88%). For host families these exchanges also foster greater understanding of and interest in their own culture because they were able to teach it to others (80% agree). More than eight-in-ten (82%)

parents agree that the au pair program allowed them more quality time with their children.

Additionally, 87% affirm that having an au pair benefited them professionally, including 47% who strongly agree with this sentiment. These types of benefits demonstrate the multi-dimensional and multi-generational positive impacts of the au pair program on the children, the au pairs, as well as, the parents and other adults in the family.

Figure 8.3.2-2: Benefits to parents of host family

Because of the au pair program I ...

<i>% who ...</i>	NET agree %	Strongly agree %
Was able to interact with people from different cultures	92	52
Gained a better understanding of the culture of the au pair	89	45
Was able to dedicate more time to my career	84	47
Was able to have more quality time with my children	82	42
Developed a better understanding of my own culture through teaching others	80	29

Source: Q8. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Net percentage is one half of a scale, inclusive of “strongly agree” column.

8.3.3 Impact of Au Pair Program for Host Family

The au pair program is extremely important for these host families to properly function and to provide the best outcomes for their children.

Need for the Au Pair Program

The au pair program is critical to these host families. If the program were no longer available, it would affect 71% of these families at least “a fair amount,” including the majority (55%) who say it would affect them “a great deal.”

For example, without the program it would be difficult for the majority of families to replace the flexibility the program provided for their family situation (77%), the familial trust and bond with the au pair/caretaker (66%), and the cultural exposure of other customs and traditions (52%). About one-third (34%) would also find it difficult to find a new method to help them and their children learn a new language. Qualitative interviews confirm how important the parents view having an au pair as part of their family structure:

*“In the day-to-day I would **not have been able to do what I did to run our family** the way they ran without our au pairs.” -Illinois, Mother of four.*

*“Without the au pair program, I **wouldn’t have had the cultural exchange**, I wouldn’t have had the **foreign language immersion**, I wouldn’t have had the **variety**... We would have to move our schedules around work. **We wouldn’t have had the same flexibility.**” -Virginia, Father of two.*

Without the au pair program, most host families believe it is likely they would spend more money on childcare (84%), including two-thirds (66%) who believe it is “extremely likely” this would be the case. They also believe that without the program it is likely to negatively impact their children and family, as 67% believe it is likely they would not be able to find suitable childcare and 57% believe their family would not develop intercultural relationships and a global perspective.

The au pair program also benefits the parents, their career and relationships. The majority (71%) of host families believe that without the program it is likely that they would not be able to spend personal time alone with their spouse. This is confirmed in the interviews where host families explained how having extra support in the household benefitted their relationships with their spouse, their family, and their career goals.

Review of Au Pair Program

One man explained the positive impact it has had on his relationship with his wife, family, and his wife's business:

*"It has shaped our family over the last 10 years. It has been a positive for us... Without it, **my wife I wouldn't be able to go out as much**, my wife wouldn't have been able to grow her business if she had to spend all of her time on childcare needs during the days. **We would have been less happy as a family.**" -Nevada, Father of two.*

A minority (38%) believe that without an au pair one parent would likely need to change or stop their career, and qualitative interviews confirm that few families felt stopping or switching careers would have been necessary. Additionally, host families reveal that having an au pair allowed the parents to work to their fullest potential while still enjoying their family.

One mother who works full-time and whose husband is in the military explained:

*"The bottom line for me and my husband is we did not believe **we would be able to perform professionally to our best ability without an au pair**, without that live-in childcare. We would have been too exhausted."*
-Nebraska, Mother of 3.

Additional Impact on Children

Host families recognize multiple benefits of having an au pair taking care of their children in the home. Eight-in-ten (80%) believe the au pairs contributed a "fair amount" or a "great deal" to their children's understanding of different cultures, and 48% say the au pairs contributed to providing foreign language immersion for their children.

Host families note the cultural and language impact the program had on their children:

*"[Our children] were much **more exposed to Spanish**. We had two au pairs from Mexico and one from Colombia. In each case we **learned about Mexican food and Colombian food and a little bit about geography and culture**. We were very open to learning about diversity." -Illinois, Mother of four.*

*"**Mission accomplished**... because we have Italian [language] in the house, we speak it at dinner, we speak it to the au pairs, my kids are fluent in Italian. We go back [to Italy] every year. **They are truly bilingual.**" -Massachusetts, Father of two.*

Review of Au Pair Program

The majority of host families also noted how au pairs contributed “a great deal” or “fair amount” to their children’s social and academic development, including early childhood development of motor and communication skills (70%), social skills (77%), new interests or hobbies (66%), and to academic success (57%).

Host families report various positive social and academic developments as a result of the au pairs, such as better manners, interest in visiting local attractions with their au pairs, better social perceptions and learning to interact with others.

Figure 8.3.3-1: Benefits to children because of au pair

How much, if at all, would you say that the childcare your child(ren) received from an au pair contributed to ...

<i>% who say ...</i>	NET fair amount/ great deal	Great deal
	%	%
Understanding of different cultures and countries	80	38
Development of social skills	77	36
Early childhood development of motor skills and communication	70	31
Development of new interests and hobbies	66	26
Academic success	57	21
Foreign language immersion	48	23

Source: Q37. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Net percentage is one half of a scale, inclusive of “great deal” column.

8.4 Cultural Exchange

Host families engage their au pairs in cultural activities about as frequently as the au pair alumni reciprocate the cultural exchange with their host families.

Most all (98%) of host families were sure to engage in a variety of activities with their au pair. Most commonly, host families celebrating traditional American holidays (94%) with their au pairs, exchange stories or pictures (87%), participating in outdoor recreational activities (86%) or visiting sites of interest (e.g. museums or parks) or traveling to other cities/states (82% each). Qualitative interviews confirm many of the host families brought their au pairs on family vacations or when traveling for a child’s event/competition in another city.

Additionally, the majority of host families also brought their au pairs to local community celebrations (71%) or participated in American sports and games (68%) or health and fitness activities (62%). Bringing au pairs to volunteer with a local charity or other community engagement opportunity was less common (20%).

Sharing of cultural activities in the au pair program has a reciprocal relationship for au pair alumni and their host families. Three quarters or more of host families affirm that au pairs shared their home country food and cuisine (88%), stories or pictures (85%), holidays and traditions (80%), or cultural gifts (75%). All host families recount their au pairs sharing these major aspects of their culture with them.

Host families recall au pairs sharing media (e.g., movies or songs) or clothing from their home country as well (58% and 39%, respectively). In addition, host families say that au pairs often share details and aspects of their culture allowing host families to “learn a lot of little things that you wouldn’t know.”

Figure 8.4-1: Most common cultural exchange activities between host families and au pairs

<i>% who engaged in...</i>	
<i>Most common cultural activities host family shared with au pair</i>	
Traditional American holiday event or activity	94
Exchange of language, stories, and pictures	87
Outdoor recreational activities	86
Travel to other cities or states	82
Visit sites of interest (museums, parks, historic sites, etc.)	82
<i>Most common cultural activities au pair shared with host family</i>	
Traditional food dishes from their country of origin	88
Stories, pictures, or mementos of their family and home	85
Holidays and traditions from their country of origin	80
Exchange cultural gifts	75

Source: Q27, Q28. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages are from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Review of Au Pair Program

One father explained the multitude of information the au pairs shared with the family and how that deepened his children's cultural understanding:

*"[We learned about] their daily lives, how their systems work, their education, their healthcare, family life, roles people fill in their societies. You can read a lot of news, you can study different cultures, but **you don't really get the mundane minutia of the differences between cultures unless you live with someone from that culture.** My wife and I had those experiences, but my kids would not have had those experiences as easily. We could have taken them to Germany with us, but they wouldn't have had that sense of appreciation for the people and similarities and differences between cultures. It's permitted them to get more out of the travel." -Oregon, Father of two.*

Another host family encapsulated the mutual cultural exchange that embodies the au pair program:

*"Allowing au pairs to experience America and live with American families and learn about American culture and customs – our au pairs absolutely got all of that. **Allowing them to travel and experience America**, from D.C. to New York. We brought one of our au pairs to Disney World... And the other way around, **showing our children the different cultures the au pairs brought** to our home – to the clothing, to the food, to the stories, to the games – was just delightful." -Nebraska, Mother of three.*

Host families believe the au pair program was fundamental to providing new cultural experiences for their family they would not have otherwise naturally encountered. They are appreciative of the experiences and culture au pairs shared with them and the unique and lasting impact cultural exchange had on their family, especially their children.

*"[If we didn't participate], **I don't think we would have been motivated to have the particular experiences** such as what a Colombian Christmas looks like, or a Hungarian Christmas." -Ohio, Father of two.*

*"The kids still remember it. **They still talk about it.** They still make the food they learned to make from their au pairs." -Nebraska, Mother of three.*

*"The **impact is immeasurable** in terms of broadening and expanding young minds." -New York, Mother of two.*

9. Comparison of Au Pair Alumni and Host Family Experiences

Au pair alumni and host families have several similar and different experiences across aspects of learning about, participating in, and cultivating the benefits from the au pair program. Overall, each party had a positive experience and would recommend it to others. Word of mouth is an important factor in spreading information about the program to encourage participating, especially for host families. The majority of participants agree that the program led to better understanding of foreign culture and their own. Cultural exchange opportunities were equally reciprocated, each party engaging with the other in an exchange of cultural activities and customs.

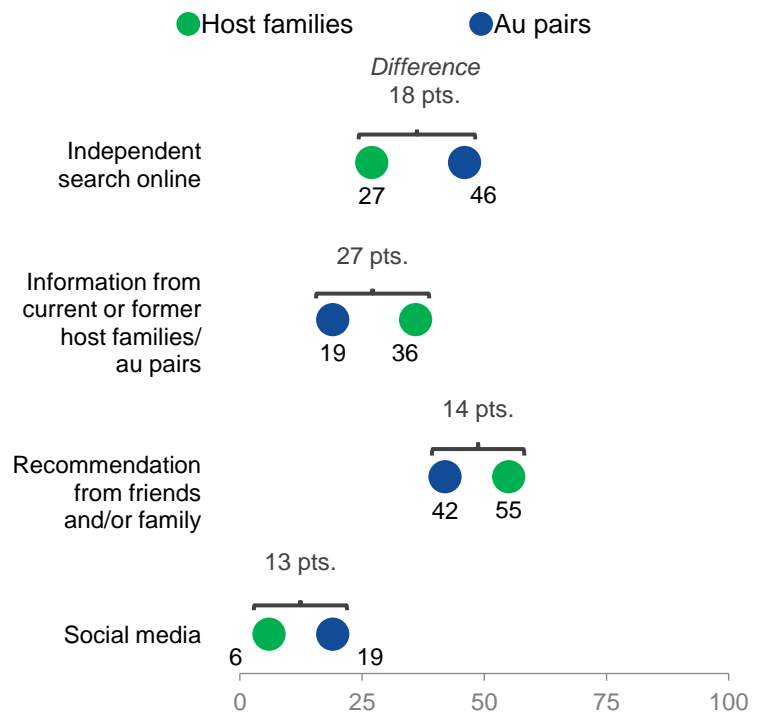
9.1 Program Onboarding and Experience

Recommendations from friends and/or family, independent online searches, and information from current or former host families/au pairs are the most common ways program participants initially learned about the program.

Among host families, word of mouth is the main source they learned about the program. More than half (55%) of the host families received a recommendation for the program from friends and/or family and more than one-third of the host families (36%) acquired information from current or former host families. Au pair alumni similarly were recommended by a friend or family member to join the program (42%), but far fewer got information from a current or former au pair (19%).

Figure 9.1-1: Comparison of most common sources from which host families and au pair alumni learned about the program

How did you heard about the au pair program? ...



