

2006-2007

# FULBRIGHT

## Foreign Fellows Handbook

### Guide to Living and Studying in the United States



For IIE Administered Grants  
*Sponsored by the*  
United States Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs





**The United States Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
301 Fourth Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20547**

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the  
United States Department of State,  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

INSTITUTE OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION

**Foreign Fulbright Program Division  
809 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017-3580  
Website: <http://www.iie.org>**

A nonprofit agency that assists the United States Department of State in the administration of the Fulbright Program for U.S. and foreign graduate fellows.



*Cover:* Picture by **Maureen O' Hara**, Miami Dade College,  
Fulbright Gateway Orientation, 2005.

# **FOREIGN FULBRIGHT FELLOW HANDBOOK**

*For IIE Administered Scholarships  
Sponsored by the  
United States Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs*

***INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION***

*This handbook is provided for informational purposes only and is intended to assist you during your participation in the Fulbright Program. If you have any additional questions that are not answered by this handbook, please contact your IIE Student Services Representative or the Fulbright agency in your home country. If you contact IIE, please be sure to state that you are a Fulbrighter and identify your home country and U.S. institution.*

## IIE U.S. Student Services

**W**hile you are at your academic institution in the United States, you will have an assigned regional IIE representative to assist you. This representative is located at the IIE Regional Center responsible for the state in which your institution is located. You will receive your IIE Welcome Packet from your Foreign Student Advisor who is located on your college or university campus (see your *Terms of Appointment* for the name and address of this individual).

IIE Regional Centers are listed below together with their state responsibilities, addresses, email addresses, telephone and facsimile numbers. Because of the volume of calls, we encourage you to email us.

### IIE - NORTHEAST

809 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017-3580  
Tel: (212) 984-5312  
Fax: (212) 984-5394  
E-mail: [northeast@iie.org](mailto:northeast@iie.org)

Connecticut	New Jersey
Delaware	New York
Maine	New Hampshire
Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
Michigan	Rhode Island
Ohio	Vermont

### IIE - NORTHEAST ANNEX – Washington, DC

1400 K Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: (202) 898-0600  
Fax: (202) 326-7809  
E-Mail: [mgrant@iie.org](mailto:mgrant@iie.org)

District of Columbia	South Carolina
Georgia	North Carolina
Maryland	Virginia

### IIE - ROCKY MOUNTAIN

475 17th Street, Suite 800  
Denver, CO 80202  
Tel: (303) 837-0788  
Fax: (303) 837-1409  
E-mail: [rockymountain@iie.org](mailto:rockymountain@iie.org)

Arkansas	Nebraska
Arizona	New Mexico
Colorado	North Dakota
Iowa	Oklahoma
Kansas	South Dakota
Minnesota	Texas
Missouri	Utah
Montana	Wyoming

### IIE – MIDWEST

155 N. Wacker Dr., Suite 714  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Tel.: (312) 346-0026  
Fax: (312) 346-2574  
E-mail: [Midwest@iie.org](mailto:Midwest@iie.org)

Alabama	Louisiana
Florida	Mississippi
Illinois	Tennessee
Indiana	Wisconsin
Kentucky	

### IIE – WEST COAST

530 Bush Street, Suite 1000  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
Tel.: (415) 362-6520  
Fax: (415) 392-4667  
E-mail: [wcoast@iie.org](mailto:wcoast@iie.org)

Alaska	Oregon
California	Nevada
Hawaii	Washington
Idaho	

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## Introduction

Congratulations on your selection as a Fulbright Fellow. We are pleased to welcome you to the community of approximately 273,500 international scholars throughout the world who share a commitment to peace and understanding between nations. In accepting your Fulbright award you have become one of the more than 70,000 students from abroad who have taken part in the Fulbright experience. The staff at IIE and the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) look forward to welcoming you to the United States, and we hope your program here will be valuable and satisfying.

Established by the United States government in 1946, the Fulbright Program supports international educational exchange of students, scholars and teachers. The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the **United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**.

## The Fulbright Program

For 50 years, foreign students, scholars and teachers have come to the United States for academic programs and Americans have studied, taught or researched abroad under the auspices of the Fulbright Program. The program was named after United States Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas who sponsored the original United States legislation proposing the exchanges in 1946. The Fulbright Program is authorized by Public Law 87-256, the *Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961*. The purpose of the program is to enable the government of the United States to promote mutual understanding among the people of the United States and the rest of the world.

The primary source of funding is an annual appropriation made by the United States Congress to the United States Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions in many countries and in the United States also contribute financially through cost-sharing as well as by indirect support such as supplemental salary, tuition waivers, university housing, or other benefits. Grants are made to United States citizens and nationals of other countries for a variety of educational activities, primarily university teaching, advanced research, graduate study, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

Interest in the Fulbright Program on the part of over 150 participating countries has been strong and many give evidence of their support through sharing costs of the program with the U.S. Government. Many U.S. universities and institutions overseas contribute scholarships and other awards to Fulbright grantees. Your own grant may include this type of support.

The **J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FSB)**, composed of 12 educational and public leaders appointed by the President of the United States formulates policy for the administration of the program, establishes criteria for the selection of candidates and approves candidates for awards.

**The United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)** ECA develops policies to assure fulfillment of the purposes of the Fulbright Program and administers it with the assistance of binational commissions and foundations in 50 countries, United States Embassies in 89 other countries and a number of cooperating agencies in the United States.

**Binational Commissions and Foundations** draw up the annual program plan for exchanges, in consultation with participating universities and organizations in the host country. They also screen, interview and recommend to the FSB qualified candidates for student and faculty grants. In a country without a commission or foundation, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy develops the program and supervises it locally.

The **Institute of International Education (IIE)**, a private nonprofit organization, has been contracted by your sponsor, the United States Department of State, to assist and maintain contact with you and your academic advisor for the duration of your stay in the United States. We will at various times ask you to submit reports, academic transcripts, and other related information. We will maintain contact not only with you, but with your United States academic institution, the United States Department of State, and the Department of Homeland Security through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) (see pages 20 and 30).

In addition to serving the Fulbright Program, IIE administers exchange programs for international organizations, other United States and foreign government agencies, foundations, private organizations, and colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. Founded in 1919, IIE is dedicated to the promotion of international exchange for educational purposes. IIE develops and administers programs between the United States and approximately 140 countries for students, teachers, leaders and specialists. It also serves as a clearinghouse of information on all aspects of international education.

## Before You Leave Your Own Country

### ***UNDERSTANDING YOUR TERMS OF APPOINTMENT***

**Y**our *Terms of Appointment* describe the benefits and conditions of your award. Be certain to read this document carefully and bring it to the United States for reference during the year. If you have any questions, consult the agency (Binational Educational Commission or Foundation, United States Embassy or Consulate) from which you received notification of your award.

### ***FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS***

If you were placed by IIE at your academic institution, your *Terms of Appointment* will estimate the various basic expenses you will incur and indicate how these expenses are to be covered. These are moderate estimates and do not cover the costs for the purchase of clothing, or equipment (calculators, personal computers, cameras), funds for vacation travel, or any other contingencies that may arise.

You should not expect to earn money in the United States nor should you depend on your spouse to earn money if he or she accompanies you (see *Employment Authorization*, page 29).

- I. If you have been chosen by a campus or community group as the recipient of an award, this will be stated on your *Terms of Appointment* along with the benefits and conditions of the award. If the award covers room and board, you will probably live in the group's dormitory or house and be expected to participate in their activities.
- II. If you have been awarded a teaching or research assistantship, fellowship or residency, please keep in mind the following points:
  1. Bring sufficient funds for your expenses during the first month, since you might not be paid for your services until the end of the month.
  2. Certain stipends are subject to United States income tax and, in some states, subject to state income tax. Such taxes are usually deducted from salary checks (see *Tax Matters*, on page 22.)

III. If you are to receive payments through IIE, you should keep in mind the following information:

1. If your grant provides for maintenance payments through IIE, your first payment will be sent to you in care of the Foreign Student Adviser or the official to whom you are asked to report at your institution, as indicated on your *Terms of Appointment*. If your *Terms of Appointment* provide for a supplementary allowance for expenses prior to the opening of school, this will be paid separately. This allowance cannot be paid to you if you are not in the United States. You should note that your allowance may be suspended if you are outside the United States for more than 31 days.
2. If your tuition and required academic fees are covered by your Fulbright grant and paid directly by IIE to your university, you should note that non-academic related fees that appear on your tuition bill will not be paid. Examples of these fees include: parking, meal plans, recreational facilities, housing, visits to the health center and late fees of any kind. You should plan to pay these expenses from personal funds or your Fulbright maintenance allowance.
3. All Fellows receiving Fulbright cash benefits from IIE are **required** to file taxes using IIE's GRANTAX program to report tax withholding (see *Tax Matters* on page 22).
4. All Fellows not receiving their Fulbright funding from IIE are eligible for assistance, but are not required to use IIE's GRANTAX program to report withholdings and filing of taxes.
5. You will be responsible for your own expenses from the end of your grant period until you depart from the United States. You must cover the cost of incidentals during your trip home from allowances previously received.
6. During the period of your grant you must not accept employment of any kind or financial aid from sources other than those specified on your *Terms of Appointment* without specific prior permission from IIE. Even if permission is given, your allowances as specified on your *Terms of Appointment* may be reduced by as much as you earn or receive from another source.

### ***ACCEPTING THE TERMS OF YOUR APPOINTMENT***

Notification of your Fulbright fellowship may be sent separately from the notification of your travel grants. Each award document should be signed and sent to the committee or agency through which you applied. Failure to sign your agreement indicates that you have declined your Fulbright appointment and therefore will not be participating in the Fulbright Program. If there are any changes either in your study plans or in finances you must immediately notify IIE and the Fulbright agency through which you applied.

***YOUR VISA AND ENTERING THE UNITED STATES***

The DS-2019 form, which is generated by IIE, is distributed to you by the Fulbright agency in your home country. You will need this form to obtain your J-1 visa from the U.S. Embassy. You should apply for your J-1 visa immediately upon receipt of your DS-2019 form. Under no circumstances should you apply for an F-1 (student) visa, a B-1/B-2 (visitor for business or pleasure) visa, an immigrant visa, or other type of visa. If your host university in the United States issues you a DS-2019 form you must return it to the university immediately. As the recipient of a Fulbright grant, you are required to apply for a J-1 (Exchange Visitor) visa under the sponsorship of the United States Department of State (Exchange Visitor Program Number G-1-00001). This information will be reflected on the DS-2019 issued to you by IIE.

Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the expiration date of the DS-2019. Along with your passport and DS-2019 form, you may also be asked to present to the United States Embassy or Consulate information about your medical history (i.e., x-ray photograph of your chest, certification of good health, and proof of vaccination against small-pox or measles within the last three years), Letter of Admission from your host institution and your Fulbright *Terms of Appointment*.

***SAMPLE UNITED STATES J-1 VISA***



In order to leave and reenter the United States throughout your grant period, you will need a visa that permits multiple entries. If you wish to leave and reenter the U.S. but your visa permits only one entry, then you must apply for a new visa in your home country. For further information consult with your IIE representative.

***US-VISIT - United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology***

US VISIT is part of a continuum of biometrically enhanced security measures that begins outside U.S. borders and continues through a visitor’s arrival in and departure from the United States. It incorporates eligibility determinations made by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State at the Consulate/Embassy abroad.

US VISIT currently applies to all visitors (with limited exemptions) entering the United States regardless of country of origin, whether they are traveling on a visa or arriving by air, sea, or land. Most visitors experience US VISIT’s biometric procedures - digital, inkless finger scans and digital photograph - upon entry to the United States.

Shortly before landing in the United States airline personnel will hand the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record to you. You will complete the form in flight. When you arrive at the United States Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP) you must present your DS-2019 form and your form I-94 along with your passport. The officer will process the forms and stamp the date of arrival, port of entry (United States city through which you entered the country), manner of entry (J-I), and his/her identification number on the forms and will return them to you. The I-94 card is a record of your legal entrance to the United States. Keep it with your passport as you will need to return it to the USCBP official upon departure from the United States. You will surrender the I-94 card each time you depart the United States and will be issued a new card each time you enter, except for visits of 30 days or less to Mexico, Canada, and the contiguous islands.

***SAMPLE FORM I-94***

Departure Number  
980934837 07

Immigration and Naturalization Service  
I-94  
Departure Record

**SAMPLE**

14. Family Name  
15. First (Given) Name  
16. Birth Date (Day/Mo/Yr)  
17. Country of Citizenship

See Other Side STAPLE HERE

***National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS)***

Upon entering the United States, you will notice that some individuals are asked to provide additional information under the National Security Entry-Exit System known as NSEERS. Anyone could be subject to this additional scrutiny. Some of the determining factors can be your country of birth or citizenship, your field of study, or frequent travel to certain countries. If you are identified as being subject to NSEERS, then you must:

1. Register with the USCBP upon arrival in the United States. USCBP will give you directions.
2. Inform United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) within 10 days of any change of address. You can do this by informing your IIE representative who will then enter your new address into the SEVIS database.
3. If requested, appear before USCIS to confirm your on-going compliance with J-1 visa regulations.
4. If you were required to go through the NSEERS special registration process, there is a special exit procedure that you must follow before you can depart the United States. Failure to follow NSEERS exit procedures at the airport from which your international flight will depart will negatively impact your ability to return to the United States.

