

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Office of Private Sector Exchange

North American Youth Exchange Network

February 25, 2016



Introduction: Office of Private Sector Exchange

- James Alexander
 - Private Sector Exchange Administration
- Nick Tiernan
 - Private Sector Designation



Exchange Visitor Program Office of Private Sector Exchange

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Deputy Assistant Secretary
For Private Sector Exchange

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**Office of Private Sector
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Office of Designation (ECA/EC/D) Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of Designation continues to focus on the following in the management of the program:

- Designations and Redesignations
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Allotment/Expansion Requests
- Collecting and Analyzing Reports
- Updating SEVIS (Add Officials, Reinstatements, etc.)
- Best practices, program highlights
- Questions regarding 22 CFR Part 62 and Guidance Directives
- DesignationSSSP@state.gov – Please include your Program Number (P-3-#)



Office of Private Sector Exchange Administration (ECA/EC/OPA) Roles and Responsibilities

The Office monitors the administration of the exchange program. Key functions include:

- Incidents and complaints
 - Investigating incidents and complaints received
 - Working with sponsors to resolve issues
- Improving health, safety, and welfare of program participants
- Trend analysis
- Monitoring and site visits
 - Investigate incidents on-site
- Presenting at conferences and meetings
- Local coordinator certification
- Questions regarding 22 CFR Part 62 and Guidance Directives



Designation

- ROs and AROs
- Management Review
- Category Review
- Category Reminders
- Outreach
 - J-1 Website
 - Year of the Host
 - Route J-1
- Introduction of Team



ROs and AROs

- ROs/AROs must be employees of sponsor
- Upon written sponsor request, the Department may authorize the appointment of an individual who is not an employee or officer to serve as an ARO
- CBCs and Evidence of Citizenship are now required of all AROs and ROs
- Replacement of ROs/AROs within 10 calendar days



Management Reviews

Per 22 CFR 62.15 Management Reviews are now required every two years for sponsors whose annual allotment is above 20 secondary school students

Final template and guidance was sent to sponsors in December

Review will require independent auditors to collect and review information and documents that sponsors are already required to have per the exchange visitor regulations

Management Review Due – Please refer to the December 2015 email discussing that issue



Category Review (CR)

- A CR is generalized review of the category by assembling information and data about the category from a variety of sources and making analysis of this information
- A CR is non-punitive and has the purpose of learning as much as possible about a J-1 particular category -- its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, as well as areas for regulatory change
- The Office of Private Sector Exchange is planning to conduct between Augusts/September 2015 and June 2016 under the auspices of its Policy and Program Support Unit and welcomes sponsor suggestions about issues sponsors feel are important to the category and methods for best studying the category. Send suggestions to JExchanges@state.gov.



SSSP Required Reports

- **Annual Report:** Academic Year, July 31
- **Placement Report:** August 31 and January 15
- **Change of Placement Report:** July 31



Allotment and Expansion Requests

- Allotment level versus participant level
- Expansion requests must include:
 - the source of program growth,
 - staff increases,
 - confirmation of adequately trained employees,
 - noted programmatic successes,
 - current financial information,
 - additional overseas affiliates,
 - additional third party entities,
 - explanations of how the sponsor will accommodate the anticipated program growth, and
 - any other information requested by the Department
- Combining Rotary Districts



Reinstatements

- 22 CFR §62.45 *Reinstatement to valid program status*
- An exchange visitor's status in SEVIS must be accurate. An incorrect status may have adverse, or negative, effect on the Exchange Visitor's record
- Supporting documentation for a reinstatement request includes:
 - An official request/cover letter on letterhead asking for reinstatement with an explanation of what has occurred
 - A copy of the Pay.gov receipt - \$ 367
 - A copy of the DS-2019 form (stamped with the initial date of entry)
 - A copy of the I-94 form
 - A copy of the Visa page
 - A Copy of Photo page of passport
 - Evidence that the SEVIS I-901 Fee has been paid
- For additional guidance refer to SEVIS manual on the J1visa.state.gov or contact DesignationSSSP@state.gov for assistance