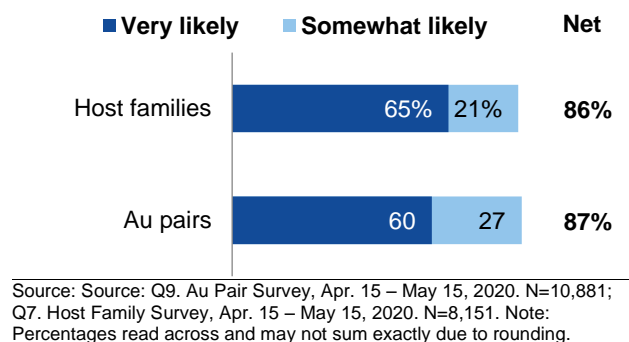
Source: Source: Q3. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881; Q2. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Review of Au Pair Program

Online sources are more likely to have been used by au pair alumni. Independent searching online is the most popular source they used to learn about the program compared to online searching being third most common for host families (46% vs. 27%, respectively). Both host families and au pair alumni minimally relied on other information sources, such as social media.

The popularity of word-of-mouth methods demonstrates the strong reputation that the au pair program enjoys. Additionally, most of host families (86%) and au pairs (87%) are likely to recommend the program to their friends, including at least six-in-ten who are “very” likely to do so (65% and 60% respectively).

Figure 9.1-2: Likelihood of recommending au pair program to others



9.2 Satisfaction

Both host families and au pair alumni are about equally satisfied with the program (84% and 83%, respectively), with slightly more host families saying they are “extremely” satisfied with their experience compared with au pairs (55% vs 48%, respectively).

Similarly, most host families (91%) and au pair alumni (83%) had a “good” or “very good” experience building personal connections with their counterparts. The majority (62%) of host families say they had a “very good” experience building these personal connections compared to half (50%) of au pair alumni who say the same.

Additionally, the majority (86%) of program participants reported they have kept in touch with their fellow host families/au pair alumni after finishing the program, including more than half (64%) of the host families who contract their former au pairs at least once a month.

Figure 9.2-1: Comparison of overall program satisfaction and relationships built

	% who are satisfied with the au pair program ...		% who had a good experience building personal connections with their counterparts	
	NET Satisfaction %	Extremely satisfied %	NET Good %	Very good %
Host Families	84	55	91	62
Au Pair Alumni	83	48	83	50
<i>Difference (% pts.)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>12</i>

Source: Q4, Q5f. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881; Q4, Q5d. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages are one half of a scale, inclusive of “extremely satisfied” and “very good” column.

9.3 Cultural Exchange and Activities

Participants agree that their involvement in the au pair program led to an improved understanding of international culture and their own culture, as well as, the ability to interact with people from different backgrounds. Compared to the host families, au pair alumni are more likely to be positively impacted in their understanding and interaction with another culture because of their involvement in the au pair program.

More than half (55%) of au pair alumni “strongly” agree that they gained a better understanding of American culture, somewhat higher than the 44% of host families who say the same about understanding the au pair’s culture. The majority (68%) of au pair alumni “strongly” agree that because of the au pair program they were able to interact with people from different cultures compared to half (51%) of host families who say the same. Notably, more au pair alumni say they “strongly” agree that the program helped them develop a better understanding of their own culture compared to the host families by 13% points (41% vs. 28%, respectively). It stands to reason that these gaps are, in part, attributable to the fact that the au pairs, and not the host families, are completely immersed in a new culture.

Figure 9.3-1: Comparison of culture impact on host families and au pair alumni

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Because of the au pair program, I ...

	<i>Gained better understanding of the international culture</i>		<i>Able to interact with people from different cultures</i>		<i>Developed a better understanding of my own culture</i>	
	NET Agree	Strongly Agree	NET Agree	Strongly Agree	NET Agree	Strongly Agree
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Host Families	89	44	92	51	79	28
Au Pair Alumni	97	55	97	67	87	41
<i>Difference (% pts.)</i>	8	11	5	16	8	13

Source: Q25a-b, d. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881; Q8a-c. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452.
 Note: Independent percentages per sub-question and are one half of a scale, inclusive of each “strongly agree” column.

Cultural exchange opportunities were bilateral. Nearly all participants shared their own cultural traditions or activities from their country of origin with their counterparts, and these shared activities are about equally recalled by the receiving party (e.g., host families recall au pairs sharing food and cuisine with them at similar levels au pairs reported doing so). Host families most commonly shared traditional American holidays events and activities with their au

pair (94%). About the same number of au pairs recall engaging in this activity (91%). Sharing of food and cultural dishes are the most common customs that au pairs shared with their host families. Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) au pairs and host families (88%) shared food dishes and cuisine from their home.

Other popular activities that the au pair alumni say they shared with their host family counterparts include sharing stories, pictures, or mementos of their family and home (80%) and exchanging cultural gifts (74%). In turn, host families also commonly engaged their au pair by exchanging language, stories and pictures as well as participating in outdoor recreational activities with them (87% and 86%, respectively). Overall, host families and au pairs recall sharing and receiving cultural exchange with their counterparts at similar rates.

Figure 9.3-2: Top three cultural exchange activities/actions host families and au pair alumni say they shared with counterpart

<i>During your time in the program, what types of cultural activities did you and your family engage in with your au pair?</i>	%
Traditional American holiday event or activity	94
Exchange of language, stories, and pictures	87
Outdoor recreational activities	86

<i>What activities and customs from your home country did you share with your host family and friends?</i>	%
Food dishes/cuisine from your home	89
Stories, pictures, or mementos from home	80
Exchange cultural gifts	74

Source: Q27. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452; Q23. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Note: Percentages from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

Figure 9.3-3: Top three cultural exchange activities/actions host families and au pair alumni say their counterpart shared with them

<i>During your time in the program, which types of cultural activities did you participate in with your host family or friends?</i>	%
Celebrating American holidays and traditions	91
Travel to other cities or states (i.e. vacations)	90
Outdoor recreational activities	85

<i>What types of cultural activities did your au pair share with you and your family?</i>	%
Traditional food dishes from their country of origin	88
Stories, pictures, or mementos of their family and home	85
Holidays and traditions from their country of origin	80

Source: Q21. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881; Q28. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452. Note: Percentages from a check all that apply list and do not add to 100%.

10. Economic Impact on U.S. Economy

After paying all related fees to apply for the au pair program and a J-1 visa, an au pair spends on average \$5,336 per year during their time in the United States. This figure includes the costs of entertainment, travel for leisure, local transportation, personal purchases, additional travel expenses or fees, educational expenses (beyond \$500 stipend from host family) and medical expenses. For host families, the average expenditure to accommodate an au pair in their home is \$7,006 per year. This figure includes the cost for groceries, local transportation, vacation with family, travel expense for the au pair’s independent travel, additional utility usage, mobile phone, entertainment, education and medical expenses, monetary gifts or bonuses for special events or holidays, and miscellaneous purchases.

Program participants were divided into sub-samples based on when they finished the program. There was a significant increase in per capita yearly spending by au pair alumni from 2016 to 2017 and from 2018 to 2019. In 2019, au pair program participants spent an estimated total of \$257 million dollars because of their program participation, with all au pair alumni spending a total of about \$117 million and all host families spending a total of about \$140 million. This analysis assumes the total number of host families for the au pair program is equal to the total number of au pairs per year.

Figure 10-1: Yearly spending of au pair program participants – au pairs and host families – 2016 to 2019

	<i>Overview of au pair spending</i>			<i>Overview of host family spending</i>			<i>Total spending</i>
	Total Au Pairs	Estimated yearly spending per au pair	Estimated total spending by all au pairs	Total Host Families	Estimated yearly spending per host family	Estimated total spending by all host families	Estimated total spending by program participants
	N	\$	\$ in mils	N	\$	\$ in mils	\$ in mils
2019	21,551	\$5,429	\$117	21551	\$6,484	\$140	\$257
2018	20,678	\$4,918	\$102	20678	\$6,550	\$114	\$237
2017	20,353	\$5,095	\$104	20353	\$6,422	\$111	\$234
2016	19,233	\$4,623	\$88	19233	\$6,501	\$105	\$213

Source: Q56B. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Q41. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452.

Review of Au Pair Program

On average, travel for leisure/vacation is the highest expense incurred by both the au pair alumni and the host families. The spending in this sector increased year over year for the au pair alumni (\$1,808 per person in 2016 vs. \$2,509 in 2019). Other popular economic sectors for au pair alumni include entertainment and personal purchases. As for the host families, daily expenditures such as groceries and local transportation are the other highest sectors.

Figure 10-2: Popular Economic Sectors Estimated Average Yearly Spending (2016 to 2019)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	Overall
Au Pair Alumni					
Entertainment (e.g., dining out, movies, etc.)	\$1,550	\$1,511	\$1,444	\$1,505	\$1,572
Travel for leisure (e.g., lodging, air fare, etc.)	\$1,808	\$2,219	\$2,211	\$2,509	\$2,321
Personal/other purchases (e.g., clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)	\$1,323	\$1,283	\$1,229	\$1,262	\$1,341
Host Families					
Local transportation (Car, bike, public transit, etc.)	\$1,728	\$1,930	\$1,546	\$1,611	\$1,732
Vacation with your family (e.g. lodging, air fare, food)	\$2,750	\$2,745	\$2,413	\$3,034	\$2,691
Groceries	\$1,464	\$1,594	\$1,831	\$1,778	\$1,970

Source: Q56B. Au Pair Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=10,881. Q41. Host Family Survey, Apr. 15 – May 15, 2020. N=6,452.

Financially, there is a net positive effect for host families, au pairs and on the overall impact for local economies. The expenditures from host families provide for the day-to-day needs and beyond for au pairs. In turn, au pairs receive resources that allow them to experience American culture in their community, travel and purchase U.S. goods that contribute towards local economic growth.

Host families had to increase their spending for typical items such as groceries, utilities, and transportation in order to host an au pair. Additionally, host families purchased more luxury and lifestyle items for au pairs in order to include them in family and cultural activities.

Review of Au Pair Program

Several host families during qualitative interviews describe providing comfortable living arrangements to ensure au pairs were happy and properly accommodated during their stay and could fully participate with family excursions:

*“They all had their own room and bathroom. It was a nice size room with bright window. Yes, [we provided a car]. We purchased whatever food they would want, we often gave them a **little extra spending money** to go out, two came on a **vacation** with us, we took them **out to dinner** a lot... we hosted our au pairs guests often... We wanted to feel like our house was their house.” -
Illinois, Mother of 4*

*“The last four we **bought annual ski passes** for and rented them ski equipment. They do **travel about 20 round trips a year** with us, not just to our weekend house. We’ve taken them to Mexico; we’ve taken them to Hawaii; we’ve **included them in our family vacation plans.**”
-Nevada, Father of 2*

In addition to the everyday expenses and the additional costs of planned vacations and lifestyle purchases, nearly half (44%) of host families faced at least one unexpected cost related to hosting their au pair. These expenses included incidental needs such as new glasses, seasonal clothes, gym memberships and specialty allergy-friendly foods as well as more significant expenditures such as car repairs, car insurance and extra gas, and medical/dental bills. All these purchases add up in the amount host families generate in economic spending over the course of hosting an au pair each year.

Au pairs acknowledge these financial benefits received from their host family, often citing several additional costs they covered beyond the standard food, lodging, stipend, and educational credit. Most au pairs received a mobile phone (82%), the use of a car (75%), and personal gifts (71%) from their host family. While less common, a sizable number of au pairs received a personal television, gaming device, or laptop (41%); admission costs for tours, museums, or other cultural activities (31%); or other entertainment costs for dining out, movies, or concerts (31%) paid for by their host family. Nearly all (90%) host families affirm they provided supplementary monetary gifts/bonuses so au pairs could afford additional cultural experiences or personal purchases.

Au pairs also used their own money while in the United States. Au pair alumni on average brought \$522 with them when they came to the U.S. and most commonly reported earning approximately \$200 per week working as an au pair in the program (\$208 on average). On the high end, approximately one-in-ten (7%) earning between \$301 to \$1000 per week.