Currently, individuals from the following countries are subject to NSEERS registration upon entry into the United States: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

The most important thing to note about the US-VISIT and NSEERS programs is that everyone entering the United States on a non-immigrant visa is subject to the US-VISIT process. This is different from NSEERS in that although USCBP can deem anyone subject to NSEERS, NSEERS applies to individuals from specific countries only. It is unclear if once the US-VISIT program is fully implemented the NSEERS program will be eliminated.

With these new entry and exit procedures, the United States hopes to address the need for heightened security and its commitment to facilitate safe travel for the millions of visitors to the United States each year.

For more information about NSEERS, please go to: [www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/index.htm) and click on "Border Security".

## **Two-Year Home Residency Requirement**

As a Fulbrighter you are participating in an exchange program that requires you to return home to share your experience. To fulfill this requirement, Fulbright Program grantees must return to their home countries when their authorized academic exchange activities in the United States end. As a J-1 Exchange Visitor, United States law requires a two-year period of home residency before an individual applies for non-immigrant (H and L) visas as temporary workers, for permanent residency in the United States, or as immigrants. This requirement does not prevent you from reentry into the United States within the two-year period to attend conferences, tourism, or further study.

### ***YOUR FAMILY***

Grants are intended for the recipient only. If your country's program policy allows for dependents, you should not bring members of your family with you unless you have additional resources to provide for their financial support, round-trip international travel, and insurance coverage, in compliance with the levels established by the U.S. federal immigration regulations. **If dependents must accompany you, you must notify your IIE representative and the Foreign Student Advisor at your United States institution.** Be sure to ask the Foreign Student Advisor about programs and support services for spouses and children. If you have been awarded a room and/or board scholarship by your institution, it will probably not be possible for you to bring dependents during the period of the grant.

If you have been assigned to a summer English language or other preacademic program, **you cannot have dependents accompany you.** Accommodations are not available for families at summer program centers.

**You should not plan to send any portion of your grant funds home for your family's support. Costs are high in the United States and your grant will only cover your own expenses.**

### **Visas for Family Members**

Family members who come with you to the United States are referred to as your *dependents*. Your spouse and any unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible to apply for J-2 dependents' visas. (Other family members such as parents, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews are not eligible for J-2 classification, but may be eligible for B-2 classification to visit the United States as tourists.)

If you plan to have your dependents travel with you to the United States, be sure to ask the Fulbright agency in your home country to notify IIE. If they are joining you after your arrival, you should notify your IIE Student Services Representative. To obtain DS-2019

forms for each dependent, you will need to provide proof of sufficient funding to support them. You should note that funds set aside for your dependents should be separate from those funds you have set aside for your own support. Money from your Fulbright grant will not be accepted as funding to be used to support your dependents. You will also need to provide verification of health insurance coverage for each of your dependents. Each of your dependents will also need a valid passport at the time that they are applying for the J-2 Visa.

### ***ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND OTHER PREACADEMIC PROGRAMS***

Many Fulbrighters are funded by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to participate in the Fulbright Preacademic Training Program prior to beginning their academic programs. These programs provide valuable training and orientation that will help to ensure your academic success. Preacademic programs may include intensive English, field-of-study information, or orientation to the United States.

Since your ability to understand, speak, read, and write English is important to your academic success, IIE offers a wide range of English language training options. Intensive English Programs (IEPs) in the United States vary in length from three weeks to four months, beginning in May through August. These programs offer language instruction at several levels as well as cultural and social activities.

Other preacademic programs exist for Fulbright grantees with a high level of English language proficiency. These include business, field-of-study programs in law, economics, IIE-designed academic skills programs, and four-day Gateway Orientations.

The **Fulbright Gateway Orientation**, funded by ECA, is a benefit for incoming Fulbright grantees. The orientation provides an overview of Fulbright goals and traditions and aims to instill a Fulbright identity among grantees. It also provides sessions on survival skills for graduate student life and an understanding of current issues in U.S. society with the goal of assisting grantees in developing an understanding of U.S. social values for successful intercultural communication in their host communities. The Gateway Orientation has no language component as it has been designed for grantees that have an advanced level of English language proficiency. There are three main components to the orientation: academic skills, graduate student life and cross-cultural awareness. Academic skills include sessions on the U.S. academic system, academic integrity, and research skills. Graduate student life focuses on topics essential to graduate student adjustment, such as stress management, legal rights of non-citizens, and survival skills, which include tips on banking, the social security

card application, and housing. Cross-cultural awareness is a workshop that provides grantees with a thorough introduction to U.S. culture, especially U.S. academic culture.

IIE will notify you via your Fulbright Commission or American Embassy if you are offered this opportunity. If assigned to a preacademic program, you will be required to report on time and participate in all aspects of the program. If you are unable to attend your preacademic program, please notify your Commission, Embassy, or IIE as soon as possible. **NO DEPENDENTS OR GUESTS MAY ACCOMPANY YOU TO A PREACADEMIC PROGRAM.**

### ***HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES***

**You are responsible for making your own housing arrangements for the academic year unless your *Terms of Appointment* specify otherwise.** If you have not already received information about housing from the U.S. university you will attend, you should inquire immediately, (see university website for contact information), to your U.S. school's International Student Admissions Office. In your letter, request information about the various types of accommodations available (i.e., dormitory rooms, university-owned apartments, off-campus rooms, or apartment rentals) and their location. Ask about rental rates, required deposits, payment schedules, and a recommended or appropriate time schedule for confirming arrangements.

Finding suitable housing accommodations at many U.S. universities is difficult. On most campuses and surrounding areas dormitory space as well as inexpensive off-campus rooms and apartments are in short supply. This could present a problem for you, since your arrival on campus will generally be scheduled to coincide with orientation on campus. If you are unable to find permanent housing you should make temporary housing arrangements prior to your arrival so you will not be searching for a place to live at a time when you have many other concerns. **Read all information on housing carefully and follow instructions. Return any housing applications immediately; do not wait until you arrive in the United States.**

***ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE***

- I. To guard against financial hardship if you should become ill or have an accident while in the United States, you must hold adequate accident and sickness insurance. The J-1 and J-2 exchange visitor status requires coverage at levels in compliance with the *Exchange Visitor Program Regulations*. For J-1 grantees, your Fulbright Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) meets the minimum requirements. IIE will work with you in resolving any outstanding insurance claims and will keep you up to date on any United States Department of State health coverage changes. For your J-2 dependents, see our website for dependent insurance information at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) (see inside back cover for internet information).
- II. We strongly suggest you carefully review your health insurance coverage needs to determine whether the coverage provided by your Fulbright grant will be sufficient. If you determine that the policy does not meet your needs, then IIE recommends that you consider purchasing a supplemental policy.
- III. The insurance coverage provided as a benefit of your Fulbright grant is in effect from the start date of your grant through the approved end date of your grant, and during your return home via the most direct route. Should you remain in the United States beyond the end date of your grant, you must arrange for other insurance coverage beginning the day following your grant end date through the date you plan to remain in the United States. Information on interim health insurance coverage will be provided prior to your departure.
- IV. A brochure describing the terms of ASPE will be sent to you upon arrival at your academic institution together with an identification card, a claim form, and instructions for filing a claim. ASPE provides basic coverage and is not intended to replace insurance you may already have and that will provide coverage in the United States. See our website at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) (See inside back cover for instructions on accessing the website).
- V. Claim forms must be submitted in accordance with the instructions that appear in the ASPE brochure. See our website for a copy of the claim form at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) (see back inside cover for instructions on accessing the website).
- VI. In cases of serious accident or illness you should notify IIE immediately, so that all possible guidance may be provided to you.

- VII. Most academic institutions have insurance plans of their own and you may be required to participate even though you have been provided with coverage under the Fulbright Program. Please note that any insurance coverage provided for you under your grant is through a group plan. IIE is unable to withdraw you from this plan and provide you with funds to pay for another insurance policy. If IIE is responsible for payment of your tuition and fees it may be possible for your grant to cover a required university insurance fee; this can be verified with your IIE representative.
- VIII. Most health insurances require you to purchase dental and vision coverage separately.
- IX. You are advised to have any treatments completed, if possible, before you leave home. **Your policy also does not cover any pre-existing medical conditions.**
- X. Insurance coverage is not provided for dependents of Fulbright grantees. **Fellows accompanied by dependents are required to provide their dependents with adequate health and accident insurance in compliance with exchange visitor regulations.** Failure to do so violates the terms and conditions of award and may result in termination of the grantee's program. Website at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) (see back inside cover for instruction on accessing the website) can provide information on insurance programs for dependents. Grantees are cautioned that medical insurance coverage is expensive, and the cost of insurance must be carefully considered in any decision about the financial feasibility of bringing dependents to the United States.

## Preparing for Departure and Arrival in the United States

**B**efore you leave your home country, be sure all details concerning your travel arrangements have been finalized. For your trip, carry with you the names, addresses and phone numbers of the Foreign Student Advisor at your U.S. Institution and your IIE representative. Carry these items separate from your passport and immigration document (DS-2019). You must also carry your *Terms of Appointment* and any correspondence from your U.S. institution. Have these items accessible in case the United States Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP) asks you about them at your port of entry into the United States.

Once you enter the United States, it is **imperative that you notify IIE of your arrival no later than 15 days from the start date on your DS-2019**. You should notify IIE electronically by completing the form available at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) or follow the instructions on the back inside cover of this handbook to locate Resources for Current Grantees. On the Resources for Current Grantees webpage, you should click on the “I Just Arrived What do I do Next?” link, which leads you to the *Foreign Fulbright Student Arrival and Address* form.

### ***PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST***

This checklist may help you organize your departure from your home country and your arrival in the United States.

- Research housing options in the United States, both short term and long term.
- Obtain or update your passport and the passports of dependents that will accompany you. (Your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the duration of your DS-2019.)
- Obtain from the Fulbright agency, form DS-2109 for yourself and any dependents that accompany you.
- Apply for the J-1 entry visa for yourself and the J-2 entry visa for any dependents that will accompany you.

- Obtain international air tickets. Find out about any baggage specifications and security clearances for your particular airline.
- Review medical insurance information and purchase insurance for accompanying dependents.
- Inform the Fulbright agency in your home country and your host university of the following;
  1. Your complete itinerary including airlines, flight numbers, transfer cities, and dates and times of flights.
  2. The names of any dependents that will accompany you
- Give the IIE contact information to your family. Check Page 2 of this handbook for the exact office and address of your IIE representative.
- Transfer personal funds to a U.S. bank; purchase traveler's checks and a small amount of U.S. currency.

### ***What to Bring***

Below is a list of items that you may not readily think about bringing but will be very glad you did!

- Your driver's license or international driver's license.
- A supply of medications for existing medical conditions. Prescriptions from abroad cannot be filled in the United States. It is a good idea to have your physician provide you with a description of the prescription medicine (s) you take. You can then consult a United States physician for a prescription that can be filled in the United States.
- An extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses.
- Medical records, dental records, and academic records of any dependents that will be enrolling in school in the United States.
- Birth certificates or other proof of age for children who will be entering school for the first time; birth certificate for yourself.
- Credit cards (Fellows sometimes have a long wait after applying for credit cards in the United States).

- Proof of safe driving record in your home country for the past one to three years if you might be purchasing automobile insurance in the U.S.
- Your Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number if you were issued one on a previous trip to the United States.
- Slides, photographs and maps of your home country, which can be used in informal talks you may be invited to give.
- It is probably wise to omit most household items such as linens and cooking utensils, because they can be purchased in the U.S. at a reasonable cost.

### ***Arrival Checklist***

This checklist will help you prioritize some things that need to be taken care of immediately upon your arrival in the United States.

- Upon entering the United States, you **must notify IIE electronically no later than 15 days** from the start date on your DS-2019. Go to IIE website at: **[www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign)** or follow the instructions on the back inside cover of this handbook.
- Check in with the International Students Office on your campus and pick up your Fulbright Welcome Packet.
- Complete and return all forms in the packet within 15 days of registering for class.
- Inquire about any orientation programs that have been planned for international students and any welcoming activities for spouses and/or children.
- Locate permanent housing and open a bank account (see section on Banking).
- Apply for a Taxpayer Identification Number or a Social Security Number and inform your Student Services representative at IIE of that number as soon as possible.
- Obtain gas, electricity, water and telephone services.
- Identify a doctor, dentist and hospital in case of an emergency.
- If you bring or buy a car, obtain a driver's license, register the car and purchase car insurance.
- Look into opportunities for professional meetings and other enrichment opportunities.
- Provide your U.S. address to all university administrative offices.

