

Host Family Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Amity Institute?

Amity is a nonprofit organization that builds international friendship and cultural understanding through teaching exchange. Founded in 1962, the Amity Institute intern program is based on the belief that language learning and cultural exchange are essential to building international friendship within our global community. Interns are here to bring their languages and cultures to life, to engage and motivate students and leave them with new confidence in their ability to communicate across borders

Who are Interns?

Interns are single and between the ages of 21 and 30. They are students or graduates of institutions of higher education in their home countries. Most Interns have teaching experience and have worked with youth. The personal qualities we seek in Interns are friendliness, openness, maturity, adaptability, motivation, and enthusiasm.

How long will an Intern stay with our family?

Interns will stay with a Host Family for one school semester as part of the PSI Amity Program. Hosting commitments for fall semester run from the end of August to mid-January. Spring semester runs mid-January to mid-June.

What will it cost?

Our Host Families provide free room and board to the Intern. Costs will include food, utilities, and minor incidental expenses.

Has my Intern had a security or police background check?

Yes. All Interns must submit a police or security background check from their home country. Interns are also screened as part of the visa interview at the embassy.

What should we expect of our Intern?

- Become a part of the family
- Help with simple household chores
- Do their own laundry
- Follow house rules
- Adjust to the Host Family's schedule
- Participate in family activities if invited
- Prepare a meal from their home country (possibly)
- Keep the Host Family informed of their plans
- Take the initiative to spend time with the family
- Share their culture
- Build a relationship with the Host Brother/Sister

I have a small house. Will this be a problem?

No. Our only requirement is that they have their own room (must be a legal bedroom) with a door that can be closed for privacy.

Do they need to have their own bathroom?

No. Just make sure that the Intern has a space for toiletries. Be sure that the schedule for bathing and/or showering is predetermined to avoid embarrassment and confusion.

We have a hectic schedule. We usually eat on the run. Will this be disappointing to the intern?

Everyone is different. What is most important is that you communicate upfront your family routine around meal time. Always be sure to have food available for your Intern to prepare his or her own meals as needed.

We have special dietary needs (i.e. vegetarian diet, gluten free diet, etc.) can we still host an Intern?

Maintaining a balanced diet is important for our Interns. We would encourage you to host an Intern, but our expectation is that accommodations would be made in order for the Intern to maintain their current healthy diet. For example, if you follow a vegetarian diet it would be expected that the Intern would be allowed to maintain his or her own diet, likely including meat.

Who is responsible for making the lunch (if brought from home)? For cleaning their room? For doing their laundry? I am too busy to do this.

For many interns this experience is an opportunity to gain greater independence and responsibility away from home and their parents. Be clear in communicating your expectations about their responsibilities in your home. If you prefer they make their own lunch or do their own laundry you will need to communicate this upfront and show them how to do it, with reminders most likely along the way. If problems arise, deal with them immediately and take the direct approach. Reiterate your original discussion regarding the issue at hand, and try to find a solution or compromise.

What if we have a vacation planned during their stay? Does the Intern come along? If so, who pays for the additional expenses?

You are not obligated to take the Intern with you on your vacation. If you want to ask the Intern to go with your family, give them the details beforehand along with their share of the expenses (airfare, entertainment, etc.). The Intern can then decide if s/he can afford to go, or even whether s/he wants to go along. If the Intern stays home, the Amity Coordinators can help you make arrangements for your Intern while you are away. In general we believe it is best not to leave the Intern in your home alone for an extended time. This is often an opportunity for the Intern to stay and spend time with his or her Cousin Family.

We can't imagine how we would be able to entertain someone for five months!

This experience is very different than having an out-of-town guest to entertain for a few days. The Intern is here to be a part of your family and is not a short-term visitor. Just live your life and the Intern will adapt accordingly. They are here to learn about American culture and share their culture with you.

Our children are too young!

Many families have had young children and hosted. We often hear of families that

wished they had also hosted earlier in their child's PSI years. Children younger than school age often become very attached to the Intern and are as equally enriched by having them live in their home.

Can I expect the Intern to baby-sit or tutor?

Interns should not be expected to act as a nanny or full-time babysitter and should not be expected to perform au pair duties, house sitting, or housework beyond that of other family members. Interns are expected to participate in household responsibilities, which may occasionally include supervising children for short periods of time and helping with homework.

We have a very busy schedule and don't have time to drive an intern to their activities.

Interns are allowed to ride the school bus to and from school when their schedule permits. The Interns are also typically very busy with after school activities. We encourage the Interns to walk, bike, and use the public transportation system whenever possible. We also advise all Host and Cousin families to coordinate carpooling in order to share the driving responsibility. Lastly, we encourage each host family to help their intern develop a transportation network consisting of neighboring families who have agreed in advance to help the intern with transportation and who have been introduced to the intern so he/she is comfortable taking rides with them.

Can the Intern use the family car?

Amity Institute does not encourage interns to drive during their assignment. **The PSI Amity Program strictly prohibits Interns from driving their Host Family's vehicle.** Interns who hold a valid driver's license and choose to drive/rent a vehicle in the US are solely responsible for their own actions. Neither Amity nor the Host School will pay for any damages.

We do not live in St. Louis Park. Can we still host an intern?

This will need to be determined on a case by case basis. Please contact the Amity Coordinators at psiamity@gmail.com if you are interested in hosting and live outside SLP.

We do not have children at PSI, can we still host?

A Host Family that is in the district but does not have children attending PSI may be considered, but PSI families will always be given first priority.

At the end of the year, what do I do if the intern wants to stay through the summer?

Generally most interns leave within a couple of weeks of school ending. Their J-1 visa requires that the Interns return to their home country within 30 days of the last day of their assignment (last day of school). Often they take the last 30 days to travel around the US before going home. Having said this, Spring host families are expected to host the Intern for one week after school ends.

What happens if my Intern gets sick?

Your Intern must have health insurance throughout the entire time they are in the US.

Many Interns use a health provider offered by Trawick. If your Intern gets sick or is in need of medical attention, they should go to a local doctor or the local emergency room which accepts their health insurance. If your Intern holds a Trawick policy there is a one-time deductible of \$100 paid at their first visit. He/she will need to find out the correct procedure to schedule appointments and use their insurance policy. It is recommended that the intern understand the process before they need it.

What can I do to make sure that our experience is successful?

Clear, positive communication is the key to success. Please do not assume that your Intern understands your expectations unless you have taken an opportunity to discuss them directly and often.

What should we do if my Intern asks us to help him/her to stay longer in the US?

A primary goal of the Amity Institute Intern Program is for our Interns to share what they learned in the US with students in their home countries. All Interns are required to return home at the end of their assignments. If you have any concerns or questions about this matter, please contact an Amity Coordinator immediately.

What are the benefits to hosting an Intern?

This experience will allow your family to develop a meaningful relationship with someone from another culture. Interns will interact with your family, friends, and neighbors thus creating international friendships and cultural understanding on a local level. Your memories will last a lifetime. By opening your home you will create an unforgettable experience for your Amity Intern allowing him or her to see the best that US culture has to offer. The Intern program also allows you to support PSI and help to create a rich, engaging Spanish language program. By volunteering your home, you are allowing many students to benefit from having an Amity Intern. Finally, hosting an Intern allows you to learn about yourself and your culture and see the US through the eyes of an international visitor, creating an invaluable educational experience for yourself and your family.

If you have further questions regarding becoming a host family please contact:

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