Review of Au Pair Program

With approximately \$800 a month (plus money they already had and bonuses from the host family), au pairs were able to fund their personal endeavors while in the United States. With the host family taking care of basic needs, multiple “extra” expenses, and some luxury costs related to family travel, au pairs focused spending their stipend on personal entertainment, travel, and miscellaneous purchases. In total, au pair alumni consistently spend less than host families, yet they still generate millions in domestic economic activity by using their weekly stipend in the U.S. economy.

11. Appendices

Appendix A. Au Pair Survey – Questionnaire

**Alliance for International Exchange
Au Pair Program Evaluation: Au Pair Alumni
Final Questionnaire**

[TEXT IN BRACKETS ARE PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS, LOGIC, OR IDENTIFICATION OF TREND QUESTIONS]

On behalf of <SPONSOR NAME> and the Alliance for International Exchange, a nongovernmental international exchange association, we invite you to take part in this important survey. This research will assist in creating educational materials for the Au Pair Program, a federal J-1 Exchange Visitor program.

The survey asks about your experiences and feedback associated with your participation prior to, during, and after your time in the program. The survey also asks about your experiences with your host family, your decision to become an au pair, and the impacts it has had on your life and career, both during and after your time in the United States.

The survey will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept completely confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be combined and analyzed as a group.

By participating in this survey, you are confirming that you are 18 years of age or older and that you register your consent to participate in this research.

Please click **Next** to participate in this survey.

[MODULE 0: Screener]

[ASK ALL:]

S.1 Are you 18 years of age or older?

- 1 Yes, I am 18 or older
- 2 No, I am under 18 years of age [**Go to Terminate**]

[ASK ALL:]

S.2 Have you participated in the U.S. J-1 Visa Au Pair Program within the last five years (that is 2015-2020)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No [**Go to Terminate**]

[IF "YES" IN S.2, ASK:]

S.2a In what year did you complete your last au pair program in the U.S.? Was it ...

- 1 2020
- 2 2019
- 3 2018
- 4 2017
- 5 2016
- 6 2015
- 7 Currently active in the J-1 Visa Au Pair Program [**Go to Terminate**]

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 1: Program Evaluation]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.1 How many years did you participate in this program?

1 [1-8 years] Dropdown menu

[ASK ALL:]

Q.2 About how many total **months** did you spend in the United States as part of the au pair program?

1 [1-X months] [Programming note: Accept integers only]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.3 How did you hear about the au pair program? Select all that apply. **{New}**

- 1 Independent search online
- 2 Advertisements online
- 3 Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc.)
- 4 News articles (online or print)
- 5 Recommendations from friends and family
- 6 Local community members
- 7 Local representative
- 8 Television
- 9 Radio or audio streaming services
- 10 Information from a former au pair
- 11 Other (specify)

[ASK ALL:]

Q.4 Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience in the au pair program? **{CC19}**

- 1 Extremely satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Somewhat dissatisfied
- 5 Extremely dissatisfied

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.5 More specifically, how would you rate your experience with the following aspects of the au pair program: **{CC19, SWT19 mod}**

- a. J-1 visa application process
- b. The Au Pair Program application process (interview, background check, health exam)
- c. Program orientation and training process (online or in-person)
- d. On-going support from sponsor organization
- e. Support from local counselor/ community coordinator
- f. Building personal connections with host family

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Very good
- 2 Good
- 3 Poor
- 4 Very poor
- 5 I did not experience this

[ASK ALL:]

Q.6 Please identify which of the following words or phrases, if any, that you would use to describe your experience living with a U.S. host family ... (Select all that apply.) **{New}**

- 1 Comfortable
- 2 Welcomed
- 3 Felt at home
- 4 Felt part of the family
- 5 Neutral
- 6 Needed an adjustment period
- 7 Some room for improvement

NO QUESTION 7

[ASK ALL:]

Q.8 How likely are you to come back to visit the United States after participating in the program? **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Not too likely
- 4 Not at all likely

[ASK ALL:]

Q.9 How likely are you to recommend the au pair program to your friends or a prospective participant? **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Not too likely
- 4 Not at all likely

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.10 Based on your experience in the au pair program, what is some advice you would give someone who is considering becoming an au pair? This can be something you wish you would have known before starting the program or a takeaway from your participation. **{New}**

[open end]

[MODULE 2: Cultural Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 11-15

[ASK ALL:]

On another subject ...

Q.16 Thinking about some of the reasons why you initially decided to participate in the au pair program, how important were each of the following to your decision? **{IT18 mod, CC19 mod}**

- a. Improving English skills
- b. Experiencing daily life in a different culture
- c. Learning how to interact with people from different cultures
- d. Visiting the United States
- e. Learning about American ways and values
- f. Teaching Americans about your own culture
- g. Earning money
- h. Gaining new or improved professional skills
- i. Gaining new or improved personal skills

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Very important
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 Not too important
- 4 Not at all important

[RANDOMIZE Q17 AND Q18:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.17 Prior to entering the au pair program, how favorable or unfavorable would you say that your overall view of the United States was ...? **{CC19 TFC}**

- 1 Very favorable
- 2 Somewhat favorable
- 3 Somewhat unfavorable
- 4 Very unfavorable
- 5 Did not know enough to develop an opinion

Review of Au Pair Program

[RANDOMIZE Q17 AND Q18:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.18 Prior to entering the au pair program, would you say that your overall view of Americans was ...? **{CC19 TFC}**

- 1 Very favorable
- 2 Somewhat favorable
- 3 Somewhat unfavorable
- 4 Very unfavorable
- 5 Did not know enough to develop an opinion

[ASK ALL:]

Q.19 Based on your experiences participating in the au pair program, how comfortable would you say you felt adjusting to American culture? **{CC19 mod}**

- 1 Very comfortable
- 2 Somewhat comfortable
- 3 Not too comfortable
- 4 Not at all comfortable

NO QUESTION 20

[ASK ALL:]

Q.21 During your time in the program, which types of cultural activities did you participate in with your host family or friends? Select all that apply. **{CC19 mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 1 American holidays and traditions
- 2 Religious holidays {new}
- 3 Visiting museums, art galleries or historic sites
- 4 Travel to other cities or states (i.e. vacations)
- 5 Outdoor recreational activities (i.e., biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach)
- 6 Volunteer with local charity group or other community engagement opportunities
- 7 Local community celebrations **{New}**
- 8 American sports and games **{New}**
- 9 Health and fitness activities **{New}**
- 10 None of these events **[Exclusive]**

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK IF Q.21=1-9:]

Q.22 From the list of activities in which you participated with your host family or friends, how different from your own culture and traditions would you say each event/activity is:

[Show Selected in Q.21]

- 1 Celebrating American holidays
- 2 Celebrating religious holidays
- 3 Visiting museums, art galleries or historic sites
- 4 Traveling to other cities or states
- 5 Outdoor recreational activities (i.e. biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach)
- 6 Volunteer with local charity group or other community engagement opportunities
- 7 Local community celebrations **{New}**
- 8 American sports and games **{New}**
- 9 Health and fitness activities **{New}**

RESPONSE OPTIONS (IT18 TFC)

- 1 Completely different
- 2 Mostly different
- 3 Mostly the same
- 4 Completely the same

[ASK ALL:]

Q.23 What activities and customs from your home country did you share with your host family and friends? Please select all that apply. **{CC19, IT18}**

- 1 Holidays and traditions from your country of origin
- 2 Stories, pictures, or mementos from home
- 3 Food dishes/cuisine from your home
- 4 Media from home or in your native language (movies, music, books) **{New}**
- 5 Fashion and clothing styles from your home country **{New}**
- 6 Religious practices and traditions
- 7 Exchange cultural gifts
- 8 Other (Please specify)

[ASK ALL:]

Q.24 In comparison to your initial thoughts of the U.S. prior to the program, how have your views changed in relation to the following ... **{CC19, SWT19, IT18}**

- a. U.S. in general
- b. American culture
- c. American people
- d. American family structure **{New}**
- e. American political system

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Much more positive
- 2 Somewhat positive
- 3 About the same
- 4 Somewhat negative
- 5 Much more negative

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.25 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Because of the au pair program...
{IT18, CC19-TFC}

- a. I gained a better understanding of American culture (traditions and customs)
- b. I am able to interact with people from different cultures
- c. I am able to better understand American values (freedom and independence)
- d. I developed a better understanding of my own culture through teaching others

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Disagree
- 4 Strongly disagree

[ASK ALL:]

Q.26 All in all, how would you rate your experience in the US? **{CC19 mod}**

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor

[MODULE 3: Language Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 27-30

[ASK ALL:]

Now thinking about language and learning ...

Q.31 What is your native language? **{New}**

- 1 Dropdown [List of 20 most spoken languages in the world, other (please specify)]

[ASK ALL:]

Q32 Prior to participating in the au pair program, how would you rate your English ability in the following areas: **{CC19 mod}**

- a. Understanding
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Basic
- 2 Conversational
- 3 Proficient
- 4 Native Language

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK IF Q.32a-c=1-3]

Q.33 From your time in the program, how much would you say that your English ability has improved, if at all, in each of the following areas? **{CC19 mod}**

- a. Understanding
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 A lot
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Not too much
- 4 Not at all

[ASK IF Q.31 = Other than “English”:]

Q.34 After participating in the au pair program, how frequently have you done any of the following? **{New}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- a. Applied English language/speaking skills in school or workplace
- b. Highlighted your English skills on a resume or job application to employers or schools
- c. Used enhanced English speaking skills to meet new people (in person or online)
- d. Used enhanced English speaking skills to make new professional connections
- e. Used enhanced English speaking skills to consume international news and media
- f. Encouraged friends and family to learn English
- g. Taught friends and family words or phrases in English

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never

[ASK IF Q.31≠ “English”:]

Q.35 During your stay in the United States, how frequently did you share your native language with your host family and friends by teaching them words, phrases or engaging in conversations? **{New}**

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never

[ASK ALL:]

Q.36 As you may have experienced, the U.S. is home to a variety of languages and cultures. During your stay in the United States did you develop an interest in learning another language, other than English? **{New}**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK IF Q.36=1:]

Q.37 Which other languages did you develop an interest in learning while in the United States? Select all that apply. **{New}**

- 1 Spanish
- 2 Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese)
- 3 Tagalog (including Filipino)
- 4 Vietnamese
- 5 Arabic
- 6 French (including French Creole)
- 7 Korean
- 8 Russian
- 9 German
- 10 Hindi
- 11 Other (please specify)

[MODULE 3: Social Connections]

NO QUESTIONS 38-40

[ASK ALL:]

Q.41 During your time in the au pair program, did you build connections with any of the following people? Select all that apply. **{CC19-TFC}**

- 1 Your host family
- 2 Local au pair counselor(s)
- 3 Fellow au pairs
- 4 American friends (outside of the host family)
- 5 American mentors (outside of the host family)
- 6 Neighbors and local community members
- 7 Academic professors and staff
- 8 Professionals in a field related to your career goals

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.42 After leaving the United States, how often do you keep in touch with the following groups or individuals?
{CC19, TI18, SWT19-TFC}

[Show a., b., and items selected in Q.41]

- a. Host family [Always shown]
- b. Local counselor [Always shown]
- c. Fellow au pairs
- d. American friends (outside of the host family)
- e. American mentors (outside of the host family)
- f. Neighbors and local community members
- g. Academic professors and staff
- h. Professionals in a field related to my career goals

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Hardly ever
- 4 Never

[Randomize Q.43a AND Q.43b:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.43a To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale from 1 – strongly agree to 5 – strongly disagree.

“The relationships I built during my participation in the au pair program were beneficial to my personal growth”

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Strongly disagree

[Randomize Q.43a AND Q.43b:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.43b To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale from 1 – strongly agree to 5 – strongly disagree.