### ***ARRIVAL AT YOUR ACADEMIC INSTITUTION***

Many Fellows find it helpful to arrive several days before the official reporting date as indicated on your *Terms of Appointment* and DS-2019. There is little advantage in arriving too early, and you should follow whatever instructions you have received from the university.

**Once you arrive in the U.S. it is imperative that you report your address to IIE within 15 days from the start date of your DS-2019. IIE can then activate your record in the SEVIS database. Failure to do so will seriously impact your ability to stay in the U.S. to begin your program.**

If you do not have a permanent residence by the 15th day from the start date of your DS-2019, you should provide IIE with the address of your temporary housing. As soon as you secure permanent housing, you should notify the appropriate IIE Student Service Office (see address list on page 2) of your address change. You should also provide your address to the Registrar and Bursar's Office on your university campus.

### ***TRANSFERRING MONEY FROM HOME***

If you require regular or emergency financial support from someone at home, Western Union Money Transfer services can be used to transfer cash from many countries. A bank account or credit card is not necessary. A family member, friend or sponsor may bring the cash they wish to send to any Western Union location, where they fill out a simple form and pay a service charge based upon the amount to be sent. You can withdraw that money in local currency minutes later at any Western Union location.

Each country has its own central telephone number that gives callers detailed information regarding locations and service hours. Check your local telephone directory under *Western Union Money Transfer* or in the U.S. call 1-800-325-6000.

### ***BANKING***

If your government does not restrict the exchange of currency, you may wish to transfer some personal funds to the U.S.. There are no restrictions on the importation of U.S. or foreign currency. This can be done by instructing your bank to issue a foreign draft on a bank near your U.S. university with which your bank has a correspondent relationship. Upon arrival, you can then open an account at that bank and draw on the funds or arrange for the funds to be transferred to a more conveniently located banking institution.

You are strongly advised to bring some personal funds with you in the form of traveler's checks to cover expenses during transit and immediately after your arrival. When you arrive at the airport in the U.S., it is useful to change some money (traveler's checks or foreign

currency) into U.S. dollars to pay for transportation to campus, tips for baggage handling, hotel, and other possible expenses.

As soon as you arrive at your university, you should open an account at a local bank. If you have transferred funds from your home bank, you will probably choose its correspondent bank in the U.S. if it is conveniently located. If not, ask your Foreign Student Advisor to suggest an appropriate institution.

Although the bank you select will offer you many different kinds of accounts, they will generally fall into two categories: (a) savings accounts, which pay interest at a modest rate but limit the number of withdrawals per month and often require your presence at the bank to handle the transaction, and (b) checking accounts, which will be most useful to you because they are designed to help depositors pay their bills by writing checks that can be sent safely through the mail (to pay rent or utility bills, for example) or handed to cashiers in local stores. Some checking accounts are offered without a fee but require that you maintain a minimum balance; others require no balance but debit the account a monthly service charge as well as a small fee for each check cashed. The bank customer service staff will list the options for you.

**SAMPLE CHECK**

The image shows a sample check from USBANK, N.A. with the following details:

- Name of company or person to be paid:** JOHN L. SMITH, 10612 Montrose Ave., Newton, MD 20001, Ph. 301-555-5861
- Date:** September 1 19 99
- Pay to the Order of:** Montrose Apartments
- Amount of check (in numbers):** \$ 600.00
- Amount of check (spelled out):** Six hundred and 00/100 dollars
- Note regarding purpose of check:** For September's apartment rent
- Your signature:** John L. Smith
- Bank Information:** USBANK, N.A., MICR line: ⑆05400000⑆ 002578699900⑆ 0111

Most banks issue an ATM (automatic teller machine) or debit card that allows bank customers to access funds in their accounts through machines that are open 24 hours a day. These are located outside the bank. Increasingly, grocery stores, gas stations and other stores have installed machines that allow you to pay for your purchases at the check-out counter or gas pump using your ATM or credit card. Remember to take your receipt with you.

It is important to note that checks drawn on out-of-town banks will take approximately 5 business days to clear, (i.e., the time required for the money to be transferred from one bank to the other before it will be available to you). If you transfer your base from one city to another during the period of your grant, you can move your funds to a new bank in one of two ways: (a) you can write a check drawn on your original bank for deposit in the new account (which must then clear), or (b) you can purchase traveler's checks with the balance of your funds.

### **Credit Cards**

Credit/charge cards are widely used in the U.S.. The most popular cards are those issued by American Express, Visa, MasterCard, and Diner's Club, but there are many others available from credit companies with a local focus and from individual shops and department stores. Ordinarily, cards are issued only to applicants with a substantial income and proof of past credit worthiness. The safest place to apply for a credit card is at your bank. Given the complexity of credit checking outside the U.S., it can be difficult for visiting students to qualify for cards once they are in the U.S.. However, if you can obtain one before you leave home, you will find it useful, especially if you should wish to rent a car.

Credit companies bill monthly and charge interest at very high rates (12–21 percent annual rate) on any unpaid balance from the previous month. Some companies, such as American Express, require payment in full at the end of the month. Although no interest is charged on the current month's bills, there are sometimes hidden costs for the convenience of credit.

### ***BAGGAGE***

It is recommended that you arrange to have additional baggage sent to you directly once you have found permanent housing in the U.S.. Do not send baggage to IIE's offices. There are no facilities for storing your baggage, and IIE will not take responsibility for it.

### ***IMPORTANT U.S. INCOME TAX INFORMATION***

As a Fulbright grantee you are required to pay income taxes to the U.S. tax authorities on the income you receive from U.S. sources unless you are exempt (excused) under a tax treaty or special rulings of the U.S. taxing authority, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). U.S. source income includes but is not limited to, funds provided to you by any U.S. institutions, organizations, or agencies as well as wages paid by any U.S. employers should you plan to engage in employment during your stay in the U.S. These funds may be disbursed directly by these entities or, in the case of grants, indirectly through a disbursing agent.

Scholarship grants are taxable in the U.S. similar to the way wages are taxable. Your sponsor, the U.S. Department of State (USDOS) pays an estimate of the required tax on your

Fulbright Scholarship to the IRS on your behalf instead of taking it out of your grant or asking you to pay the tax. Therefore, the Institute of International Education (IIE), the administrative agency for the Fulbright program, has a contractual obligation to your sponsor to report annually to the IRS. You should never owe U.S. taxes on your Fulbright scholarship. **Any refunds based on overpayment of the estimated tax paid on your behalf are returned to the USDOS.**

GRANTAX is the tax management service at IIE in New York. GRANTAX expert tax preparers will prepare and submit your annual U.S. tax report (commonly referred to as an income tax return) to the IRS at no cost to you. All Fulbright grantees are eligible to use the GRANTAX service; **however if you receive your funding directly from IIE, you are required to use the GRANTAX service.**

1. Each year in late January you will receive various tax-related documents summarizing your U.S. source income from the previous year. Universities, banks and employers if applicable will send these documents to you. Most likely this will be the form 1042-S. In some instances you may receive the form 1099-Misc. For those who receive funding directly from IIE, your form 1042-S summarizing your Fulbright scholarship income will be kept at GRANTAX. Tax forms and tax terms you may encounter are explained below.
2. Also each year in late January, you will be sent an email with information to access electronically, a questionnaire to complete and return electronically to GRANTAX by the end of March. At that time, you will also be asked to mail any other tax documents you may have received (mentioned above) summarizing your U.S. source income in addition to your Fulbright scholarship, a copy of your social security card, and a completed Power of Attorney form to GRANTAX.
3. GRANTAX will then prepare and submit your tax report to the IRS. If a tax refund is a result of this report, the IRS will send the refund check to IIE. If your U.S. source income is solely from your Fulbright scholarship, then the entire refund amount will be kept by IIE and returned to your sponsor. In the event that you have earned wages during your stay in the U.S. in addition to your Fulbright scholarship and you are eligible to receive a portion of the refund, GRANTAX will send you a refund check. If your employer fails to withhold enough tax from your wages, you may be faced with making a payment to the IRS.
4. Fulbright grantees, who are required to use the GRANTAX service, are not eligible to submit a “joint tax return” (tax terminology) with J-2 wage earners who may have accompanied you to the U.S.

## **TAX TERMS AND TAX FORMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER**

### **1042-S (Foreign Person's U.S. Source Income Subject to Withholding)**

This form is used to summarize U.S. source income paid to a nonresident alien.

*Income summarized on this form includes:*

- Scholarship and fellowship grants that are not in exchange for services and to the extent includable in U.S. source income. Qualified educational expenses, such as tuition, books, required fees and supplies, are exempt from taxes and are not included in this form.
- Compensation payments made to employees for which an exemption from tax withholding is claimed based on a tax treaty.
- All non-employee compensation payments made to nonresident aliens such as bank interest, dividends, awards, etc. Many U.S. financial institutions issue form 1099 to report non-compensation income such as bank interest and dividends.

### **W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement)**

This form is used to summarize your U.S. income from employment regardless of your U.S. residency status. Your employer reports gross income you earned during the year as well as income taxes they withheld from your wages and submitted to tax authorities.

### **1099 (Miscellaneous Income)**

This form is used to report income that is not reported in the previously mentioned forms (1042-S or W-2): compensation as an independent contractor, bank interest, dividends, etc. If you learn that you will be receiving this form as a result of your employment, please contact GRANTAX and ask how to pay quarterly estimated federal and state taxes to the applicable tax authorities. Otherwise, you may find yourself having to pay a large tax bill.

*As previously explained, for those who receive funding directly from IIE, your form 1042-S summarizing your Fulbright scholarship income will be kept at GRANTAX and will be used to prepare your annual U.S. tax report. If you have non-IIE U.S. source income in the form of a scholarship or other earned income and do not receive a summary of your U.S. based income on one or more of the three forms defined above by early February then you should contact your employer or organization that awarded the scholarship right away.*

### **8843 (Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition)**

This form must be filed in order to ensure your exempt status for U.S. tax purposes as a J-1 visa holder. It's usually attached to your income tax return (annual income and tax report). In the event that you are not subject to U.S. taxes because you did not receive U.S. source

income and are not required to file a tax return, you must complete this form and submit it to the IRS.

**W-8BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for U.S. Tax Withholding)**

If you receive a scholarship/fellowship grant, and you are from a tax-treaty country and want to claim a tax-treaty exemption, please complete this form and submit to your withholding agent (IIE). You can determine the availability of tax-treaty benefits for your country in the IRS publication 901 - United States Tax Treaties.

**8233 (Exemption from Withholding on Compensation for independent (Certain Dependent) Personal services of a Nonresident Alien Individual)**

If you are planning to engage in U.S. employment during your U.S. stay and if you are from a tax-treaty country and want to claim a tax-treaty exemption on your compensation, complete this form and submit it to your employer. An employer will file this form with the IRS on your behalf. You must complete this form for each tax year that you are employed in the U.S.

**W-4 (Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate)**

If you work while you are in the U.S., your employer will ask you to fill in this form prior to the commencement of your employment. This form will determine the withholding tax amount from your wage. A more detailed explanation of this form follows.

**FICA Tax (Social Security Tax)**

This tax is imposed on all earned wages in the U.S. This tax is to finance the old age/survivors/disability insurance and the medical insurance for such eligible individuals provided under the Social Security Act. Even though you have or have applied for a Social Security Number, you are most likely exempt from paying this tax, which represents 7.65% of your gross wage. Unfortunately many U.S. employers are not aware of this fact and they withhold this tax from your wages. Please see your employers if you notice this error on your statement of earnings.

**Paying Tax On Your U.S. Source Wage Income**

**If your U.S. source income will include earned wages in addition to scholarship income, please read this carefully to learn how to avoid owing a large amount of money to the IRS.**

In general, U.S. employers are unfamiliar with the way in which U.S. tax law applies to nonresident aliens (U.S. tax terminology). Consequently many employers will withhold income tax from your wages at the same rate as a U.S. citizen. This means that when your annual U.S. tax report is submitted to the IRS, you will owe a significant amount of money.

Your annual U.S. tax report will not be the same as a U.S. citizen's tax report. U.S. citizens are entitled to various tax benefits that unfortunately are not available to nonresident alien taxpayers. Finally, at the end of the year, when you are required to report all of your U.S. source income to the IRS, you may be surprised to find yourself with a higher tax responsibility than you would have guessed. Remember, your sponsor pays an estimate of the required tax on your Fulbright scholarship to the IRS on your behalf, but not on any other U.S. source scholarship or wage income.

Since it may be difficult for you to pay off a significant debt all at once, you can make sure that your employer withholds the maximum amount from your wages. If at the end of the year, when all of your income and all of your tax responsibility has been calculated, it is determined that too much of your income has been withheld for tax purposes, the annual U.S. tax report submitted on your behalf will result in a tax refund paid to you rather than you paying the IRS.