Outreach

The screenshot shows the homepage of the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program website. At the top left is the Department of State seal. The main header features the text "J-1 VISA EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM" in blue. To the right is a search bar with the text "Search J-1 Visa" and a right-pointing arrow. Below the header is a dark navigation bar with white text for "J-1 VISA BASICS", "PROGRAMS", "für PARTICIPANTS", "PROGRAM SPONSORS", and "HOST FAMILIES/EMPLOYERS". The main content area has a large banner for "Route J-1" with a background image of a road and a "ROUTE US J-1" sign. The banner text reads "Follow Robin Lerner as she travels to J-1 participant sites." and "Discovering the World in Your Hometown". Below the banner is a section titled "Employee of the Quarter!" with a sub-header "Posted on Wednesday, September 17th, 2014 at 1:19 pm." and a photo of two men in a kitchen. To the right of the photo is a "About Robin" section with a photo of Robin Lerner and text describing her role as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Private Sector Exchange at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Exchange.

ECA/EC

Office of Designation

Secondary School Student Program

Nick Tiernan, Program Analyst

Tim Fonseth, Program Specialist

Anthony Palmer, Program Specialist

Secondary
School
Student
Program



DesignationSSSP@state.gov



(844) 300-1824



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*Call or email with any questions
Submit documents electronically*



Key Issues in OPA

- Reporting
 - Process
 - Rubric
 - Template
- Projects
- Best Practices
- Statistics
 - Training
 - Incidents and Complaint



Reporting Incidents

What to report to OPA:

- **Immediately:** Incidents involving actual or alleged abuse, neglect, or sexual exploitation.
- Sponsors must report allegations to the authorities as required by local/ state law.
- **On/before next business day:** Serious problem or controversy.

How to report:

- Incident Report
- Documentation
 - Applications
 - Background Check
 - References
 - Monthly Reports
- Email :
HighSchoolExchanges@State.gov

Failure to report to OPA and as required to local authorities can lead to suspension and revocation of the sponsor's designation.

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Secondary School Student Program



Department of State

Secondary Student Category Incident Report

A. REPORTER INFORMATION			
Date:		Sponsor Name:	
From:		Program Number:	
Email:		Telephone #:	
B. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION			
EV Last Name:		EV First Name:	
SEVIS Number:		Country:	
DOB:		Program Dates:	
Overseas Partner:		Regional Manager:	
Host Family Name & Address:		Regional Director:	
Host Family Phone:			
Other Parties Involved: (contact information)			
C. SUMMARY			
Nature of Incident:			
Date of Occurrence:		Date 1 st Reported to Sponsor:	
D. ACTION TAKEN			
E. NEXT STEPS / PROPOSED SOLUTION			
F. UPDATE (please number and date each update submitted)			



Incident Reporting Rubric

Nature of Incident or Allegation*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually Related Incidents or Abuse (incident or allegation involving actual or alleged sexual exploitation or any other allegations of abuse) • Incident Involving the Criminal Justice System (police, child protective services, law enforcement, etc.) • Exchange Visitor Death • Exchange Visitor Missing • Threat of Negative Press, Foreign Government, or Embassy Involvement (incident expected to bring DOS or the exchange visitor program into notoriety or disrepute) • Public Events or Natural Disasters Directly Involving Student Safety (school shooting/violence/stabbing, earthquake, tornado, flood, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor Violations (self-recognition of errors in vetting, oversight, staffing, etc.) • Patterns of Behavior Problems (substance abuse, aggressive physical contact, severe bullying, etc.) • Host Parent Substance Abuse • Mental Health Issues (eating disorder, cutting, suicidal ideation, suicide attempt, planned program termination due to mental health concerns, etc.) • Dangerous and Unsuitable Living Conditions (non-vetted people in the home, theft, inappropriate relationship, pest infestations, mold, filth, etc.) • Life Threatening Health Condition (traumatic brain injury, severe burn, <i>debilitating</i> heart condition, major surgery, seizure disorder, etc.)