“The relationships I built during my participation in the au pair program were beneficial to my professional growth”

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Strongly disagree

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 4: Personal and Career Development]

NO QUESTIONS 44-48

[ASK ALL:]

Q.49 Please identify any of the following skills or concepts that you learned about or improved on while living with your host family. This can include skills learned through observation of the host family's day-to-day activities or hands on practice. Select all that apply. **{New}**

- 1 Managing multiple tasks
- 2 Confidence in communicating with others
- 3 Prioritizing different objectives
- 4 Creating a balanced budget (managing spending habits and savings)
- 5 Leadership skills
- 6 Healthy eating and meal planning
- 7 Effective parenting skills
- 8 Using smart technology (Smart TV's, Baby/security cameras, Alexa enabled devices, computers)
- 9 Other (Specify _____)

[ASK ALL:]

Q.50 Thinking about the impact that participating in the au pair program may have had on your personal development, to what extent did you see an improvement in ...? **{New}**

- a. Having confidence in yourself
- b. Ability to step outside your comfort zone
- c. Ability to relate to and understand others
- d. Ability to express yourself to others
- e. Ability to overcome hurdles or solve problems
- f. Ability to adapt to new situations
- g. Interactions with your own family and friends

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 A lot of improvement
- 2 Some improvement
- 3 Not too much improvement
- 4 No improvement at all

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.51 After leaving the au pair program, in what types of sectors have you used the skills that you have learned? Select all that apply. **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 Government
- 2 Business
- 3 Education
- 4 Childcare
- 5 Careers in cultural exchange
- 6 Manufacturing
- 7 Information technology
- 8 Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's)
- 9 Charitable work & philanthropic
- 10 Military
- 11 Other (specify)

[ASK ALL:]

Q.52 How did your experience in the au pair program support your career or educational goals? Select all that apply **{New}**

My experience in the au pair program ...

- 1 Helped me discover or further define my career goals
- 2 Made me a more competitive candidate in my field of interest
- 3 Encouraged me to expand my professional/educational goals beyond my country's borders
- 4 Helped me acquire a job or gain a promotion
- 5 Made me an attractive applicant for a school program in my field of interest
- 6 Led me to start a business or become an entrepreneur
- 7 None of these

[ASK ALL:]

Q.53 To what degree do you think participation in the program has provided you with practical work experience? **{IT18-mod}**

- 1 A great deal
- 2 Somewhat
- 3 Not too much
- 4 Not at all

NO QUESTION 54

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 6: Economic Impact]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.55 Approximately how much money did you bring with you when you came to the United States? If you are not sure of the exact amount, give an estimated amount. **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 [textbox] Enter amount in U.S. dollars
- 2 Not sure

[ASK ALL:]

Thinking about your spending patterns during the most recent U.S. au pair program you participated in ...

Q.56A For each of the following types of expenses, please identify whether, or not, while in the U.S., you made expenditures on any of the following. Please do not include any financial contributions from your host family. **{New}**

- a. Entertainment (e.g., dining out, movies, etc.)
- b. Travel for leisure (e.g., lodging, air fare, etc.)
- c. Local transportation (e.g., car, bus, Uber)
- d. Personal/other purchases (e.g., clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)
- e. Paying back your travel expenses or fees
- f. Medical expenses (e.g., prescriptions, co-pays)
- g. Education expenses (e.g., course fees, books, supplies)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 9 Not sure

[BASED ON THOSE WHO SELECTED YES IN Q56a (Q56a-g=1), ASK:]

Q.56B In an average **month**, about how much would you say that you personally spent on each of the following expenses during your most recent U.S. au pair program? If you are not sure, please select "Not sure." **{SWT19, CC19-mod}**

- a. Entertainment (e.g., dining out, movies, etc.)
- b. Travel for leisure (e.g., lodging, air fare, etc.)
- c. Local transportation (e.g., car, bus, Uber)
- d. Personal/other purchases (e.g., clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)
- e. Paying back your travel expenses or fees
- f. Medical expenses (e.g., prescriptions, co-pays)
- g. Education expenses (e.g., course fees, books, supplies)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 [Text box – Only accepts integers] Enter amount in U.S. dollars per month
- 9 Not sure

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.57 About how much money did you earn as an au pair in the U.S. on a weekly basis? Again, if you do not remember your exact stipend, please provide an estimated amount.

- 1 [textbox] Enter amount in U.S. dollars [Programming note: Accept integers only]
- 9 Not sure

[ASK ALL:]

Q.58 Aside from your stipend and education credit, what other benefits did your host family cover the cost of or provide for you? Select all that apply.

- 1 Mobile phone
- 2 Clothing or shoes
- 3 Personal care (hair, nails and grooming)
- 4 Personal television, gaming system or computer
- 5 Admission for tours, museums, theme parks, or activity centers
- 6 Entertainment (dining out, movies, concerts)
- 7 Lodging outside of your host family's home (hotels, Air B&B, campsites)
- 8 Transportation (Air travel, bus, Uber, etc.)
- 9 Use of a car and auto insurance coverage
- 10 Purchases (clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)
- 11 Medical costs (supplies, prescriptions, fees)
- 12 Personal gifts (Birthday, holiday, reward, etc.)
- 13 Other (please specify)

[MODULE 7: Demographics]

NO QUESTIONS 59-63

[ASK ALL:]

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

Q.64 What is your gender?

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Other
- 4 Prefer not to answer

[ASK ALL:]

Q.65 What is your age?

- (____) years
- 99 [NUMBER DROP DOWN MENU: 18-40 or older]

NO QUESTION 66

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.67 In what U.S. states were you placed with a family? Select all that apply.

1 [List of states]

NO QUESTIONS 68-69

[ASK ALL:]

Q.70 Are you currently enrolled in school?

- 1 Yes, I am currently a student
- 2 No, I am not a student

[ASK ALL:]

Q.71 Are you now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

- 1 Employed full-time
- 2 Employed part-time
- 3 Not employed

[ASK ALL:]

Q.72 What is the highest level of education you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- 1 High school graduate or less education
- 2 Trade or vocational school degree
- 3 Some college, no degree
- 5 Two-year associate degree from a college or university
- 6 Four-year college or university degree/Bachelor's degree
- 7 Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no postgraduate degree
- 8 Postgraduate or professional degree

[ASK ALL:]

Q.73 Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

[ASK ALL:]

Q.74 What is your race? Please select all that apply.

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Asian or Asian
- 4 Some other race
- 5 Hispanic/Latino/Spanish
- 9 Prefer not to answer

[End of Interview]

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Appendix B. Au Pair Survey – Topline

Alliance for International Exchange
Au Pair Program Evaluation: Au Pair Alumni
Final Topline
April 15, 2020 – May 15, 2020
Total N= 10,881

[TEXT IN BRACKETS ARE PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS, LOGIC, OR IDENTIFICATION OF TREND QUESTIONS]

On behalf of <SPONSOR NAME> and the Alliance for International Exchange, a nongovernmental international exchange association, we invite you to take part in this important survey. This research will assist in creating educational materials for the Au Pair Program, a federal J-1 Exchange Visitor program.

The survey asks about your experiences and feedback associated with your participation prior to, during, and after your time in the program. The survey also asks about your experiences with your host family, your decision to become an au pair, and the impacts it has had on your life and career, both during and after your time in the United States.

The survey will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept completely confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be combined and analyzed as a group.

By participating in this survey, you are confirming that you are 18 years of age or older and that you register your consent to participate in this research.

Please click **Next** to participate in this survey.

[MODULE 0: PARTICIPANT SCREENER]

[PERCENTAGES SHOWN]¹²

[ASK ALL: REQUIRED]

S.1 Are you 18 years of age or older?

S.1 is a screener question only.

[ASK ALL: REQUIRED]

S.2 Have you participated in the U.S. J-1 Visa Au Pair Program within the last five years (that is 2015-2020)?

S.2 is a screener question only.

¹² No question required a response from participants apart from screening questions. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. All percentages based on unweighted data and unweighted N. Responses less than .5% reported with asterisks (*). Responses with no data are marked with a dash (-). Response are shown on total participants and the two sub-groups of only/primary payment method.

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

S.2a In what year did you complete your last au pair program in the U.S.? Was it ...

1	2020
23	2019
27	2018
23	2017
17	2016
10	2015

[MODULE 1: Program Evaluation]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.1 How many years did you participate in this program?

61	1
39	2
1	3
*	4
-	5
-	6
-	7
-	8

[ASK ALL:]

Q.2 About how many total **months** did you spend in the United States as part of the au pair program?

37	12 months and under
28	13-18 months
28	19 -24 months
7	25 months or more

[ASK ALL:]

Q.3 How did you hear about the au pair program? Select all that apply. **{New}**

46	Independent search online
7	Advertisements online
19	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc.)
2	News articles (online or print)
42	Recommendations from friends and family
3	Local community members
7	Local representative
*	Television
*	Radio or audio streaming services
19	Information from a former au pair
5	Other

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.4 Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience in the au pair program? **{CC19}**

48	Extremely satisfied
36	Somewhat satisfied
6	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
6	Somewhat dissatisfied
5	Extremely dissatisfied

[ASK ALL:]

Q.5 More specifically, how would you rate your experience with the following aspects of the au pair program: **{CC19, SWT19 mod}**

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
a. J-1 visa application process	44	51	4	1
b. The Au Pair Program application process (interview, background check, health exam)	37	56	6	2
c. Program orientation and training process (online or in-person)	35	52	11	3
d. On-going support from sponsor organization	23	47	20	10
e. Support from local counselor/ community coordinator	30	38	20	13
f. Building personal connections with host family	50	33	11	6

[ASK ALL:]

Q.6 Please identify which of the following words or phrases, if any, that you would use to describe your experience living with a U.S. host family ... (Select all that apply.) **{New}**

55	Comfortable
63	Welcomed
44	Felt at home
51	Felt part of the family
16	Neutral
23	Needed an adjustment period
24	Some room for improvement

NO QUESTION 7

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.8 How likely are you to come back to visit the United States after participating in the program? **{CC19-mod}**

79	Very likely
15	Somewhat likely
4	Not too likely
3	Not at all likely

[ASK ALL:]

Q.9 How likely are you to recommend the au pair program to your friends or a perspective participant? **{CC19-mod}**

60	Very likely
27	Somewhat likely
8	Not too likely
6	Not at all likely

[ASK ALL:]

Q.10 Based on your experience in the au pair program, what is some advice you would give someone who is considering becoming an au pair? This can be something you wish you would have known before starting the program or a takeaway from your participation. **{New}**

Open-end responses used for qualitative purposes only.

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 2: Cultural Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 11-15

[ASK ALL:]

On another subject ...