When you start your job, one of the forms you will be asked to complete is the form W-4. Your employer will use the information on this form to calculate the percentage of your wages that should be held back for tax purposes.

In section #3 you should check "single." This means that for U.S. tax purposes, you want to be considered single. In section #5, you should indicate "0" which means you would not be claiming any dependents on your annual U.S. tax report.

If you think you will earn more than \$10,000 ask your employer about an additional withholding (about 5% of your gross income) OR be prepared to pay additional tax at the time your U.S. annual tax report is prepared.

### **Tax-Treaty Status**

Current tax treaties between the U.S. and other countries may exempt some Fulbright grantees from withholding and payment of U.S. income tax. The provisions of these treaties vary and exemptions are not automatic. Citizens of a tax-treaty country may be qualified for the tax-treaty benefits only for the period for which they are temporarily in the U.S., and if they meet the tax-treaty qualifications. The proper filing of U.S. tax return is also required to claim the benefits.

You can obtain copies of tax treaties from most IRS offices and in many public libraries in the U.S. General information on each treaty is included in IRS Publication 519 - U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens Publication, as well as Publication 901 – U.S. Tax Treaties. Both of these can be downloaded from the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

If your grant is in exchange for teaching or research activities, any applicable tax-treaty exemptions will apply only if the performance of such activities is conducted at an accredited institution of higher learning; no other type of institutions may qualify.

If you think you are exempt under an effective tax treaty and you receive grant payments from your university of affiliation, consult with university officials instead of IIE regarding your U.S. tax exempt status.

All organizations that issue grants are responsible for providing tax documentations to you and also to the IRS. If you receive funds from any U.S.-based organizations other than IIE, contact them for tax information regarding their grants. This also applies to the employment income. If you plan to obtain employment authorization while you are in the U.S., please make sure that your employer will withhold income taxes from your wage and issue proper tax documentations. GRANTAX will need those tax documents in order to complete your tax return.

### ***OBTAINING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OR INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER***

Every person who receives income in the U.S. is identified by either a Social Security Number (SSN) or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). These are unique personal identification numbers, widely used in the U.S.. If you receive funds from IIE or another U.S. source, you must obtain an SSN or ITIN.

Even if your grant payments are issued by the Fulbright Commission in your country, IIE recommends that you obtain an SSN or ITIN as soon as possible after arriving in the U.S..

If you have been issued an SSN during a previous stay in the U.S., bring it with you as it will still be valid.

#### **Applying for your Social Security Number**

To apply for an SSN, you must appear in person at the office of the Social Security Administration nearest your host institution.

Take the following documents with you:

- A completed Form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card (available online at <http://www.ssa.gov>).
- Your passport and one other document that establishes your age and identity.
- Your Form I-94.

- Your SEVIS Form DS-2019.
- Some Social Security Administration Offices may require a letter that states that you are authorized to work in the U.S.. Your representative at IIE will provide you with a letter that states that it is possible that you may work in the U.S. at some point in the future.
- **NOTE: It is extremely important that your name on the application for an SSN be spelled exactly the same way it is spelled on your passport and on your SEVIS form DS-2019.**

The Social Security Administration verifies your immigration documents and status through the DHS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program. SAVE is populated by data collected by the DHS at the time you were admitted to the U.S.. DHS estimates that this data will become available in the SAVE system within 10 calendar days of your admission into the U.S..

Finally, you should not try to apply for an SSN until after you have reported *electronically* to IIE your arrival in the U.S.. Notify IIE of your arrival within 15 days from the start date of your DS-2019 by using the form available at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) or follow the instructions on the back inside cover of this handbook to locate Resources for Current Grantees.

### **Applying for your Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)**

To apply for an ITIN, you should go to the nearest IRS office and complete Form W-7. More specific instructions on applying for an ITIN are currently being reviewed as this handbook goes to print. For updated information on ITINs check with the Foreign Student advisor on your campus or contact your IIE representative.

### **Social Security Taxes**

Social Security is the U.S. national retirement plan. A portion of every wage earner's paycheck is automatically deducted for Social Security taxes.

Services performed by Fulbright grantees (holders of J-1 visas) are currently not subject to Social Security taxes if the services are performed in accordance with the purposes for which the student was admitted to the U.S. If you receive stipends from a university or receive wages from an employer, you should be aware of this exemption and bring it to the attention of university officials or your employers immediately in case Social Security taxes (sometimes identified as FICA on paycheck stubs) are withheld by mistake.

**Please note:** The wages of J-2 visa holders are usually subject to Social Security taxes.

### ***EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION***

**Fellows coming to the U.S. for an academic program are not usually permitted to work unless it is specified in the terms of their award.** Fellows may not accept employment at any time without prior IIE approval. Requests for approval must demonstrate financial need and must be accompanied by written assurance from an academic advisor that the work schedule will neither interfere with academic performance nor delay degree completion. Federal immigration regulations limit J-1 employment to a maximum of 20 hours a week during the academic year.

Fellows who receive maintenance or have tuition paid through IIE are not permitted to accept employment during the periods of their grants except in very rare circumstances; they should be aware that if employment is approved, their grants may be reduced by the amount of their earnings.

### ***ACADEMIC TRAINING***

Academic Training is not to be confused with employment authorization. Although the experience may be paid or unpaid, Academic Training can be approved at the completion of an academic program only if the training is complimentary to the Fellow's academic program, is recommended by the Fellow's academic advisor and is temporary in nature. In some instances, your sponsor may limit or will not permit Fellows to engage in Academic Training. Fellows should therefore check carefully with their IIE Student Service Office concerning their eligibility for Academic Training **before** seeking opportunities. If approved, the Academic training period **must fall within the time limits established by the J. William Fulbright Scholarship Board** for students in the U.S.

### ***AUTOMOBILES***

Not only is an automobile expensive to maintain, but it also carries with it certain liabilities and responsibilities. Some universities and some sponsors prohibit recipients of scholarships from owning automobiles.

If you find it necessary to purchase an automobile or other motor vehicle, please note that not only must you abide by state and university regulations, but you also must secure adequate insurance coverage. This is extremely important, since neither IIE nor any other sponsoring agency can assume responsibility in case of accident or loss. You should seek the advice of your Foreign Student Advisor in securing adequate coverage and in informing yourself of the liability insurance laws of the state in which your academic institution is located.

Only tourists may use the driver's licenses of their own country for up to one year; international students are expected to apply for a license in the state in which they reside. You may not be issued automobile insurance if you do not have a valid United States driver's license.

To obtain a license, visit the local office of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If you have a valid license from home, the driving test required of new drivers will probably be waived, but you will be asked to take a written test proving you understand the road rules of the U.S.. The DMV will give you a book outlining these rules.

You may bring a car into the country for your personal use for up to one year without payment of a customs tax, but you will have to comply with the insurance and registration regulations noted below. If you remain beyond a year or wish to sell your car before you depart, you will be charged the tax in effect at the time you entered the U.S..

There are many car rental agencies all over the country, and they can be found at all major airports. Cars can be rented by the day, week, month, or year; usually the fee is based on the duration of the rental and, in some cases, a mileage charge. Gasoline is sometimes included in the fee; sometimes it costs extra. You must present the agency with a valid driver's license. Most agencies demand a credit card before they will rent a vehicle; those that accept cash usually ask for a substantial deposit and return any excess when the final bill is settled.

If you need to purchase an automobile, whether new or used, it is a good idea to ask a colleague to accompany you to the car dealership. There is a great art to buying cars in the U.S., and you will be glad to have an experienced guide. For example, this is one occasion where bargaining is the rule, and many options regarding equipment, services, and financing will be offered that can be confusing. You should always ask to test drive the car and, if it is used, have it checked by an independent mechanic before you sign the purchase papers.

In addition to the vehicle's purchase price, you must expect to pay a local or state sales tax, a registration fee, personal property tax, and insurance premiums. Public liability and property damage insurance is compulsory in most states and advisable everywhere, and it can be a costly item. This protects you financially in the event you injure someone or damage property with your vehicle. It is also wise to insure yourself against fire, theft, or damage to the vehicle itself. Costs of these items vary so widely from area to area that it is advisable for you to discuss them with colleagues when you arrive at your university. Holders of J-1 visas are eligible for reasonably priced automobile insurance from the American Automobile Association. A certification of a safe driving record from home may help to facilitate the purchasing of automobile insurance.

Gasoline is sold by the gallon (slightly less than four liters) and is usually available in three unleaded grades, each designed for different-sized engines. (Environmental laws require cars in the U.S. to use unleaded gas.) Diesel fuel is also available but less frequently. Gas stations (also called service stations) also provide restroom facilities as a convenience to the traveler.

Driving laws are strictly enforced, and ignorance of them is not considered an excuse. Parking rules are clearly posted on the roadsides, and fines are imposed (or cars towed away) if they are not observed. Moving violations (such as passing in a no-passing zone, speeding, driving through a red light) are considered the most serious and carry the heaviest fines. Speed limits are also posted; the maximum speed limit permitted on highways varies by state and type of road. There are laws in the U.S. to prevent driving under the influence of alcohol, and penalties for doing so are severe.

To protect yourself and your property, never pick up hitchhikers you do not know, never leave the keys in the ignition, never leave packages visible in the car, and be sure to close all windows and lock car doors whenever you park. When driving you should be aware that pedestrians **always** have the right of way. You should also note that making a right turn against a red light may be illegal in some urban areas.

### ***MAIL***

Whenever you move, you should leave a forwarding address at your place of residence and complete a change-of-address form at your local post office or at <http://www.usps.com>.

The United States Postal Service, a government-owned corporation, provides mail service. Post offices are usually open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and until noon on Saturday, although some have extended hours. Blue mailboxes are located on many street corners and in public buildings; each carries a sign on which collection times are indicated. In most areas of the country, mail is delivered to individual residences, Monday through Saturday.

As of March 2006, postage for first-class mail within the U.S. is \$0.39 per ounce. Postage to Canada and Mexico is \$0.63. All other international airmail postage is currently \$0.84 per half ounce.

Use of the ZIP code that follows the city and state names is required for delivery. The first five digits are in common use; the final four are part of a system designed to direct mail to specific addresses more quickly, but they are not required. "USA" needs to be added as a final line to the address if the letter is to cross an international boundary.

### **UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE ADDRESSES**

Individuals in the U.S. often use a variety of addresses. It is common for an individual to reside at one location and receive mail at another. For instance, one may choose to pay for a private mail box even though a mail box is provide at the place of residence.

Throughout this handbook you will have read references made to both mailing address and the address where you physically reside. You are responsible for notifying your IIE representative within 10 days of making a change of either of these addresses at any time during your period of sponsorship.

Upon arrival at your host institution in the U.S. it is important that you remember to update your address with all university administrative offices on campus, such as the Registrar's Office and the Office of the Bursar. If you were placed at your academic institution by IIE, then until you update your address, IIE, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 which is the IIE headquarters will remain the address on college and university files for important correspondence. Consequently, IIE will continue to receive important communication that should be mailed to you such as Statements of Student Accounts. These statements will indicate if you have an outstanding balance with your institution, which are costs incurred by you that are outside what is covered by the Fulbright Program. In some cases, late fees apply. Serious neglect may also damage your credit history in the U.S.. You should consult with your Foreign Student Advisor on campus about making sure that all the various offices at your university have your proper address on file.

## During Your Study Period

### *GENERAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE*

**D**uring your stay in the U.S., IIE will be ready to assist you whenever possible. The IIE personnel with whom you will correspond and who will be most directly involved with your program will be a member of one of IIE's Student Service Offices (see address list on page 2). Throughout the year, IIE will send you general instructions and announcements to inform you of reporting requirements and special opportunities available through the Fulbright Program. For information and advice about academic and campus matters, consult the Advisors assigned to you by the college or university (i.e., Academic Advisor and Foreign Student Advisor).

### *REPORTING TO IIE*

You will be asked to send confirmation of full-time enrollment every semester or commencement and continuation of your research project. You must also submit transcripts each term to show grades and courses completed and make several reports to IIE during your stay in the U.S.. All report forms and special instructions are available on our website (see back inside cover). E-mail messages will be sent to you advising which forms are due and the exact deadlines.

**You are expected to keep your IIE representative informed of your current local and e-mail address. The local address you provide must be the actual physical location where you reside. In no case may the address of the host institution be used as your residence address. If your mailing address is different from the address where you physically reside, let your IIE representative know that as well. If either of your addresses change, you must notify IIE within 10 days of moving. The best way of updating your information is by going to [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) and selecting the "Updating your personal information" link. This link will take you to the *Foreign Fulbright Student Information Update* form.**

An Internet-based system is used to enable colleges and universities and the United States Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP) to exchange information on the immigration and academic status of international students, scholars, and their dependents nationwide. This program, called the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), is also used by the U.S. government to track the arrivals and departures of international exchange visitors, as well as your address, continued enrollment, academic training, on campus employment, and other important related activities.