*Reporting depends on the level of seriousness, the impact to the health, safety, and welfare of the exchange student, and the impact to the surrounding community. It is a Department of State **best practice** for sponsors to report particularly serious matters within 24 hours, and other matters within 72 hours, depending on the seriousness of an incident.

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Highlighted Projects

Mental Health

Case Management System

CBC Adjudication

Monitoring



Mental Health Project

- Many reported incidents that involve mental health
 - Impact on the program
 - Sponsor concern about issue
 - Sponsor materials lack information on mental health
- Meetings with mental health experts to gather information
 - Team was rolling...until the FO noticed
- Youth Mental Health First Aid training
- Webinars to come



Case Management System

- Data Storage: One stop shop
 - Incidents and Complaints...and more
- Migrated all previous data
- Phase 1: We enter cases manually
- New reporting procedure automatically logs case-related emails
- Phase 2: Sponsors will submit Incidents through online portal



Criminal Background Check (CBC)

- Weaknesses in host family vetting process
 - Gaps in coverage
 - State definitions of criminal offenses may vary
 - Inconsistent reviews of CBCs by sponsors
 - CBCs do not show dismissed charges
- Instant CBC vs. county-level search
 - Comparative advantages and disadvantages
 - Sponsors' use of these searches vary
- Working with partners—Alliance and CSIET—to:
 - Increase coverage and depth of CBCs
 - Create consistent standard to assess CBC hits – talk to the associations..... **Released spring and fall 2015!**



2015 Monitoring Trips

- Follow-up to three boarding schools visited in spring 2014 in Oregon & Wisconsin
- Boarding school issues of concern
- Visited 12 rural and urban schools with large EV populations in Boise and Minneapolis areas
- Visited southern Virginia
- Key findings
- More to come: LA, NY, NV, NC, KY, GA



Best Practices: Sponsor Policies

- Host Family Code of Conduct
- Cultural Differences in Expressing Affection
- Case Studies of hypothetical scenarios
- Exchange Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Clear Sexual Misconduct Information and Guidelines
- Information on Mental Health



Screening Host Families

- Quality of the home
 - Assess pictures **taken by LC** of the home
 - Would you advertise the home on your website?
 - Would you want your own child there?
- Financial capacity
 - Understand varying costs of living
 - Food/housing subsidies
 - Placing two EVs, where one should be maximum
- Consider compatibility factors
 - Good match is key to positive experience
- Ask about family's hosting history
 - Check with previous sponsors to see if family still eligible to host
 - Respond promptly to inquiries from other sponsors



Documenting Student Contact

- Monthly contact keeps students safe
- Reports enable central office to ask key questions
- Monthly progress reports
 - Should be substantive; if not, return to LCs for revision
 - Document behavioral issues and corrective actions
 - Fully explain reasons for moves
- When incidents do occur...
 - Trail of information in monthly reports
 - Demonstrates sponsor effort and compliance
- Best practice: keep records of serious cases of abuse on file indefinitely



Mandated Sponsor Training

- Sponsors must ensure that all LCs complete the DOS training module prior to their appointment as a LC or assumption of duties. The training includes:
 - Instruction designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Exchange Visitor Program
 - Secondary School Student category regulations.
 - Public diplomacy objectives
- DOS Sponsors must demonstrate the local coordinator's successful completion of training requirements and that annual refresher training is successfully completed.