Q.16 Thinking about some of the reasons why you initially decided to participate in the au pair program, how important were each of the following to your decision? **{IT18 mod, CC19 mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]	Very important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not at all important
a. Improving English skills	69	17	6	8
b. Experiencing daily life in a different culture	73	23	3	1
c. Learning how to interact with people from different cultures	63	31	6	1
d. Visiting the United States	63	26	9	2
e. Learning about American ways and values	52	36	11	2
f. Teaching Americans about your own culture	34	42	21	3
g. Earning money	25	35	31	10
h. Gaining new or improved professional skills	58	30	10	2
i. Gaining new or improved personal skills	77	20	3	1

[RANDOMIZE Q17 AND Q18:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.17 Prior to entering the au pair program, how favorable or unfavorable would you say that your overall view of the United States was ...? **{CC19 TFC}**

40	Very favorable
48	Somewhat favorable
7	Somewhat unfavorable
2	Very unfavorable
4	Did not know enough to develop an opinion

[RANDOMIZE Q17 AND Q18:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.18 Prior to entering the au pair program, would you say that your overall view of Americans was ...? **{CC19 TFC}**

31	Very favorable
52	Somewhat favorable
10	Somewhat unfavorable
2	Very unfavorable
5	Did not know enough to develop an opinion

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.19 Based on your experiences participating in the au pair program, how comfortable would you say you felt adjusting to American culture? **{CC19 mod}**

55	Very comfortable
39	Somewhat comfortable
6	Not too comfortable
1	Not at all comfortable

NO QUESTION 20

[ASK ALL:]

Q.21 During your time in the program, which types of cultural activities did you participate in with your host family or friends? Select all that apply. **{CC19 mod}**

91	Celebrating American holidays and traditions
56	Celebrating Religious holidays {New}
80	Visiting museums, art galleries or historic sites
90	Travel to other cities or states (i.e. vacations)
85	Outdoor recreational activities (i.e., biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach)
28	Volunteer with local charity group or other community engagement opportunities
62	Local community celebrations {New}
74	American sports and games {New}
61	Health and fitness activities {New}
2	None of these events

[ASK IF Q.21=1-9:]

Q.22¹³ From the list of activities in which you participated with your host family or friends, how different from your own culture and traditions would you say each event/activity is:

[Show Selected in Q.21]	Completely different	Mostly different	Mostly the same	Completely the same
a. Celebrating American holidays N= 9,851	19	53	27	*
b. Celebrating Religious holidays N= 6,021	19	32	46	3
c. Visiting museums, art galleries or historic sites N= 8,667	11	23	57	10
d. Traveling to other cities or states N= 9,753	30	41	26	3
e. Outdoor recreational activities (i.e. biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach) N= 9,216	16	33	44	7
f. Volunteer with local charity group or other community engagement opportunities N= 3,006	21	37	39	4
g. Local community celebrations N= 6,656	33	49	18	1
h. American sports and games N= 7,990	48	40	11	1
i. Health and fitness activities N= 6,584	7	22	59	13

¹³ Percentages calculated for this, and all other conditional questions, are based on the number of respondents who received it. For this question, see each sub-item for N size.

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.23 What activities and customs from your home country did you share with your host family and friends?
Please select all that apply. **{CC19, IT18}**

- 66 | Holidays and traditions from your country of origin
- 80 | Stories, pictures, or mementos from home
- 89 | Food dishes/cuisine from your home
- 52 | Media from home or in your native language (movies, music, books) **{New}**
- 21 | Fashion and clothing styles from your home country **{New}**
- 18 | Religious practices and traditions
- 74 | Exchange cultural gifts
- 2 | Other (Please specify)

[ASK ALL:]

Q.24 In comparison to your initial thoughts of the U.S. prior to the program, how have your views changed in relation to the following ... **{CC19, SWT19, IT18}**

	Much more positive	Somewhat positive	About the same	Somewhat negative	Much more negative
a. U.S. in general	29	34	25	9	2
b. American culture	27	38	26	8	2
c. American people	32	34	22	10	2
d. American family structure {New}	22	28	25	20	5
e. American political system	9	17	32	28	14

[ASK ALL:]

Q.25 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Because of the au pair program... **{IT18, CC19-TFC}**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I gained a better understanding of American culture (traditions and customs)	55	42	2	1
b. I am able to interact with people from different cultures	68	30	1	1
c. I am able to better understand American values (freedom and independence)	40	48	11	2
d. I developed a better understanding of my own culture through teaching others	41	46	11	2

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.26 All in all, how would you rate your experience in the US? **{CC19 mod}**

60	Excellent
30	Good
7	Fair
4	Poor

[MODULE 3: Language Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 27-30

[ASK ALL:]

Now thinking about language and learning ...

Q.31¹⁴ What is your native language? **{New}**

26	Spanish
26	German
13	Portuguese
6	English
6	Italian
5	French
18	Other

[ASK ALL:]

Q32 Prior to participating in the au pair program, how would you rate your English ability in the following areas: **{CC19 mod}**

	Basic	Conversational	Proficient	Native language
a. Understanding	12	27	47	15
b. Speaking	18	35	36	10
c. Reading	12	28	48	13
d. Writing	18	35	38	9

[ASK IF Q.32a-c=1-3]

Q.33 From your time in the program, how much would you say that your English ability has improved, if at all, in each of the following areas? **{CC19 mod}**

	Basic	Conversational	Proficient	Native language
a. Understanding N= 9,285	79	16	4	1
b. Speaking N= 9,752	80	16	3	1
c. Reading N= 9,451	60	30	8	2
d. Writing N= 9,850	48	35	14	3

¹⁴ Top six languages reported individually. All other languages grouped under "Other".

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK IF Q.31≠ “English”:]

Q.34¹⁵ After participating in the au pair program, how frequently have you done any of the following? **{New}**

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. Applied English language/speaking skills in school or workplace	63	24	9	4
b. Highlighted your English skills on a resume or job application to employers or schools	64	23	8	5
c. Used enhanced English speaking skills to meet new people (in person or online)	56	27	12	4
d. Used enhanced English speaking skills to make new professional connections	47	28	17	7
e. Used enhanced English speaking skills to consume international news and media	70	23	5	2
f. Encouraged friends and family to learn English	48	30	15	7
g. Taught friends and family words or phrases in English	51	31	13	5

[ASK IF Q.31≠ “English”:]

Q.35¹⁶ During your stay in the United States, how frequently did you share your native language with your host family and friends by teaching them words, phrases or engaging in conversations? **{New}**

29	Often
45	Sometimes
23	Rarely
4	Never

[ASK ALL:]

Q.36 As you may have experienced, the U.S. is home to a variety of languages and cultures. During your stay in the United States did you develop an interest in learning another language, other than English? **{New}**

60	Yes
40	No

[ASK IF Q.36=1:]

Q.37 Which other languages did you develop an interest in learning while in the United States? Select all that apply. **{New} (Top 5 selected)**

59	Spanish
25	French
15	German
7	Chinese
5	Italian

¹⁵ N= 10,081

¹⁶ N= 10,143

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 3: Social Connections]

NO QUESTIONS 38-40

[ASK ALL:]

Q.41 During your time in the au pair program, did you build connections with any of the following people?
Select all that apply. {CC19-TFC}

85	Your host family
47	Local au pair counselor(s)
89	Fellow au pairs
67	American friends (outside of the host family)
13	American mentors (outside of the host family)
47	Neighbors and local community members
24	Academic professors and staff
10	Professionals in a field related to your career goals

[ASK ALL:]

Q.42 After leaving the United States, how often do you keep in touch with the following groups or individuals?
{CC19, TI18, SWT19-TFC}

[Show a, b, and those selected in Q.41]	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
a. Host family [Always shown]	34	37	15	14
b. Local counselor [Always shown]	4	13	20	63
c. Fellow au pairs N= 9,669	50	39	9	2
d. American friends (outside of the host family) N= 7,266	38	41	15	7
e. American mentors (outside of the host family) N= 1,436	18	35	24	23
f. Neighbors and local community members N= 5,028	6	21	30	44
g. Academic professors and staff N= 2,544	5	16	25	53
h. Professionals in a field related to my career goals N= 1,048	16	34	26	24

[Randomize Q.43a AND Q.43b:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.43a To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale from 1 – strongly agree to 5 – strongly disagree.

“The relationships I built during my participation in the au pair program were beneficial to my personal growth”

68	1 – Strongly agree
17	2
8	3
3	4
4	5 – Strongly disagree

Review of Au Pair Program

[Randomize Q.43a AND Q.43b:]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.43b To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale from 1 – strongly agree to 5 – strongly disagree.

“The relationships I built during my participation in the au pair program were beneficial to my professional growth”

46	1 – Strongly agree
23	2
18	3
8	4
6	5 – Strongly disagree

[MODULE 4: Personal and Career Development]

NO QUESTIONS 44-48

[ASK ALL:]

Q.49 Please identify any of the following skills or concepts that you learned about or improved on while living with your host family. This can include skills learned through observation of the host family’s day-to-day activities or hands on practice. Select all that apply. **{New}**

79	Managing multiple tasks
83	Confidence in communicating with others
53	Prioritizing different objectives
53	Creating a balanced budget (managing spending habits and savings)
50	Leadership skills
47	Healthy eating and meal planning
68	Effective parenting skills
37	Using smart technology (Smart TV’s, Baby/security cameras, Alexa enabled devices, computers)
4	Other (Specify _____)

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.50 Thinking about the impact that participating in the au pair program may have had on your personal development, to what extent did you see an improvement in ...? **{New}**

	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	Not too much improvement	No improvement at all
a. Having confidence in yourself	62	32	5	2
b. Ability to step outside your comfort zone	74	23	3	1
c. Ability to relate to and understand others	60	35	5	1
d. Ability to express yourself to others	50	41	8	1
e. Ability to overcome hurdles or solve problems	56	39	5	1
f. Ability to adapt to new situations	73	25	2	1
g. Interactions with your own family and friends	49	36	13	3

[ASK ALL:]

Q.51 After leaving the au pair program, in what types of sectors have you used the skills that you have learned? Select all that apply. **{CC19-mod}**

5	Government
42	Business
68	Education
50	Childcare
20	Careers in cultural exchange
3	Manufacturing
11	Information technology
5	Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's)
6	Charitable work & philanthropic
1	Military
8	Other (specify)

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.52 How did your experience in the au pair program support your career or educational goals? Select all that apply **{New}**

My experience in the au pair program ...

48	Helped me discover or further define my career goals
39	Made me a more competitive candidate in my field of interest
52	Encouraged me to expand my professional/educational goals beyond my country's borders
26	Helped me acquire a job or gain a promotion
23	Made me an attractive applicant for a school program in my field of interest
7	Led me to start a business or become an entrepreneur
16	None of these

[ASK ALL:]

Q.53 To what degree do you think participation in the program has provided you with practical work experience? **{IT18-mod}**

38	A great deal
42	Somewhat
14	Not too much
6	Not at all

NO QUESTION 54

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 6: Economic Impact]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.55¹⁷ Approximately how much money did you bring with you when you came to the United States? If you are not sure of the exact amount, give an estimated amount. {CC19-mod}

27	\$200 or less
22	\$201 to \$499
24	\$500 to \$999
27	\$1000 or more

Median: \$500

[ASK ALL:]

Thinking about your spending patterns during the most recent U.S. au pair program you participated in ...

Q.56A For each of the following types of expenses, please identify whether, or not, while in the U.S., you made expenditures on any of the following. Please do not include any financial contributions from your host family. {New}

	Yes	No
a. Entertainment (e.g., dining out, movies, etc.)	97	4
b. Travel for leisure (e.g., lodging, air fare, etc.)	93	7
c. Local transportation (e.g., car, bus, Uber)	87	13
d. Personal/other purchases (e.g., clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)	97	3
e. Paying back your travel expenses or fees	56	44
f. Medical expenses (e.g., prescriptions, co-pays)	45	55
g. Education expenses (e.g., course fees, books, supplies)	60	40

[BASED ON THOSE WHO SELECTED YES IN Q56a (Q56a-g=1), ASK:]

Q.56B In an average **month**, about how much would you say that you personally spent on each of the following expenses during your most recent U.S. au pair program? If you are not sure, please select "Not sure." {SWT19, CC19-mod}

	Average %	Lower 25%	Upper 25%
a. Entertainment (e.g., dining out, movies, etc.) N= 5,505	\$100	\$50	\$200
b. Travel for leisure (e.g., lodging, air fare, etc.) N= 4,218	\$200	\$100	\$300
c. Local transportation (e.g., car, bus, Uber) N= 4,664	\$50	\$30	\$100
d. Personal/other purchases (e.g., clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.) N= 5,363	\$100	\$50	\$200
e. Paying back your travel expenses or fees N= 1,419	\$100	\$50	\$200
f. Medical expenses (e.g., prescriptions, co-pays) N= 1,629	\$30	\$12	\$100
g. Education expenses (e.g., course fees, books, supplies) N= 2,466	\$50	\$20	\$150

¹⁷ 33% of respondents were not sure how much money they brought. The distribution is based on N= 9,444.

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.57 About how much money did you earn as an au pair in the U.S. on a weekly basis? Again, if you do not remember your exact stipend, please provide an estimated amount.

2	Less than \$150
46	\$151 to \$199
45	\$200
5	\$201 to \$300
2	\$301 to \$1,000

Median: \$200

[ASK ALL:]

Q.58 Aside from your stipend and education credit, what other benefits did your host family cover the cost of or provide for you? Select all that apply.