**It is therefore imperative that you report to IIE within 15 days from the start date of your DS-2019 and provide your address. IIE can then activate your record in the SEVIS database. If you fail to report to IIE within the specified time period, then your record in the SEVIS database is noted as such and will seriously impact your ability to stay in the U.S. to begin your program.** As indicated on page 17, new Fulbrighters should go to the Resources for Current Grantees site located at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) and select “I’ve just arrived what do I do next?”

### **Share with IIE**

1. Any important academic problems.
2. Major changes in your personal status such as marriage, divorce, births.
3. Name changes due to marriage, divorce, etc. within 10 days of making such a change.
4. Health problems.
5. The arrival in the U.S. of any dependents.
6. Any international travel.
7. Change in address within 10 days of making such a change.
8. Plans for departure from the U.S.

*You must obtain IIE’s approval in advance for the following:*

1. Employment Authorization (see page 29).
2. Academic Training (page 29).
3. Transferring to a Different Institution (see page 37).
4. Changing Field of Study (see page 35).
5. Trips outside the U.S. (see page 35 through 37).
6. Emergency Departure from the U.S. (see page 41).

### ***SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY***

IIE, on behalf of your sponsor the U.S. Department of State, is responsible for sharing information about you with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) through SEVIS. SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and other notifications via the Internet to the USDHS. The data entered will reside in a central database maintained by USDHS. This information will be accessible by U.S. embassies abroad, schools in the U.S., by the USDHS at your port of entry, and other U.S. government agencies. It is important to note that much of this information has always been available to the U.S. government, but not in a web-based format.

Although IIE will sometimes depend upon contacts at colleges and universities for information on your activities, it is also imperative that you report information to IIE as instructed.

### ***ACADEMIC REGULATIONS***

You are expected to comply with the regulations of your academic institution. These regulations include such matters as class attendance, course assignments, academic honesty, absence from campus, and withdrawal from courses in which you are registered.

When you attend a college or university in the U.S., you will be encountering a system of education that is quite different from that to which you have become accustomed. U.S. colleges and universities are competitive, and each student is judged by the work he or she accomplishes. You should feel free, however, to consult with your Foreign Student Advisor and/or Academic Advisor whenever you have questions or problems.

You are expected to be a full-time student at all times. Your host university will have a definition of what full time means. Usually this means at least four courses or twelve credit hours but this might vary from institution to institution. If you are not working on a degree, your Academic Advisor must be able to attest to IIE that you are engaged in work that is equivalent to full-time course work.

### ***ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREIGN FULBRIGHT STUDENTS***

#### **Fulbright Enrichment Seminars**

The United States Department of State sponsors a number of three-or four-day seminars every year during the spring semester for first-year Fulbright students from abroad. Each seminar brings together approximately 125 Fulbrighters in various cities across the U.S. in an open and interactive forum to discuss and learn more about the chosen topic of the seminar. Travel and other costs associated with your attendance are covered by your sponsor, the United States Department of State. Between November and February, you will receive information about the upcoming seminar and an invitation to apply. As space is limited, IIE will assign applicants to a seminar site based on several criteria – topic preference, distribution of grantees from various countries at each seminar, distribution of fields, and U.S. host institution representation, as well as costs related to air travel.

#### ***TRIPS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES***

You should notify IIE in writing before making any trips outside the U.S.. Provide the inclusive dates of travel, your destination, and contact information.

The process of issuing visas may be considerably slow due to security clearances. We urge all Fulbright grantees to examine their need to travel outside the U.S. and determine if it is worth the risk of delay or failure to obtain a reentry visa for the U.S. IIE and the Fulbright Program cannot guarantee that your application will be successful or will be handled by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in a timely fashion. Fulbright Grantees should be aware of these potential difficulties of traveling internationally and reentering the U.S. Go to [www.unitedstatesvisas.gov](http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov) for comprehensive information on applying for U.S. visas.

If you must travel outside the U.S., please note the following:

1. In all cases where you plan international travel, you must be in contact with your IIE representative, who will validate your DS-2019 form and review your documents. Only an IIE representative can validate your DS-2019 form. Be prepared to provide full information on your travel dates, destinations, and contact information.
2. To reenter the U.S. you must have:
  - A valid passport.
  - A validated DS-2019 form with your name exactly as it appears on your passport. This is critically important. The name must read exactly the same in both documents (for instance, your family name cannot precede your given name on DS 2019; multiple given names on the passport need to match the names on DS-2019).
  - A separate DS-2019 form for each family member traveling with you.
  - A J-1 multiple entry visa stamped in your passport that is valid through the date you are reentering the U.S.
3. If you were required to go through the NSEERS special registration process (see page 11), there is a special exit procedure that you must follow before you can depart the U.S. Failure to follow NSEERS exit procedures at the airport from which your international flight will depart will negatively impact your ability to return to the U.S.

### **Checking Your Travel Documents Early**

Examine your passport and U.S. entry visa at least one month before you travel, and answer the following questions:

- Is your passport valid for at least six months beyond the expiration of your DS-2019?
- Has your DS-2019 form been re-validated for travel and reentry once during the past 12 months?
- Is your U.S. visa entry stamp valid for the date you will reenter the United States?

- Do you need to apply for a new visa because your previous visa was a single-entry visa which you used the last time you entered?
- Does the country you intend to visit require a visa for entry? Contact the embassy of that country for further information.

If you answered no to any of the first four questions, call IIE immediately for instructions.

If your passport needs to be renewed, it can be renewed by your embassy or consulate in the U.S. before you leave the U.S.. Visas may be renewed only at a U.S. Embassy or consulate abroad. IIE cannot renew visas. **NOTE:** Although we are advising students to seriously consider any and all options rather than try to renew their visas in a country other than their own, if during a visit of 30 days or less to Canada or Mexico, you choose to apply to renew your J-1 visa and your application is denied, the denial will be reflected in your passport and **you will NOT be permitted to reenter the U.S.** If, during your visit of 30 days or less, you have not applied to renew your J-1 visa, you may still re-enter the U.S. using your **expired visa**, along with the supporting documents mentioned above.

If you will visit Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean Islands for more than 30 days, you **must** have a valid J-1 visa for re-entry into the U.S..

*At least three weeks before your planned departure, send the copy of your Form DS-2019 to IIE to have it signed to show that you continue to be in good standing.*

If your DS-2019 form has not been returned to you, if your permission to stay has expired, or if you are uncertain whether your documents are in order to permit your reentry to the U.S., consult your IIE representative concerning the procedures to follow.

### **Insurance Coverage Outside the U.S. During the Grant Period**

The Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) insurance will not cover you when you travel anywhere outside of the U.S. during your grant period .

### ***TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT INSTITUTION***

If a more satisfactory program of studies is available at another institution and you wish to consider a transfer, you must discuss the matter with your Academic Advisor and contact your IIE representative. You must state the reasons you wish to transfer before you take any action and you may not proceed without IIE's approval. When requesting admission to another insti-

tution, be sure to ascertain whether you will be granted full credit toward a degree for courses already taken. Otherwise your transfer may delay completion of your degree program.

Transfers during the academic year are discouraged because there is almost inevitably some loss in time and academic benefit for the Fellow. You should be aware that institutions generally grant admission and/or awards for the full academic year and many of them also have course sequences which make entry in mid-year difficult or impossible. If you have an award from your present academic institution, it is essential that you obtain a release from any obligations you may have to that institution; you should also bear in mind that you will have to obtain an alternate means of financial support if you decide to transfer.

### ***CHANGING FIELD OF STUDY***

Fellows may not change their major field of study without prior consultation with and approval from both their Academic Advisor and IIE. Since in many cases IIE must consult with the sponsor in the fellow's home country, a request for change must be submitted to IIE well in advance of the time a decision will be needed. Strong justification for the change must accompany the request.

### ***RENEWALS OF YOUR IIE ADMINISTERED GRANT***

If you receive funds administered by IIE for maintenance and/or tuition during your first year of study in the U.S., you may be eligible to apply for renewal of your grant to continue your studies for the summer or a second year. IIE will send you information concerning renewal eligibility criteria in January.

However, since renewal funds are limited, you should also explore other possible sources of financial aid for continued study, either through your academic institution or other organizations.

### ***EXTENSION OF SPONSORSHIP***

If your financial support comes from your university or another agency and IIE does not administer funds for you under the Fulbright Program, you will receive an e-mail message in April. This message will provide the Web address containing the instructions and forms to use to indicate your plans for extension or departure (if you are finishing your program in the spring or summer), or to request extension of your non-cash grant benefits and permission to stay in the U.S.. If the extension is approved, you will be notified directly by IIE and will also receive a DS-2019 form in support of permission to remain in the U.S..

Factors that are considered by IIE in evaluating a grantee's extension request are: conformity of plans with the original objective for which the grant for study in the U.S. was awarded; academic performance; adequacy of financial support for the extension period;

time limitations for grantee travel as stated in country or Fulbright Program policies; and/or leave status (if on leave from employment in the home country). In some cases IIE must submit a grantee's extension request to the Embassy, Binational Fulbright Commission or Fulbright Foundation in his or her home country for approval.

The Fulbright Program provides sponsorship for one degree only. If Fellows wish to pursue a second degree in the U.S., they must obtain funding and immigration sponsorship from other sources. If the request is approved by your sponsor, the J-1 visa will be transferred to the new sponsoring institution, and Fulbright benefits will cease.

## Departure From The United States

### ***OBTAINING RETURN TICKET***

**P**rocedures for obtaining return tickets vary with grantees from different countries. It is very important that you read your Fulbright *Terms of Appointment* for information regarding your return travel and contacting the appropriate agency or office.

If you:

- I. Have a Binational Fulbright Commission or Fulbright Foundation in your home country and received a roundtrip travel grant as part of your Fulbright benefits, you should follow the instructions given by the Commission or Foundation in your home country. Any questions you have regarding routing, tickets, or allowances should be addressed to them and IIE should be kept informed of your plans.
- II. Received your received initial travel grant to the U.S. from the American Embassy in your home country, your travel grant was provided by your sponsors the U.S. Department of State. Before completing your academic program you should contact your IIE representative to receive instructions on obtaining your return ticket home. Your message should include the name of your academic institution, your home country, and the date of departure.

All air travel and all air shipments paid for with United States Government funds must conform to the *Fly America Act*, which requires that all such travel and shipments be on American Flag carriers where such services are available.

- III. Received a travel grant from your home country employer or another organization in your home country, you should contact them before the completion of your academic program.
- IV. Received an Airways Travel Grant from IIE you should contact the Airways Travel Grant Coordinator by emailing [airgrants@iie.org](mailto:airgrants@iie.org) or you may call (212) 984-5339 or Fax (212) 984-5465. As your itinerary is made on a space available basis, you should make your request well in advance of your desired date of departure.

You should plan your return early, giving yourself sufficient time to make the appropriate arrangements. When making plans to return home you should note that last minute arrangements can be more expensive and difficult, especially during the summer months when international travel is particularly heavy.

***FINAL REPORTING***

Before your departure, review the information at [www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign](http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign) (see inside back cover) where you can locate Departure Forms and a Final Report form that you are to complete and mail back to IIE shortly before you leave the United States. Your comments on the Final Report will be shared with the Fulbright Commission, Foundation or Embassy in your home country as well as the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

It is important that you report your anticipated departure date accurately on the departure forms. If your departure date is changed from the date you list on the form, you must let IIE know.

***EMERGENCY DEPARTURE***

If it becomes necessary for you to return home for an extended period of time before the end of your grant period, you must consult your Foreign Student Advisor and IIE to obtain approval for your departure. Should such an emergency arise, please inform IIE of the situation immediately and provide information about any tickets or travel documents you hold.

## Society and Culture

### Characteristics of Americans

It is not easy to make generalizations about the United States — above all, it is a land of diversity. The size of the country, its geographic and climatic differences, and the ethnic mix of its people all contribute to its variety. Still, there are a few characteristics you will encounter in “typical” Americans from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

For example, Americans tend to value their individuality, to think themselves the equal of any other man or woman, and to believe they are masters of their own destiny. They feel free to speak their minds on most subjects and are often astonishingly frank in expressing political opinions, cherishing above all other rights the freedom of speech guaranteed by the United States Constitution. They are direct in their communications; they ask questions when they need information; they say “no” when they mean no. Americans do not commonly exhibit class consciousness or make distinctions amongst themselves along class lines. If anything, the vast majority identify themselves as belonging to the middle class. Except for perhaps the very rich or very poor, Americans do not usually feel that their success in life will be determined by the social class into which they were born and do not usually show excessive deference or superiority to each other in public situations.

Americans appear open and friendly at first meeting, but this means only that they are pleased to make your acquaintance; it may or may not lead to true friendship. They are informal; they often introduce themselves by their first names and call others by their first names on very slight acquaintance. In professional situations, however, it is preferable to address people using their title and last name (e.g., Dr. Smith, Ms. Jones) until they ask you to use their first name. Americans tend to stand at least an arm’s length apart when conversing and are not inclined to touch one another, except to shake hands upon greeting one another. They value their privacy and rarely visit even good friends, without telephoning first.