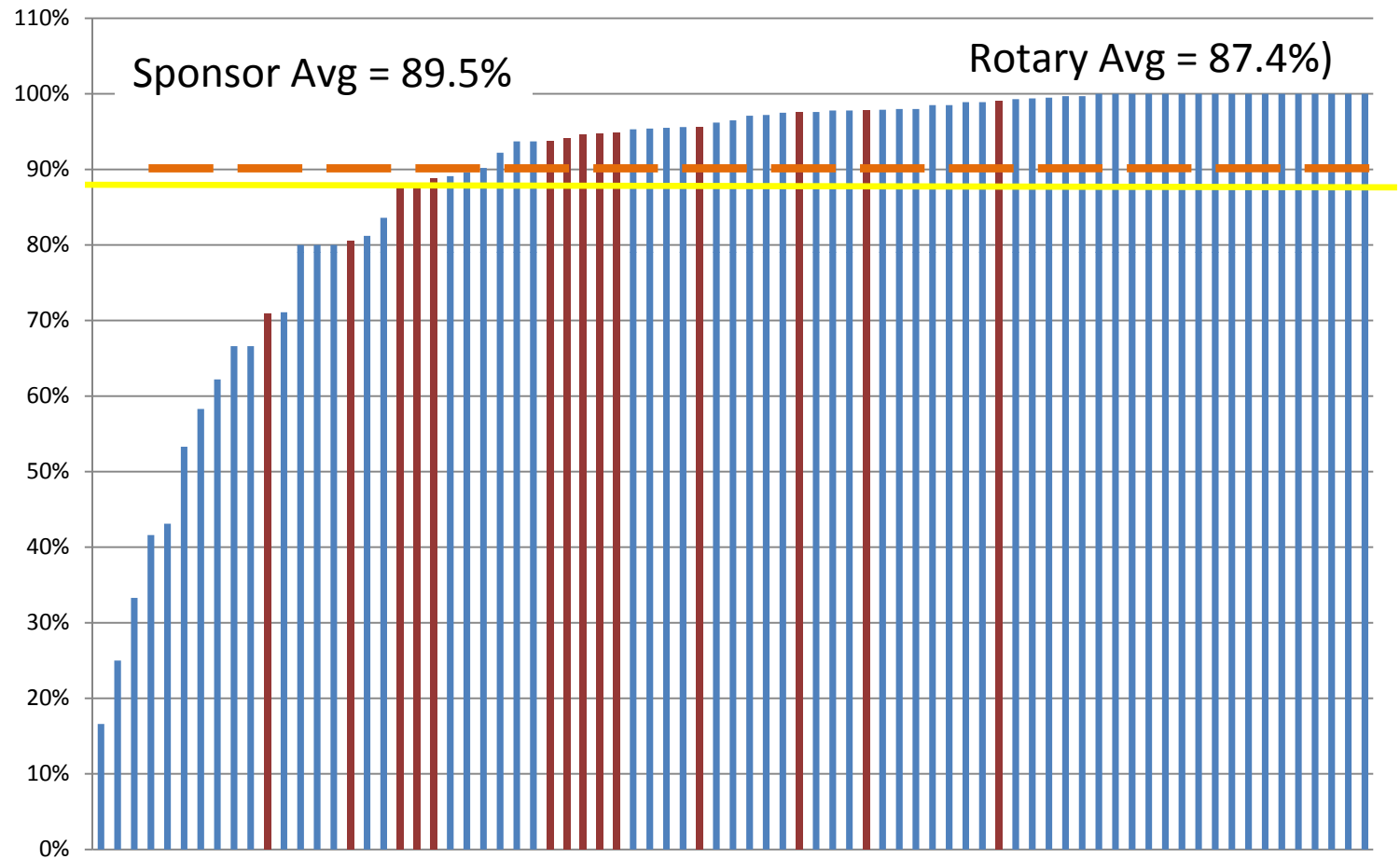
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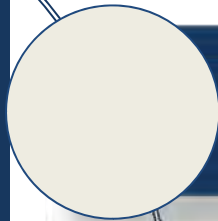
Rotary Training Compliance Rate



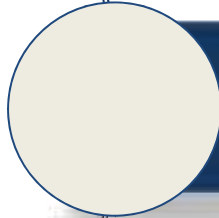
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OPA Incidents & Complaints

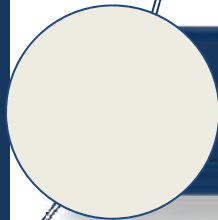
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Number of Incidents & Complaints



Nature of Key Incidents



Nature of Key Complaints



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- Call or email with any questions
- Send your documents electronically