82	Mobile phone
6	Clothing or shoes
9	Personal care (hair, nails and grooming)
41	Personal television, gaming system or computer
31	Admission for tours, museums, theme parks, or activity centers
31	Entertainment (dining out, movies, concerts)
17	Lodging outside of your host family's home (hotels, Air B&B, campsites)
24	Transportation (Air travel, bus, Uber, etc.)
75	Use of a car and auto insurance coverage
8	Purchases (clothing, toiletries, souvenirs, etc.)
12	Medical costs (supplies, prescriptions, fees)
71	Personal gifts (Birthday, holiday, reward, etc.)
3	Other (please specify)

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Appendix C. Host Family Survey – Questionnaire

Alliance for International Exchange Au Pair Program Evaluation: Host Families Final Questionnaire

[TEXT IN BRACKETS ARE PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS, LOGIC, OR IDENTIFICATION OF TREND QUESTIONS]

On behalf of [SPONSOR NAME] and the Alliance for International Exchange, a nongovernmental international exchange association, we invite you to take part in this important survey. This research will help to create educational materials for the Au Pair Program, a federal J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

The survey asks about your experiences and feedback from your time serving as a host family within the au pair program, your decision to seek an au pair, as well as understanding the program's impacts on your family and in your community.

The survey will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept completely confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be combined and analyzed as a group.

*By clicking ahead in this survey, you are registering your consent to participate in this research. We ask that **only one member** of the household complete this survey.*

Please click **Next** to continue.

[MODULE 0: PARTICIPANT SCREENER]

[ASK ALL:]

S.1 Has your family participated in the U.S. J-1 Visa Au Pair Program within the last five years (that is 2015-2020)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No [TERMINATE]

[IF "YES" IN S.1, ASK:]

S.2 In what year did your family host your last au pair in the U.S.?

- 1 2020
- 2 2019
- 3 2018
- 4 2017
- 5 2016
- 6 2015
- 7 Currently hosting as part of the J-1 Visa Au Pair Program

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

S.3 During the time(s) you participated in the au pair program, how many people, including yourself, lived in your household? This includes infants, children, and adults. **{New}**

- a. Infants (2 years or younger) ____ [number drop down box from "1" to "8 or more"]
- b. Children ____ [number drop down box from "1" to "8 or more"]
- c. Adults ____ [number drop down box from "1" to "8 or more"]

[ASK ALL:]

S.4 About how many total **months** did you host your au pair(s) as part of the program?

- 1 [1-X months] [Programming note: Accept integers only]

[MODULE 1: Program Evaluation]

NO QUESTION 1

[ASK ALL:]

Q.2 How did you hear about the au pair program? Select all that apply. **{CC19}**

- 1 Independent search online
- 2 Advertisement online
- 3 Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
- 4 News articles (online or print)
- 5 Information from current or former host families
- 6 Recommendations from friends and/or family
- 7 Local community members
- 8 Representatives from a program sponsor/agency

[ASK ALL:]

Q.3 Thinking about some of the reasons why you initially decided to participate in the au pair program, how important were each of the following to your decision? **{IT18, CC19 mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- a. Cultural exchange (e.g. traditional customs, foods, etc.) to you and your children
- b. Learning a foreign language for yourself and/or your children
- c. Live-in childcare
- d. Federally regulated program guidelines in place
- e. Ability to establish a deeper level of trust with childcare provider
- f. Strengthening ties between people in the U.S. and those from other countries
- g. Cost saving in comparison to alternative childcare services
- h. Desire to share American culture

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Very important
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 Slightly important
- 4 Not at all important

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.4 Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience as a host family in the au pair program? **{CC19}**

- 1 Extremely satisfied
- 2 Somewhat satisfied
- 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4 Somewhat dissatisfied
- 5 Extremely dissatisfied

[ASK ALL:]

Q.5 More specifically, to what extent would you rate your experiences with the following aspects of the au pair program: **{CC19, SWT-mod}**

- a. Communication and interactions with the sponsor agencies
- b. Resources provided (e.g., regulatory guidelines, interview tips, local program support)
- c. Communication and interactions with your local representative
- d. Building personal connections with the au pair themselves
- e. The care provided by the au pair in your home
- f. Childcare related household support
- g. The matching process of the au pair with your family
- h. How your concerns, if any, were addressed
- i. Cultural exchange and learning

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Very good
- 2 Good
- 3 Poor
- 4 Very poor
- 5 Can't rate – I did not experience this

[ASK ALL:]

Q.6 Is your family still able to participate in the au pair program, or not (e.g., still has child younger than 18)? **{New}**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

[ASK IF Q.6=1:]

Q.6a Since the au pair program is still a viable option for your family, how likely would you participate in the au pair program as a host family again? **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Not too likely
- 4 Not at all likely

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.7 How likely are you to recommend becoming a host family in the au pair program to friends or family in the future? **{CC19-mod}**

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Not too likely
- 4 Not at all likely

[ASK ALL:]

Q.8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Because of the au pair program... **{IT18, CC19-TFC}**

- a. I gained a better understanding of the international culture of the au pair (traditions, customs)
- b. I was able to interact with people from different cultures
- c. I developed a better understanding of my own culture through teaching others
- d. I was able to dedicate more time to my career
- e. I was able to have more quality time with my children

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Disagree
- 4 Strongly disagree

[MODULE 2: Program Challenges/Program Impact]

NO QUESTIONS 9-14

[ASK ALL:]

Q.15 Please rate your experience with each of the following aspects of the au pair program:

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- a. Communications with your sponsor agency
- b. Orientation experience with your local au pair program representative
- c. Communications with your local au pair representative
- d. Finding the right au pair to match the needs of your family
- e. Navigating the application process
- f. Your sponsor agency's response to concerns, if any, that you raised

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor
- 5 Can't rate – I did not experience this

NO QUESTION 16

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.17 Please rate your experience with managing each of the following:

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- a. Cross cultural communications between the au pair and members of the household
- b. Integrating the au pair into your home and engaging with them
- c. Establishing household rules for the au pair in your home
- d. Changes in the cost to operate your household with an additional member (such as groceries, and toiletries)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Fair
- 4 Poor
- 5 Can't rate – I did not experience this

NO QUESTION 18

[ASK ALL:]

Q.19 How much, if at all, would it impact your family if the au pair program were no longer available?

- 1 Great deal
- 2 Fair amount
- 3 Not too much
- 4 Not at all

[ASK ALL:]

Q.20 If the au pair program were not available how likely is each of the following scenarios for your family:

- a. Inability for the family to develop intercultural relationships, communication, and global perspectives
- b. Inability to find suitable childcare for your family
- c. Having to spend more money for childcare
- d. Relocating to another area or region to find affordable childcare assistance
- e. Having one parent work from home more
- f. Having one parent change careers/stop working
- g. Inability to have personal time (e.g. time to spend alone or with a significant other, without the children)

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Extremely likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Not too likely
- 4 Not at all likely

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.21 If the au pair program was no longer available, what aspects of the cultural exchange program would be harder to replace within your family? Please select all that apply. **{New}**

- 1 Acquiring a foreign language for yourself and your children
- 2 Cultural exposure to other customs and traditions
- 3 Flexibility of the program
- 4 Familial trust and bond with the au pair

[MODULE 3: Cultural Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 22 - 26

[ASK ALL:]

Q.27 During your time in the program, what types of cultural activities did you and your family engage in with your au pair? Select all that apply. **{CC19-Mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 1 Traditional American holiday event or activity
- 2 Visit sites of interest (museums, parks, historic sites, etc.)
- 3 Outdoor recreational activities (i.e., biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach)
- 4 Volunteer with local charity groups or other community engagement opportunities
- 5 Travel to other cities or states (i.e. Vacations)
- 6 Exchange of language, stories, and pictures
- 7 Local community celebrations **{New}**
- 8 American sports and games **{New}**
- 9 Health and fitness activities **{New}**
- 10 None of these activities **[Exclusive]**

[ASK ALL:]

Q.28 What types of cultural activities did your au pair share with you and your family? Select all that apply.

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 1 Holidays and traditions from their country of origin
- 2 Traditional food dishes from their country of origin
- 3 Stories, pictures, or mementos of their family and home
- 4 Traditional clothing or fashion items from their country of origin
- 5 Media from their home country (e.g. traditional songs, movies, etc.)
- 6 Exchange cultural gifts

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.29 What do you believe are the main benefits you experienced as a host family from your participation in the program? Please select all that apply. **{CC19-Mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 1 Gain an increased sense of appreciation for other cultures (e.g. customs, cuisine, etc.)
- 2 Promote cultural engagement with your child and the au pair **{New}**
- 3 Gain other perspectives and norms on child rearing **{New}**
- 4 Exposure to a foreign language
- 5 Interact with people from different cultures
- 6 Have additional help with the children **{New}**
- 7 Became a mentor to your au pair with regard to their personal development
- 8 Provide life-changing experiences for young people to take back to their home countries
- 9 Foster life-long friendships between the family and the au pair **{Mod}**
- 10 Develop a relationship between the au pair and the children in the family
- 11 Feel an increased sense of pride/appreciation for the U.S.

[ASK ALL:]

Q.30 Have you kept in touch with your au pair(s) after they left the United States?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

[ASK IF Q30=1:]

Q.31 How frequently do you keep in touch with your former au pair(s) since they returned home?

- 1 More than once a week
- 2 Once a week
- 3 Once or twice a month
- 4 A few times a year
- 5 Once a year
- 6 Once every few years
- 7 Never

[MODULE 4: Impact on Children]

NO QUESTIONS 32-36

[ASK ALL:]

Q.37 How much, if at all, would you say that the childcare your child(ren) received from an au pair contributed to ...

- a. Foreign language immersion (e.g., intentional and consistent exposure to a language other than English)
- b. Early childhood development of motor skills and communication
- c. Development of social skills
- d. Academic success
- e. Development of new interests and hobbies
- f. Understanding of different cultures and countries around the world

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Great deal
- 2 Fair amount
- 3 Not too much
- 4 Not at all
- 5 Can't rate – this does not apply to our situation

[MODULE 5: Economic Impact]

NO QUESTIONS 38-39

Thinking about expenses during the au pair program...

[ASK ALL:]

Q.40 Thinking about each of the following types of expenses, please identify whether or not while you were hosting, you made expenditures for your au pair on any of the following?

- a. Groceries
- b. Local transportation (Car, bike, public transit, etc.)
- c. Vacation with your family (e.g. lodging, air fare, food)
- d. Travel expenses for the au pairs independent travel
- e. Additional utilities (e.g. streaming services)
- f. Mobile phone
- g. Entertainment (e.g. dining, movies, concerts)
- h. Other purchases (e.g., clothing, souvenirs, memberships)
- i. Medical expenses (e.g. prescriptions, co-pays)
- j. Tuition and books
- k. Monetary gifts or bonuses for special events or holidays

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 9 Not sure

Review of Au Pair Program

[BASED ON THOSE WHO SELECTED YES IN Q40 (Q40a-k=1), ASK:]

Q.41 Independent of the au pair's stipend and education credit, in an average **month**, about how much would you say that you spent on each of the following categories for your au pair during their time in the United States? If you are not sure, please select "Not sure." **{new}**

- a. Groceries
- b. Local transportation (Car, bike, public transit, etc.)
- c. Vacation with your family (e.g. lodging, air fare, food)
- d. Travel expenses for the au pair's independent travel
- e. Additional utilities (e.g. streaming services)
- f. Mobile phone
- g. Entertainment (e.g. dining, movies, concerts)
- h. Other purchases (e.g., clothing, souvenirs, memberships)
- i. Medical expenses (e.g. prescriptions, co-pays)
- j. Tuition and books
- k. Monetary gifts or bonuses for special events or holidays

RESPONSE OPTIONS

- 1 [Text box – Only accepts integers] Enter amount in U.S. dollars per month
- 9 Not sure

[ASK ALL:]

Q.42 During your time as a host family, were there any unexpected costs related to hosting an au pair?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

[IF UNEXPECTED COSTS (Q42=1), ASK:]

Q.43 Please describe these unexpected costs?