### Appointments/Punctuality

It is always appropriate to make an appointment before visiting someone, particularly at an office. It is best to be on time for appointments. When they are professional in nature—an appointment with a doctor or a colleague at the university—you should appear within 5 minutes of the time you have agreed upon. On social occasions, especially when the invitation is for a meal, plan to arrive no more than 10 to 15 minutes after the appointed hour (but never before the hour—the hosts may not be ready.) In both cases, be sure to telephone if you are unavoidably delayed. Remember that public events such as concerts and university classes begin promptly at the scheduled time.

**Invitations**

If you accept an invitation or make an appointment, it is very important that you appear as promised since your hosts will have taken considerable trouble to prepare for your visit, and professional people will have arranged their schedules to accommodate you. It is perfectly acceptable to decline an invitation if it is not convenient for you, but some response is always called for. On a formal, written invitation, “RSVP” means “please reply.” It is not necessary to bring a gift unless the occasion is a birthday or Christmas party or perhaps if the invitation is for an entire weekend. In these cases, a simple, inexpensive gift of flowers, candy, a bottle of wine, or a small souvenir from your own country would be appropriate. A thank-you note to your host or hostess, especially following an overnight visit, is considerate.

If you have been invited to go out for a meal, you should assume that all parties will pay for themselves, unless the invitation included a specific offer to pay for your food.

**Dietary Restrictions**

If health or religious beliefs restrict the foods that you can eat, you should feel free to explain this when you accept an invitation to visit. Such preferences are always understood; your host or hostess will usually be happy to take them into account when the menu is planned. You can also be assertive about dietary preferences or restrictions in a restaurant. Many places will try to accommodate your request.

**Smoking Restrictions**

It is now quite common in the United States for cigarette smoking to be either restricted or completely prohibited in public places. This includes restaurants, airplanes and other public transportation, theaters, stores, museums, and many office and university buildings. Cigar and pipe smoking are almost always prohibited. You should also be aware that Americans often object to guests smoking in their homes, and it is considered a courtesy to inquire whether your host will mind before you “light up.”

**Asking Questions**

Probably the best advice this handbook can give is to suggest you ask questions whenever you need guidance or information. Americans do so freely and never think that inquiries are a sign of ignorance or weakness. On the contrary, questions indicate interest, and you will find most people glad to be of help.

***CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES***

The United States is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. This cultural diversity stems from having had a steady flow of immigration from different parts of the world for over 150 years, which contributed to the already existing culture. These immigrant populations have influenced both the cultural as well as the physical landscape of their

environment. The degree to which each group's influence is felt depends on the density of a given ethnic group and the length of time that the community has been in the United States.

Interesting statistics of United States households (citizens and non-citizens) from the 2000 United States Census were that 11% of people living in the United States are foreign born and 18% of households speak a language other than English at home. The largest groups of immigrants in the last ten years have been from: Mexico (25%, nearly 2 million), the Caribbean (11%, 836,200), China/Hong Kong/Taiwan (6.6%, 501,000), South America (5.8%, 443,000), Philippines (5.7%, 432,100), Central America (5.5%, 422,200), India (4%, 311,100) and Middle East/Central Asia (3.6%, 274,000). The Latin American community in the United States, which includes immigrants and United States native born descendants, has become the largest minority group with over 35 million people (13.5%), followed closely by the African-American community with 34 million people (13.1%).

Climate as well as geography are other factors that play a role in the cultural diversity of the United States. This is reflected in the lifestyle differences found in the various regions of the United States expressed through their choices in architecture, cuisine, leisure activities, etc.

### ***THE LAW AND CIVIL RIGHTS***

The United States is governed by the "rule of law." It must be observed by every resident, including the President and other public officials, and can be changed only through established legislative procedures. The law also offers everyone its equal protection; it applies to everyone equally, regardless of position or wealth.

The Constitution of the United States, which supersedes all federal, state, and local law, protects all persons within the borders of the country. With the exception of a few laws that regulate such matters as immigration and voting, foreign nationals enjoy the same rights and privileges as American citizens. They also have the same obligations under the law.

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution, collectively termed the Bill of Rights, contain this country's most cherished legal principles, among which are

- the right to freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly
- the right to refuse to testify against oneself, to keep silent rather than answer questions that might be incriminating
- the right to protection against unreasonable search and seizure
- the right to "due process," to be safe from punishment under the law unless—and until—specified, orderly procedures have been followed. For example, persons charged with a crime need not prove their innocence; rather, they are considered innocent until proven guilty. They are also entitled to representation by legal counsel, appointed by the court if a defendant cannot pay for such services.

The body of civil law regulates contractual relationships between individuals. If one party to a contract fails to observe its conditions, the injured party can ask the court to enforce the terms or demand compensation for loss or damages.

The Exchange Visitor Program Regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of State govern the requirements for your J-1, and any dependent's J-2, visa. These regulations implement the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. In September 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) was enacted, which directed the development of an electronic information collection system, known to you as SEVIS, for individuals in J visa status. In October 2001, the USA PATRIOT Act subsequently amended IIRIRA and mandated that the SEVIS database be implemented by January 2003 as part of its underlying effort to facilitate information sharing and cooperation among government agencies. Other laws were also passed by Congress that further defined the types of information to be collected and maintained in SEVIS. Thus, it is important for you to be aware that, although the electronic collection of exchange visitor information is a new practice and the SEVIS database a new tool for United States government agencies, the laws that have promoted educational and cultural exchanges and have defined the requirements for your J-1 and J-2 visas have been in effect for over four decades.

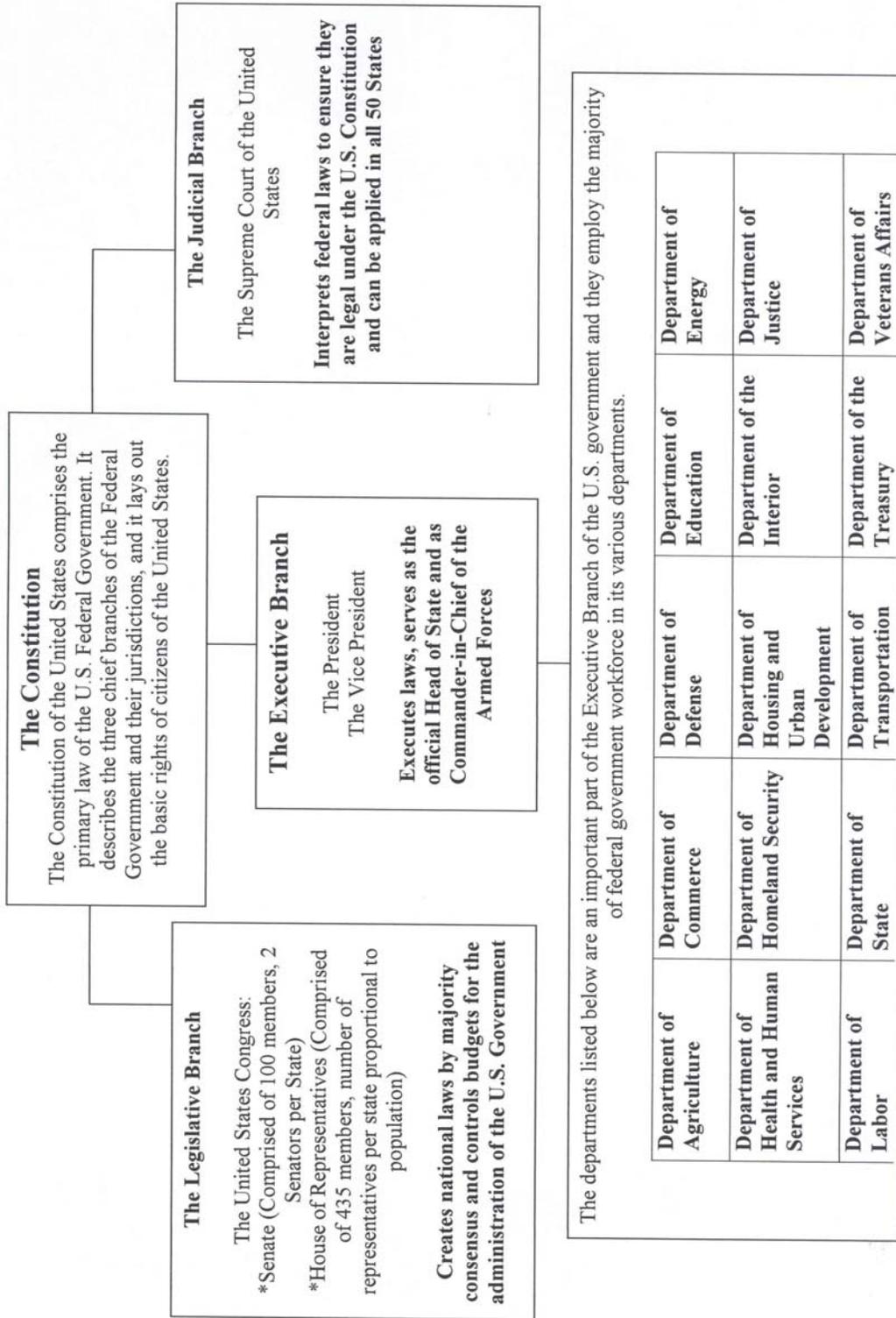
### ***ELECTORAL COLLEGE***

The Electoral College was established by the founding fathers as a compromise between election of the president by Congress and election by popular vote. The electors are a popularly elected body chosen by the 50 States and the District of Columbia on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November (November 2, 2004). The Electoral College consists of 538 electors (one for each of 435 members of the House of Representatives and 100 Senators; and 3 for the District of Columbia. Each State's allotment of electors is equal to the number of House members to which it is entitled plus two Senators. The United States Census is used to reapportion the number of electors allocated among the states.

The term "electoral college" does not appear in the Constitution. Article II of the Constitution and the 12th Amendment refer to "electors," but not to the "electoral college." In the early 1800s, the term "electoral college" came into general usage as the unofficial designation for the group of citizens selected to cast votes for President and Vice President. It was first written into Federal law in 1845.

The slates of electors are generally chosen by the political parties. State laws vary on the appointment of electors. Electors are often selected to recognize their service and dedication to their political party. They may be State elected officials, party leaders, or persons who have a personal or political affiliation with the Presidential candidate. The electors

# The Government of the United States of America



meet in each State on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December. A majority of 270 electoral votes is required to elect the President and Vice President. No Constitutional provision or Federal law requires electors to vote in accordance with the popular vote in their State.

If no presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the 12th Amendment to the Constitution provides for the presidential election to be decided by the House of Representatives. The House would select the President by majority vote, choosing from the three candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes. The vote would be taken by State, with each State delegation having one vote. If no Vice Presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the Senate would select the Vice President by majority vote, with each Senator choosing from the two candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes.

You can find additional information regarding the Electoral College in the following suggested websites:

[http://www.archives.gov/federal\\_register/electoral\\_college/](http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college/)

<http://www.fec.gov/>

### ***HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES***

*Higher education* is the term used in the United States for formal education beyond the twelve years of elementary and secondary school. United States higher education is decentralized and diversified. Educational institutions may be supported by state funding, private organizations or religious denominations. Each United States institution of higher education is headed by a President or Chancellor and is usually controlled by a governing board of trustees or regents.

Although there is a difference, the terms *college* and *university* are usually used interchangeably. The United States college has no exact counterpart in the educational system of any other country. Colleges are usually referred to as *liberal arts colleges*, although most offer courses in many fields, including the sciences. A college may be an independent institution or part of a university. A university is made up of a group of schools which include an undergraduate liberal arts college, graduate schools, and professional schools.

Graduate study which prepares the student for professional practice is largely a function of the university, but there are also many individual tax-supported professional and technical schools. The standards of professional schools are usually established by the professional associations and societies in each field.

The academic year lasts between thirty-two and thirty-six weeks, beginning in August or September and lasting through May or June. Most colleges and universities divide the

school year into two equal parts called *semesters* or *terms*. Some divide the year into a system of three equal trimesters. Others have four quarters, of twelve weeks each, and require their students to attend classes during the three quarters, which fall between September and June. Many schools have summer sessions, which last from six to twelve weeks; tuition and fees for this period may be charged in addition to those paid for the academic year.

At the undergraduate level, courses offered at each college or university and the regulations and requirements are listed in the college catalogue, published by each institution in print or made available on the university website. The first two years of an undergraduate program are devoted to general learning. Study programs include many subjects, and the scope of each subject is usually broad. Since they survey an entire field of study, they are usually taken as introductory courses or as prerequisites for more specialized courses. During the final two years of college students specialize in one subject by concentrating most of their courses in it. The field of concentration is called a *major*. Some courses are required for the degree and others may be chosen as *electives*.