- 1 [OPEN END]

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 6: Demographics]

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

[ASK ALL:]

Q.44 In what U.S state did you live while you were a host family in the au pair program? If you lived in multiple states, please select all that apply.

99 [List of states]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.45 What state do you currently live in?

99 [List of states]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.46 How many years have you and your family participated as a host family in the au pair program? **{New}**

99 [Number drop down of years]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.47a When initially starting the au pair program, how old were your child/children at the time? **{New}**

Child 1 [number drop down box from "1 or under" to "17"]

Child 2 [number drop down box from "1 or under" to "17"]

Child 3 [number drop down box from "1 or under" to "17"]

Child 4 [number drop down box from "1 or under" to "17"]

Q.47b How old were they after completing the au pair program? **{New}**

[ASK ALL:]

Q.48 Please identify if your au pair was responsible for the care of children in any of the following categories. Select all that apply. **{New}**

1 Multiples (e.g., twins, triplets)

2 Special needs (e.g., behavioral, emotional, physical)

3 Health-related needs (e.g., allergies, diabetic)

4 None of these **{Exclusive}**

[ASK ALL:]

Q.49 What is your current military affiliation?

1 Active duty

2 National Guard

3 Veteran

4 Never served in the military

[End of Interview]

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Appendix D. Host Family Survey – Topline

**Alliance for International Exchange
Au Pair Program Evaluation: Host Families
Final Topline
April 15, 2020 – May 15, 2020
Total N= 6,452**

[TEXT IN BRACKETS ARE PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTIONS, LOGIC, OR IDENTIFICATION OF TREND QUESTIONS]

On behalf of [SPONSOR NAME] and the Alliance for International Exchange, a nongovernmental international exchange association, we invite you to take part in this important survey. This research will help to create educational materials for the Au Pair Program, a federal J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

The survey asks about your experiences and feedback from your time serving as a host family within the au pair program, your decision to seek an au pair, as well as understanding the program’s impacts on your family and in your community.

The survey will take approximately **10 minutes** to complete. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept completely confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be combined and analyzed as a group.

*By clicking ahead in this survey, you are registering your consent to participate in this research. We ask that **only one member** of the household complete this survey.*

Please click **Next** to continue.

[MODULE 0: PARTICIPANT SCREENER]

[PERCENTAGES SHOWN]¹⁸

[ASK ALL: REQUIRED]

S.1 Has your family participated in the U.S. J-1 Visa Au Pair Program within the last five years (that is 2015-2020)?

S.1 is a screener question only.

[ASK ALL:]

S.2 In what year did your family host your last au pair in the U.S.?

24	2020
14	2019
10	2018
6	2017
4	2016
3	2015
39	Currently hosting as part of the J-1 Visa Au Pair Program

¹⁸ No question required a response from participants apart from screening questions. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. All percentages based on unweighted data and unweighted N. Responses less than .5% reported with asterisks (*). Responses with no data are marked with a dash (-). Response are shown on total participants and the two sub-groups of only/primary payment method.

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

S.3 During the time(s) you participated in the au pair program, how many people, including yourself, lived in your household? This includes infants, children, and adults. **{New}**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
a. Infants (2 years or younger)	79	18	1	1	1	*	*	*
b. Children	26	49	19	4	1	*	*	0
c. Adults	6	75	17	1	*	0	0	0

[ASK ALL:]

S.4 About how many total **months** did you host your au pair(s) as part of the program?

[1-X months] [Programming note: Accept integers only]

Mode = 12

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 1: Program Evaluation]

NO QUESTION 1

[ASK ALL:]

Q.2 How did you hear about the au pair program? Select all that apply. {CC19}

- 27 | Independent search online
- 2 | Advertisement online
- 6 | Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
- 1 | News articles (online or print)
- 37 | Information from current or former host families
- 56 | Recommendations from friends and/or family
- 8 | Local community members
- 6 | Representatives from a program sponsor/agency

[ASK ALL:]

Q.3 Thinking about some of the reasons why you initially decided to participate in the au pair program, how important were each of the following to your decision? {IT18, CC19 mod}

[RANDOMIZE LIST]	Very important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not at all important
a. Cultural exchange (e.g. traditional customs, foods, etc.) to you and your children	42	36	17	5
b. Learning a foreign language for yourself and/or your children	26	24	26	24
c. Live-in childcare	68	21	8	3
d. Federally regulated program guidelines in place	34	33	21	12
e. Ability to establish a deeper level of trust with childcare provider	67	23	8	2
f. Strengthening ties between people in the U.S. and those from other countries	23	33	28	17
g. Cost saving in comparison to alternative childcare services	60	25	11	4

[ASK ALL:]

Q.4 Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience as a host family in the au pair program? {CC19}

- 57 | Extremely satisfied
- 28 | Somewhat satisfied
- 2 | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 6 | Somewhat dissatisfied
- 7 | Extremely dissatisfied

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.5 More specifically, to what extent would you rate your experiences with the following aspects of the au pair program: **{CC19, SWT-mod}**

	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
a. Communication and interactions with the sponsor agencies	27	54	13	6
b. Resources provided (e.g., regulatory guidelines, interview tips, local program support)	26	56	13	5
c. Communication and interactions with your local representative	39	45	11	5
d. Building personal connections with the au pair themselves	62	29	6	3
e. The care provided by the au pair in your home	59	32	6	4
f. Childcare related household support	45	40	10	5
g. The matching process of the au pair with your family	26	53	16	6
h. How your concerns, if any, were addressed	24	51	16	8
i. Cultural exchange and learning	36	52	8	3

[ASK ALL:]

Q.6 Is your family still able to participate in the au pair program, or not (e.g., still has child younger than 18)? **{New}**

96	Yes
4	No

[ASK IF Q.6=1:]

Q.6a¹⁹ Since the au pair program is still a viable option for your family, how likely would you participate in the au pair program as a host family again? **{CC19-mod}**

52	Very likely
16	Somewhat likely
15	Not too likely
17	Not at all likely

[ASK ALL:]

Q.7 How likely are you to recommend becoming a host family in the au pair program to friends or family in the future? **{CC19-mod}**

65	Very likely
21	Somewhat likely
7	Not too likely
7	Not at all likely

¹⁹ Percentages calculated for this, and all other conditional questions, are based on the number of respondents who received it. For this question, N= 6,114.

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Because of the au pair program...
{IT18, CC19-TFC}

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I gained a better understanding of the international culture of the au pair (traditions, customs)	45	44	7	3
b. I was able to interact with people from different cultures	52	40	5	2
c. I developed a better understanding of my own culture through teaching others	29	51	17	4
d. I was able to dedicate more time to my career	47	37	11	5
e. I was able to have more quality time with my children	42	40	14	4

[MODULE 2: Program Challenges/Program Impact]

NO QUESTIONS 9-14

[ASK ALL:]

Q.15 Please rate your experience with each of the following aspects of the au pair program:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Communications with your sponsor agency	20	48	20	11
b. Orientation experience with your local au pair program representative	29	45	18	8
c. Communications with your local au pair representative	37	40	14	9
d. Finding the right au pair to match the needs of your family	29	43	19	9
e. Navigating the application process	23	55	17	5
f. Your sponsor agency's response to concerns, if any, that you raised	23	42	20	16

NO QUESTION 16

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.17 Please rate your experience with managing each of the following:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Cross cultural communications between the au pair and members of the household	34	50	12	5
b. Integrating the au pair into your home and engaging with them	41	44	10	5
c. Establishing household rules for the au pair in your home	32	51	12	4
d. Changes in the cost to operate your household with an additional member (such as groceries, and toiletries)	19	51	24	5

NO QUESTION 18

[ASK ALL:]

Q.19 How much, if at all, would it impact your family if the au pair program were no longer available?

55	Great deal
16	Fair amount
12	Not too much
18	Not at all

[ASK ALL:]

Q.20 If the au pair program were not available how likely is each of the following scenarios for your family:

	Extremely likely	Somewhat likely	Not too likely	Not at all likely
a. Inability for the family to develop intercultural relationships, communication, and global perspectives	25	32	25	18
b. Inability to find suitable childcare for your family	36	31	18	15
c. Having to spend more money for childcare	66	18	8	8
d. Relocating to another area or region to find affordable childcare assistance	6	10	33	51
e. Having one parent work from home more	23	28	20	29
f. Having one parent change careers/stop working	16	22	26	36
g. Inability to have personal time (e.g. time to spend alone or with a significant other, without the children)	43	28	14	15

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.21 If the au pair program was no longer available, what aspects of the cultural exchange program would be harder to replace within your family? Please select all that apply. **{New}**

- 34 | Acquiring a foreign language for yourself and your children
- 52 | Cultural exposure to other customs and traditions
- 77 | Flexibility of the program
- 66 | Familial trust and bond with the au pair

[MODULE 3: Cultural Exchange]

NO QUESTIONS 22 - 26

[ASK ALL:]

Q.27 During your time in the program, what types of cultural activities did you and your family engage in with your au pair? Select all that apply. **{CC19-Mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 94 | Traditional American holiday event or activity
- 82 | Visit sites of interest (museums, parks, historic sites, etc.)
- 86 | Outdoor recreational activities (i.e., biking, hiking, camping, visiting the beach)
- 20 | Volunteer with local charity groups or other community engagement opportunities
- 82 | Travel to other cities or states (i.e. Vacations)
- 87 | Exchange of language, stories, and pictures
- 71 | Local community celebrations {New}
- 68 | American sports and games {New}
- 62 | Health and fitness activities {New}
- 2 | None of these activities [Exclusive]

[ASK ALL:]

Q.28 What types of cultural activities did your au pair share with you and your family? Select all that apply.

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 80 | Holidays and traditions from their country of origin
- 88 | Traditional food dishes from their country of origin
- 85 | Stories, pictures, or mementos of their family and home
- 39 | Traditional clothing or fashion items from their country of origin
- 58 | Media from their home country (e.g. traditional songs, movies, etc.)
- 75 | Exchange cultural gifts

Review of Au Pair Program

[ASK ALL:]

Q.29 What do you believe are the main benefits you experienced as a host family from your participation in the program? Please select all that apply. **{CC19-Mod}**

[RANDOMIZE LIST]

- 61 | Gain an increased sense of appreciation for other cultures (e.g. customs, cuisine, etc.)
- 65 | Promote cultural engagement with your child and the au pair {New}
- 36 | Gain other perspectives and norms on child rearing {New}
- 54 | Exposure to a foreign language
- 67 | Interact with people from different cultures
- 90 | Have additional help with the children {New}
- 65 | Became a mentor to your au pair with regard to their personal development
- 71 | Provide life-changing experiences for young people to take back to their home countries
- 74 | Foster life-long friendships between the family and the au pair {Mod}
- 82 | Develop a relationship between the au pair and the children in the family
- 34 | Feel an increased sense of pride/appreciation for the U.S.

[ASK ALL:]

Q.30 Have you kept in touch with your au pair(s) after they left the United States?

- 86 | Yes
- 14 | No

[ASK IF Q30=1:]

Q.31²⁰ How frequently do you keep in touch with your former au pair(s) since they returned home?

- 9 | More than once a week
- 12 | Once a week
- 43 | Once or twice a month
- 33 | A few times a year
- 2 | Once a year
- * | Once every few years
- * | Never

²⁰ N=5,254

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 4: Impact on Children]

NO QUESTIONS 32-36

[ASK ALL:]

Q.37 How much, if at all, would you say that the childcare your child(ren) received from an au pair contributed to ...