Graduate study is the advanced specialized studies leading to a master's degree or a doctor's degree and emphasizes preparing students for research or for professional practice. Graduate work leading to a Masters of Arts (M.A.) or Masters of Science (M.S.) degree requires a minimum of a one-year, but usually a two-year program of study is the norm, beyond the bachelor's degree. The typical requirements for a master's degree include successfully completing 32 to 36 credits of graduate courses, including a minimum of 20 credits in the major field of study; maintaining a minimum average of grade B; writing a thesis; and passing examinations in all required courses. Study for the master's degree is sometimes undertaken as preparation for further graduate work or as an extension of the general education of the bachelor's degree program. Degrees for doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) and doctor of education (Ed.D) require a minimum of three years full-time study beyond the master's degree, but in most fields more is necessary. Graduate students attend lecture courses and seminars and carry out research under professional guidance. Graduate study leading to a doctorate emphasizes original research.

The method of teaching in most colleges and universities consists of lectures supplemented by reading assignments and class discussions between the professor and students. Science courses include lectures and laboratory periods. Art courses (except history of art courses) generally include lectures and studio classes in which the students work with artistic media. Education courses sometimes offer opportunities to observe class sessions and to practice teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Assignments usually call for the student to read a number of books and/or articles and to write essays, reports, and/or term papers. Reading lists are distributed to the students at the beginning of the semester listing the reading material a student needs to read by a given date.

Most examinations are written, not oral. Quizzes and tests are short examinations. They may be given regularly throughout the semester, or they may be unscheduled and even unannounced. Quizzes may consist of short questions requiring short responses. Common questions are ones that contain answers of “true” or “false” or a series of multiple choices and the correct one must be selected. *Midterm* examinations are usually longer than quizzes and are given in the middle of the school term. *Finals* are examinations which cover the subject matter of an entire course.

Every course is worth a certain number of *hours*, *credits* or *points*, depending upon how many hours of lectures, class meetings, and laboratory work are offered each week. A course which lasts for one term and consists of three one-hour class periods a week is valued at three hours, points or credits. As a Fulbrighter, you are expected to be a full-time student at all times. Please see page 33 for information.

Grading systems vary among institutions. Many employ the first five letters of the alphabet to denote levels of achievement. To receive full credit for their courses, students must maintain an average of grade ‘C’, considered a satisfactory level of academic work. ‘B’ denotes above-average or superior work and in most graduate programs a grade of ‘B’ is considered the lowest satisfactory grade. ‘A’ indicates excellent achievement. ‘D’ is a passing grade, but denotes lower-than-average work, and ‘E’ or ‘F’ symbolizes completely unsatisfactory work. A student who receives an ‘E’ or ‘F’ as a final mark fails to receive credit for the course. The course therefore does not contribute toward his degree requirements. When a student receives an unsatisfactory grade for an examination or a course he/she is said to have *failed*. Often an elective course may be marked only Pass or Fail. Some schools use the symbol ‘I’ to denote incomplete work and allow the student to make up the work for a course after the end of the semester. If a student’s work is incomplete or unsatisfactory, the college may put him or her on *probation* – that is, allow him or her a period of time, usually one school term, in which to make up incomplete work and/or raise grades to a satisfactory standard.

Many graduate schools make *assistantships* available to candidates for graduate degrees. Assistantships are in a sense paying jobs. Sometimes the assistant is paid in cash; sometimes he/she receives free tuition for his services. Assistantship duties range from grading papers or serving as a laboratory technician to teaching freshman courses or doing specialized research. In general research assistants will work on the projects of the particular school or department in which they are employed. Hours of service generally range from ten to fifteen per week, but some research assistants may be expected to devote up to the full twenty hours.

## Other Useful Facts

### ***HOLIDAY PERIODS DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR***

Most colleges and universities close for two weeks or more during the Christmas and New Year holidays in late December, as well as for several days between quarters or semesters. As you will note from your *Terms of Appointment*, you are expected to pay any extra expenses during vacations from your own funds or from the regular maintenance stipend you are receiving. Some dormitories and residence halls may be closed or may not serve meals during vacation periods. Fellows who wish to travel and sightsee during vacation periods should ask the Foreign Student Advisor's office about any local trips planned for foreign students and visitors.

### ***OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS***

Official holidays are those days of celebration recognized by the U.S. government and usually include the closing of government offices and private businesses and banks.

#### **New Years**

**(January 1)**

**New Year's Eve**, December 31, is more important to Americans than New Year's Day itself. Everyone gathers with friends and family to "ring out the old and ring in the new," an expression that reflects the old custom of ringing church bells at midnight to greet the new year.

#### **Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, Birthday**

(Third Monday in January)

Martin Luther King, Jr., a distinguished African American, organized and led the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1960s in his capacity as the leader of the Southern Leadership Conference. During the 1963 March on Washington, he delivered the stirring and memorable "I have a dream" speech to a quarter million people gathered before the Lincoln Memorial. Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 in recognition of his message of change through nonviolence to promote freedom, equality and dignity of all races and people.

#### **Presidents' Day**

(Third Monday in February)

This holiday commemorates the birthdays of George Washington, the first President of the United States, and Abraham Lincoln, President during the Civil War (1861–65).

**Memorial Day**

(Last Monday in May)

Memorial Day is the day on which people in the United States honor those who died in the service of their country. Many families visit their loved ones' graves and decorate them with flowers. The day is also marked with patriotic parades. This holiday is considered the beginning of the summer season.

**Independence Day** (July 4)

Independence Day commemorates the day the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. Independence Day is celebrated all over the country with picnics, political speeches, parades, and community get-togethers that culminate in firework displays.

**Labor Day**

(First Monday in September)

This holiday was established in recognition of the labor movement's contribution to the productivity of the country. This day marks the end of the summer season and is celebrated with picnics and other outings.

**Columbus Day**

(Second Monday in October)      *Official holiday in many states*

By popular tradition, Columbus "discovered" America in 1492, although the continent was already populated by Native Americans and had been visited earlier by other seafarers. The holiday, originally and still occasionally celebrated on October 12, is chiefly observed by Americans of Italian descent with parades and festivals. In the Northeast, the long weekend is the high point of the season for viewing the brilliantly colored fall leaves.

**Veterans Day** (November 11)      *Official holiday in many states*

Originally established to commemorate Armistice Day—the end of the First World War—and celebrated on November 11, the date still observed in some areas, the holiday was changed after World War II to serve as an occasion to pay tribute to veterans of all wars. It is marked by parades, speeches, and the laying of wreaths at military cemeteries and war memorials.

**Thanksgiving Day**

(Fourth Thursday in November)

The first Thanksgiving Day was observed by the pilgrims of Plymouth Colony in Massa-

chusetts in 1621 to give thanks for the bountiful harvest and their ability to survive in the wilderness. Today, it is a time when Americans give thanks for the good life they enjoy. They celebrate by getting together with family and friends to eat traditional foods such as turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie.

**Christmas** (December 25)

Many people regard this as the most celebrated holiday of the year, with the Christmas season extending from a few days before December 25 to January 1, New Year's Day. Although originally a Christian holiday, commemorating the birth of Christ, people of many faiths join in the secular festivities common during this period. These include gift exchanges, the singing of holiday carols, visits to Santa Claus at the local shopping mall, and the decoration of a Christmas tree. Family members travel great distances to be together for Christmas, a day on which gifts are exchanged and a traditional dinner is shared.

***CULTURAL HOLIDAYS***

Cultural holidays are those days of public celebration where businesses are not necessarily closed.

**Valentine's Day**

(February 14)

A holiday celebrated by sending cards and giving candy in heart-shaped boxes and flowers to loved ones.

**Saint Patrick's Day** (March 17)

Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, and this holiday was brought to the United States by Irish immigrants. People mark this day by wearing green clothing and getting together with friends to celebrate. Some U.S. cities with large Irish American populations, like Boston and New York, also hold Saint Patrick's Day parades.

**Passover** (8 days, usually in April)

The Jewish holiday of Passover commemorates the liberation of the ancient Hebrews from slavery in Egypt in 1200 B.C. A highlight of the festival is the Seder, a ceremonial dinner attended by family and friends, during which the memory of the exodus is recounted through readings, singing, and the consumption of symbolic foods. Unleavened bread or matzoh is eaten during this time.

**Easter** (The first Sunday after the Paschal full moon)

An important religious holiday for Christians who believe that Christ rose from the dead on this day. Many folk traditions are now connected with Easter, including the decoration of brightly colored eggs and the presentation of baskets of candy to children. If you are in the United States around the time of this holiday, you may also see the Easter Bunny, who is often available at shopping malls to have his picture taken with children.

**Mother's Day** (Second Sunday in May)

On this day, Americans honor their mothers by sending them flowers, buying them small gifts, and taking them out to eat.

**Father's Day**

(Third Sunday in June)

Fathers are honored on this day with cards and gifts from their family members.

**Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur**

(3 days in September and October)

*Not official holidays*

The holidays of Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and the 10-day interval between them comprise the most sacred period in the Jewish calendar. Known as the High Holy Days, this period combines the welcoming of the New Year with reflective examination of the course of one's life during the past year. Rosh Hashanah is characterized by prayer, family feasts, and the sending of New Year's greetings. Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish year, is a time of fasting and prayer.

**Halloween** (October 31)

In the United States, this day, the eve of a Christian holiday—All Hallowed's or All Saints' Day, which falls on November 1—has lost its original religious character. Today, it is largely celebrated as a children's day. Traditions include carving out pumpkins with funny faces (jack-o'-lanterns), telling scary stories, and going door to door in costume to receive candy and treats from neighbors. When a door opens after they knock, the children say "trick or treat," meaning, "if you don't give me a treat, I will trick you." Many children and adults also attend costume parties and decorate their homes to celebrate Halloween.

**Hanukkah**

(8 days, usually in December)

This Jewish holiday commemorates the successful uprising of a small band of Jews known as the Maccabees against their Hellenistic Syrian conqueror in 164 B.C. As part of the reconsecration of the Temple in Jerusalem, the victors lit a menorah or candelabrum with a small flask of holy oil that miraculously burned for 8 days. Hanukkah thus came to be known as the Festival of Lights and is celebrated today by the lighting of a menorah for 8 days. It is a time of conviviality and is marked by the gathering of family and friends and gift giving.

**Kwanza**

(7 days, December 26 through January 1)

African-American nonreligious celebration of family and community patterned after African harvest festivals. Each day is dedicated to one of seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Each evening, family members gather to light one of the candles in the kinara, a seven-branched candelabra; often gifts are exchanged.

**Ramadan** (9<sup>th</sup> month of the Muslim Calendar)

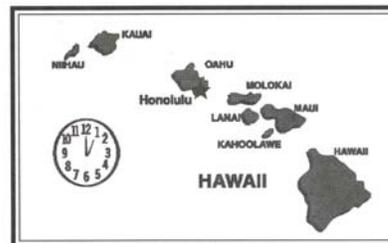
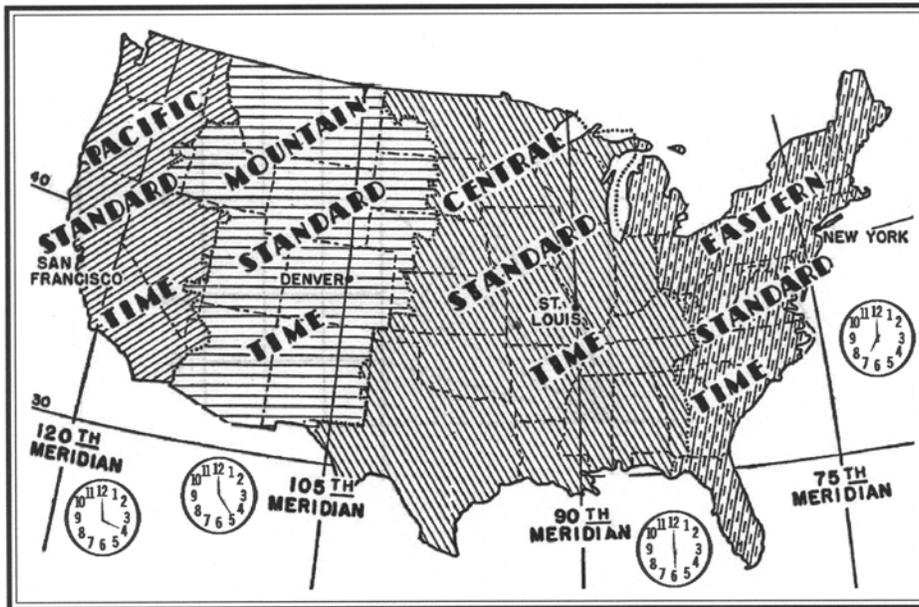
The Month of Ramadan is when it is believed the Holy Quran was sent down from heaven. This celebration lasts a whole month during which Muslims fast during daylight hours and indulgence of any sort is forbidden. It is a time to worship, contemplate and concentrate on their faith and spend less time on the concerns of their everyday lives.