	Great deal	Fair amount	Not too much	Not at all
a. Foreign language immersion (e.g., intentional, and consistent exposure to a language other than English)	23	25	32	20
b. Early childhood development of motor skills and communication	31	39	18	13
c. Development of social skills	36	41	15	9
d. Academic success	21	36	29	14
e. Development of new interests and hobbies	26	40	23	10
f. Understanding of different cultures and countries around the world	38	42	14	6

[MODULE 5: Economic Impact]

NO QUESTIONS 38-39

Thinking about expenses during the au pair program...

[ASK ALL:]

Q.40 Thinking about each of the following types of expenses, please identify whether or not while you were hosting, you made expenditures for your au pair on any of the following?

	Yes	No
a. Groceries	99	1
b. Local transportation (Car, bike, public transit, etc.)	96	4
c. Vacation with your family (e.g. lodging, air fare, food)	89	11
d. Travel expenses for the au pair's independent travel	46	54
e. Additional utilities (e.g. streaming services)	71	29
f. Mobile phone	97	3
g. Entertainment (e.g. dining, movies, concerts)	76	24
h. Other purchases (e.g., clothing, souvenirs, memberships)	75	25
i. Medical expenses (e.g. prescriptions, co-pays)	25	75
j. Tuition and books	90	10
k. Monetary gifts or bonuses for special events or holidays	90	10

Review of Au Pair Program

[BASED ON THOSE WHO SELECTED YES IN Q40 (Q40a-k=1), ASK:]

Q.41 Independent of the au pair’s stipend and education credit, in an average **month**, about how much would you say that you spent on each of the following categories for your au pair during their time in the United States? If you are not sure, please select “Not sure.” **{New}**

	Average %	Lower 25%	Upper 25%
a. Groceries N= 4,076	\$150	\$100	\$250
b. Local transportation (Car, bike, public transit, etc.) N= 4,040	\$100	\$50	\$250
c. Vacation with your family (e.g. lodging, air fare, food) N= 3,229	\$150	\$100	\$500
d. Travel expenses for the au pair’s independent travel N= 1,492	\$50	\$20	\$100
e. Additional utilities (e.g. streaming services) N= 2,483	\$30	\$15	\$50
f. Mobile phone N= 4,427	\$50	\$35	\$75
g. Entertainment (e.g. dining, movies, concerts) N= 2,797	\$50	\$25	\$100
h. Other purchases (e.g., clothing, souvenirs, memberships) N= 2,611	\$30	\$20	\$60
i. Medical expenses (e.g. prescriptions, co-pays) N= 832	\$16	\$10	\$50
j. Tuition and books N= 3,233	\$50	\$25	\$100
k. Monetary gifts or bonuses for special events or holidays N= 3,557	\$50	\$25	\$150

[ASK ALL:]

Q.42 During your time as a host family, were there any unexpected costs related to hosting an au pair?

44	Yes
56	No

[IF UNEXPECTED COSTS (Q42=1), ASK:]

Q.43²¹ Please describe these unexpected costs?

Open-end responses used for qualitative purposes only.

²¹ N=2,792

Review of Au Pair Program

[MODULE 6: Demographics]

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

[ASK ALL:]

Q.46 How many years have you and your family participated as a host family in the au pair program? **{New}**

22	1 year
21	2 years
39	3 – 5 years
16	6 – 10 years
3	11 or more years

[ASK ALL:]

Q.47a²² When initially starting the au pair program, how old were your child/children at the time? **{New}**

	1 or under	2-3 years old	4-5 years old	6-11 years old	12-17 years old
Child 1 N= 5,435	25	40	20	15	1
Child 2 N= 3,752	13	22	29	32	3
Child 3 N= 2,690	78	16	4	2	*
Child 4 N= 1,163	11	13	22	48	6

[ASK ALL:]

Q.47b²³ How old were they after completing the au pair program? **{New}**

	1 or under	2-3 years old	4-5 years old	6-11 years old	12-17 years old
Child 1 N= 4,744	2	16	31	40	11
Child 2 N= 3,357	2	5	15	59	19
Child 3 N= 2,362	22	50	15	13	2
Child 4 N= 1,074	2	6	10	55	28

[ASK ALL:]

Q.48 Please identify if your au pair was responsible for the care of children in any of the following categories. Select all that apply. **{New}**

14	Multiples (e.g., twins, triplets)
9	Special needs (e.g., behavioral, emotional, physical)
8	Health-related needs (e.g., allergies, diabetic)
71	None of these [Exclusive]

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

²² Only the first 4 children are shown.

²³ Only the first 4 children are shown.

Appendix E. Host Family In-depth Interview – Protocol Guide

**Au Pair Program
Host Family
In-Depth Interview
Final Protocol Guide**

Participant ID: _____

Interviewer name: _____

Date ___/___/___

Time ___:___ AM/PM

SECTIONS	ALLOTTED TIME
1. Introduction	2 Minutes
2. Section 1: Program Evaluation	» 11 Minutes
4. Section 2: Program Impact	» 10 minutes
3. Section 2: Cultural Enrichment	» 10 Minutes
4. Section 3: Economic Impact	» 11 Minutes
5. Debriefing	1 Minutes
TOTAL TIME	» 45 MINUTES

Review of Au Pair Program

Ref #	Question/Prompt	Response
	Preliminary Information	
1	Name of Interviewer	
2	Date	
3	Participant ID	
5	Participant's Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
6	Region	<input type="checkbox"/> Northeast <input type="checkbox"/> South <input type="checkbox"/> Midwest <input type="checkbox"/> West
7	Years of involvement in the program	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-60 months (5YRS) <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ months

Review of Au Pair Program

The interviewer should not read the script word-for-word but should be familiar enough with its contents to conduct the interview in a natural and conversational manner, paraphrasing, or giving further explanation as appropriate.

Hello, my name is _____ with EurekaFacts calling on behalf of the Alliance for International Exchange. May I please speak with [Insert Name]. [When respondent is on the line, continue:]

It's very nice to speak with you and thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview today.

*The purpose of this interview is to hear about your role as an au pair host family within the J-1 Visa Exchange Au Pair Program. We will be striving to understand the benefits and importance of the program, as well as evaluate its impact on your family. Your feedback will allow us to gain insight into your experiences and perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the program. This interview will last no longer than **45** minutes.*

Some key things to remember as we move along:

- *We are very interested in your thoughts and opinions about the au pair program so please answer each question to the best of your abilities. I would like you to verbalize everything that you are thinking.*
- *Please keep in mind that your participation is completely voluntary, and your answers will not be linked to you personally in any way. If at any time you decide you do not want to go on, that is your choice, and you may stop.*
- *This interview will be audio recorded so that analysts can review the recordings later. Recording the interview also allows me to focus my attention on our discussion and less on taking notes, since what you have to say is very important.*
- *When we are done, you will receive a \$50 e-gift card from a major credit card company via e-mail within 5-7 business days as a thank you for your participation.*
- *If this connection becomes disconnected, please allow up to 5 minutes for us to call you back and establish a new one.*

Do you have any questions before we begin? Before we proceed, I would like to confirm that we have your consent to conduct and record this interview?

Great! Thank you.

[START HANDHELD RECORDER – State EF ID, Date, Time]

Review of Au Pair Program

Section 1: Program Evaluation

1. Can you tell me how you and your family decided to participate in the au pair program?
 - a. Was the program recommended to you?
 - b. By whom?
 - c. From everything you heard and read, what were some things that attracted you to the program?
 - d. Potential probe, if needed: What, if anything, most attracted you to the program?
2. How satisfied were you with your experience as a host family in the au pair program?
 - a. [Potential probe:] What was the most satisfying experience about it?
 - b. Can you describe some experiences you think were particularly meaningful?
 - c. Now, can you describe some areas of the program that could be improved?
3. How would you describe your experience with the matching process of the au pair with your family?
 - a. Can you provide some examples of how this was a positive experience?
 - b. Can you provide some examples of how the matching process can be improved?
4. If the option were available for your family, would you participate in the au pair program again?
 - a. Can you provide some details about why you have come to this decision?
 - b. I don't have this data right in front of me ... If you have hosted more than once, what are some factors that led to your decision to continue participating in the program?

Section 2: Program Impact

5. Overall, how do you feel the program impacted your family?

[Probes on program impact] How would you say, if at all, the program impacted?

 - a. Your ability to return to work after having children?
 - b. You and/or spouse's ability to continue on a career path?
 - c. The exposure your children had to different cultures and customs?
 - d. The day-to-day routine of your family run smoothly?
 - e. After completing the program, did you notice any long-lasting changes in these areas?
6. Can you tell me about the relationship the au pair formed with your child/children?
 - a. Did you see a positive change in your child(ren's) behavior?
 - b. Are you still in touch with your au pair(s)?
 - i. [Probe:] How would you describe your ongoing relationship your au pair?

Review of Au Pair Program

- c. In your opinion, how would you rate the general quality of the care provided to your child/children by the au pair(s).
 - i. Probe: Can you provide some detail on your answer?
- 7. If the au pair program was not available, what impact might this have had on your family?
 - a. What are some benefits to your family that you may not have been able to obtain without the au pair program?
 - b. Are there changes your family may have needed to make in order to meet your childcare needs?
- 8. What were some challenges that you faced while participating in the au pair program?
 - a. Did you seek out assistance from the local counselor or the sponsor organization to address any issues? And, if so, can you describe your experience with the resolution process?

Section 3: Cultural Enrichment

- 9. Can you describe some of the things that you and your family learned about other cultures from your experience in the au pair program?
 - a. Would you have been able to have experiences like these outside of the au pair program?
- 10. Did your au pair speak a language other than English? [IF NO, SKIP TO Q12: On another subject ...]
- 11. And what language is that?
 - a. What was it like for your family to be exposed to [INSERT LANGUAGE] by the au pair:
 - b. Can you describe how exposure to new languages has benefited your family?
 - c. Can you describe how having someone whose native language is different from English may have presented challenges for your family?
- 12. Did your family experience any issues with blending someone from a different culture into your family?
 - a. [Probe:] How did you address these cultural differences?
- 13. Do you believe the au pair program is achieving its goal as a *cultural exchange* program?
 - a. [Probe:] In what ways?
- 14. As we finish this section, here is a more general question ... Can you provide some insight on how you and your family made the au pair feel welcome?

Section 4: Economic Impact

“For our last section of the interview, we are now going to discuss some financial aspects of participating in the au pair program. Please answer to the best of your ability and provide an estimate for information you may not be sure about. Again, all the information collected today will be kept confidential and your name will not be linked to any response.”

15. We would like to know about your initial expectations on the total cost of hosting an au pair.
 - a. What was your process for determining a budget to cover the costs of hosting an au pair?
 - b. Was the total cost above, below or in line with your initial expectations for hosting an au pair?
 - i. If above ... what are some of the costs that were outside of your expectations?
 - ii. If below ... what are some of the savings that were outside of your expectations?
 - iii. If in line with expectations ... what would you attribute this to?
 1. Possible probe: What would you *most* attribute this to?
16. Can you please describe the accommodation that you and your family provided to the au pair(s)? As examples,
 - a. How about the living space included?
 - b. Did you provide ... car and phone access, and any other benefits provided at a cost to you including vacations; access to streaming services; education; ride sharing services; hosting of their guests, etc.
 - c. Are there any other costs/accommodations you would like to mention, that we did not discuss?
17. How well did you manage the changes in costs to run your household with an additional family member?
 - a. Can you describe any unexpected *household* costs not included in your budget as a direct result of having an au pair in your home? What were some of those costs (monthly)?
 - i. [Potential Probe:] This can include additional groceries, cleaning services, or utilities for example. Did you have unexpected costs like these?
18. Outside of household costs, were there any other unexpected costs that you and your family incurred? Can you please provide some examples?
 - a. [Potential Probe:] This can include any repairs, replacements, trips, or accidents for example? Did you have unexpected costs like these?

Review of Au Pair Program

19. We are just about done. I have just one additional wrap up question. What, if any, is a misconception about the au pair program you would like people to better understand?

Debriefing

Before we finish, do you have any other comments or thoughts about your au pair host experience(s) or about the program itself?

Thank You

Thank participant for their time.

[STOP HANDHELD RECORDER]