The United States is very culturally diverse and there are many communities with large immigrant populations. Such ethnic communities also celebrate their ethnic and religious holidays, such as: Chinese New Year, Devali the Hindu Celebration of lights, Cinco de Mayo and the Independence Day of several different countries.

Different months are also designated to the celebration of different populations in the United States, such as: Black History Month (February), Women's History Month (March), Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15) and Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month (May).

**TIME ZONES**

The continental United States is divided into four time zones, as shown on the map below. The relative times for the outlying states are also indicated. Eastern standard time is 5 hours earlier than Greenwich mean time. Most states observe daylight saving time during the summer months. This means that clocks are advanced 1 hour on a given date in April and restored to standard time in October. (They “spring forward” in the spring, “fall back” in the fall.) Exceptions to this rule are made in Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and most of Indiana. Arrival and departure times of planes and trains are usually given in the current time of the arrival or departure point.



### ***HOURS OF BUSINESS***

Offices are usually open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, with employees taking an hour for lunch sometime between noon and 2 p.m. Banks are generally open to the public only until 2 or 4 p.m. and most have automatic teller machines that dispense cash from your account or accept deposits 24 hours per day.

Shops open about 9:30 a.m. and remain open continuously until 5:30 or 6 p.m., often until 9 p.m. one evening per week. All are open Monday through Saturday. Most shops in suburban malls are open until 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and usually from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Drugstores, supermarkets, and smaller food shops usually remain open until late in the evening and on Sundays.

### ***ELECTRICITY***

Electrical current in the United States is produced at 110 volts, 60 cycles. Appliances manufactured for other voltages can be operated only with a transformer. Even so equipped, appliances with clocks or timers will not function properly, nor will television sets not built for the U.S. color system (N.T.S.C.).

### ***CLIMATE***

Because of its size and geographical diversity, the climate in different parts of the United States varies widely. To a certain extent, Americans are insulated from weather extremes. Homes, offices, cars, and buses are routinely air conditioned in the warmer parts of the country, and central heating is the rule everywhere. Indoor temperatures are thus maintained at 20–22 °C (68–72 °F).

**The Northeastern States or New England** (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont): Winters can be very cold and long with lots of snow, and the summers are warm. In the north, winters can be very severe. Fall and spring are usually cool and crisp. You will find cooling fog along the coasts during winter and summer.

**The Mid-Atlantic Region** (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington, DC): Summers tend to be hot and humid, and late afternoon or early evening thunderstorms are common. Winters, while milder and a little shorter than in New England, can still produce a lot of snow. Spring and fall are very pleasant with relatively low humidity.

**The Southeastern States** (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia): The southeastern states have long, hot, and humid summers and warm winters. Summer-time, with its high humidity, can bring frequent but short-lived thunderstorms. Along the Atlantic coast, the hurricane season lasts from July to October. Southern Florida has an

almost tropical climate where freezing temperatures are uncommon. In the mountains of West Virginia, the winters are similar to those in New England.

**The Midwest** (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin): This region occupies the Great Plains, a vast, flat expanse located in the center of the country. Winters in the northern section of this region can be severe with blizzards and much snow, while summers in the southern section can be quite hot with frequent heat waves and drought.

**The Southern Interior and Gulf States** (Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas): Summers are hot and frequently humid, especially along the Gulf of Mexico. Average winter temperatures rarely fall below freezing, but there are occasional cold spells.

**The Rocky Mountain Region** (Arizona, Colorado, Southern Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming): Because of the range of altitudes in this mountainous region, there is considerable variety in local temperature and precipitation. Winters are very cold in the mountains and bring heavy snowfalls. Large areas of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada are desert, where even winters can be extremely hot and dry.

**The Pacific Northwest** (Northern Idaho, Oregon, Washington): The region enjoys mild winters and moderately warm summers. The Pacific Ocean helps keep the weather mild and wet along the coast, with a number of rainy days.

**California:** Southern California, including Los Angeles and San Diego, enjoys warm to very hot but dry summers, while the winters are mild and moderately rainy. Smog (fog and pollution) is a problem in Los Angeles. Northern California, including Berkeley and San Francisco, has a cooler, milder climate year round. San Francisco is known for its morning fog.

**Alaska:** Alaska is the northwesternmost state of the United States and borders northwest Canada. It has long, snowy, frigid winters and short, mild summers. Days during mid-winter will only have 3 to 4 hours of daylight, and in mid-summer, only 3 to 4 hours of darkness.

**Hawaii:** A chain of tropical islands in the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii is situated approximately 6,900 miles from the west coast of the United States by airplane. The weather is low in humidity and comfortable year round.

*Source:* Pearce, E.A., and Gordon Smith. *World Weather Guide*. Time Books/Random House, 1990.

**WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**

Few Americans speak of weights and measures in metric terms. Temperature is the principal exception; these days, temperature is frequently quoted in both Fahrenheit and Celsius.

**Children's clothing** is sized according to the child's age from infancy through approximately 6 years. Infants' clothing is sized according to months of age, from newborn (NB) through 18 months. It is always wise to consider the child's height and weight when buying clothing. It is not uncommon for infants and toddlers to wear much larger sizes than what their age indicates. It is a good idea to ask a salesperson for assistance until you are familiar with children's clothing sizes.

**Adult clothing** sizes vary somewhat from one manufacturer to another. It is wise to "try on" clothing before making a purchase.

<b>Temperature</b>	
<i>Fahrenheit (°F)*</i>	<i>Celsius (°C)</i>
23	-5
32 (freezing)	0
41	5
50	10
59	15
68	20
77	25
86	30
95	35
104	40
212 (boiling)	100

*\*(°F = 9/5 °C + 32)*

<b>Weight</b>		
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Equivalent</i>	<i>Metric</i>
pound (lb)	16 oz	0.454 kilogram(kg)
ounce (oz)	1.0 oz	28.35 gram (g)
ton	2,000 lbs	0.907 metric ton
0.04 oz		1 g
2.20 lb		1 kg

<b>Area</b>		
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Equivalent</i>	<i>Metric</i>
acre	4,840 square yards	0.405 hectares
square mile	640 acres	2.590 square km

<b>Comparable Clothing Sizes</b>					
<b>Women's sizes</b>					
<i>Junior</i>					
USA	7	9	11	13	15
England	9	11	13	15	17
Continent	34	36	38	40	42
<i>Misses</i>					
USA & England	10	12	14	16	18
Continent	36	38	40	42	44
<i>Ladies</i>					
USA & England	36	38	40	42	44
Continent	44	46	48	50	52
<i>Shoes</i>					
USA	5	6	7	8	9
Metric	35	36	38	39	40
<b>Men's Sizes</b>					
<i>Coats &amp; Pajamas</i>					
USA & England	36	38	40	42	44
Continent	46	48	50	52	54
<i>Shirts</i>					
USA & England	14	14½	15	15½	18
Continent	36	37	38	39	40
<i>Shoes</i>					
USA	6	7	8	9	10
Metric	39	40	41	42	43

<b>Distance</b>		
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Equivalent</i>	<i>Metric</i>
inch (in)		2.54 centimeters (cm)
foot (ft)	12 in	30.48 cm
yard (yd)	36 in (3 ft)	.91 meters (m)
mile (mi)	5,280 ft	1.61 kilometers (km)
100 mi		160 km
0.39 in		1 cm
3.28 ft		1 m
0.62 mi		1 km
5 mi		8 km

<b>Volume</b>		
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Equivalent</i>	<i>Metric</i>
teaspoon (tsp)		5 milliliters (mL)
tablespoon (tbs)		15 mL
ounce (oz)		29.57 mL
cup (c)	8 oz	0.237 liters (L)
pint (pt)	2 c	0.551 L
quart (qt)	2 pt	1.101 L
gallon (gal)	4 qt	3.785 L
0.34 oz		10 mL
1.06 qt		1 L
0.26 gal		1 L

### ***SALES TAX***

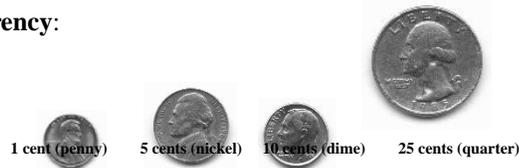
You should also be aware that state and local sales taxes—ranging up to 9 percent of the price, depending on the area—are added to the marked price of many items at the time of purchase. Thus, a \$10 item with a 9 percent sales tax will actually cost \$10.90.

### ***U.S. CURRENCY***

The American Monetary system follows the decimal system. The basic unit of the U.S. monetary system is the dollar, which can be divided into 100 cents. The “\$” is the dollar symbol and a “¢” or “.” may appear to denote cents. Bills in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 are the most widely used. There are also \$50 and \$100 bills. Please **note** that all bills are the same size and color.

Coins may be used for self-service machines available in many public building to purchase soft drinks, coffee, or candy. Some forms of public transportation such as buses also allow you to use coins. You may also need coins to use public telephones, parking meters, and washing and drying machines in some dormitories or apartment buildings. You should note that most machines do not accept pennies (1 cent coins).

#### **Samples of U.S. Currency:**



(Photos courtesy of U.S. Mint and Bureau of Printing and Engraving)

### ***TIPPING FOR SERVICE***

There are a number of circumstances in the United States when tipping is expected and, in fact, where tips make up a substantial portion of the wage of the person involved. Although tipping should be based on the quality of the service rendered, most people tip as follows:

- to porters at airports and train or bus stations, \$1 per piece of luggage (unless a set fee is posted in the terminal);
- to bellboys who show you to your room and carry your baggage in hotels, a minimum of \$1;
- to waiters or waitresses in restaurants, 15-20 percent of the bill (for large groups, a service charge may already be included in the bill);
- to taxi drivers, 10-15 percent of the fare;
- to barbers or hairdressers, 10–20 percent of the bill.

Unless they perform some unusual service for you, you need not tip hotel clerks, doormen, or chambermaids, nor is it customary to tip gas station attendants, theater ushers, bus drivers, or airline personnel. If you do not wish the services of a porter or bellboy, you can simply indicate your preference to handle your baggage yourself. Under no circumstances should you offer a tip to public officials, including police officers; this may be looked upon as an attempt to bribe the official and could have serious consequences.

### ***TELEPHONES***

The telephone system in the United States is composed of many privately owned but cooperating companies. The system is effective, and a good deal of business is conducted over the telephone. One can reserve hotel rooms, make travel reservations, buy theater tickets, and shop for any item one might want without leaving home.

Telephone numbers in the U.S. contain 10 digits: a 3-digit area code, a 3-digit number for the local exchange (occasionally 2 letters and 1 digit), and a 4-digit number for the individual subscriber. Under the system, the United States is divided into many small regions or areas, each reached by an area code that must be dialed whenever you are calling outside your local area. Usually when you call a local number, only the exchange and individual subscriber number must be dialed. For example, the IIE number is

1-212 984 - 5400.  
*Area code Exchange Subscriber*

In some large metropolitan areas that span more than one area code, it may be necessary to dial the area code, as well, even if it is within the same area code.

In most locations it is necessary to dial “1” before the area code if calling outside your local area. Be careful not to confuse the letter “I” with the numeral “1” or the letter “O” with the numeral “0” (zero).

When calling outside your local area, or “long distance,” it is least expensive if you dial direct at night without using an operator. Calls from hotels often include a substantial ser-

vice charge. All numbers in the United States can be dialed directly (i.e., without operator assistance), and overseas calls can also be dialed from many local exchanges. To ask an operator for assistance, dial “0.” He or she will be able to give you the area/international code for the city/country you wish to call and place “collect” calls (which are billed to the person called) and “person-to-person” calls (which incur a charge only if the person you wish to speak to is present, even if the phone is answered). It is also useful to remember that you can save about 35 percent of the cost if you dial domestic long-distance calls after 5 p.m. and 60 percent if you call between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays, all day on Saturday, and before 5 p.m. on Sundays or holidays. (This may vary, however, according to the long-distance provider you choose.) Some businesses in the United States have “800” or “888” as an area code; such numbers can be dialed (preceded by “1”) without charge to the caller from anywhere in the United States. You can obtain a local number by calling “Information” (dial “411”) and a long-distance number by dialing the area code followed by 555-1212. The services usually carry a small charge.

Telephone calls to numbers with “900” area codes cost more than normal long-distance calls—sometimes as much as \$50 for a 1-minute call! By dialing 900 numbers, you can order products, get financial tips, talk with a willing stranger, and much more. Although some legitimate services are provided through 900 numbers, it is vital to be aware that ALL of them cost money. Some companies are starting to send bills for calls placed to 800 numbers, as well.

In case of emergency, call the operator (dial “0”), and ask for the police, fire department, or an ambulance. In many cities, there is a special number (usually “911”) to use in the event of an emergency. It can be dialed from a pay phone without the use of coins.

Public coin-operated telephones can be found on the street and in railroad and bus stations, airports, hotels, restaurants, drugstores, and other public buildings. Prepaid **telephone debit cards** are available almost everywhere in the United States. With them, you may place local, long-distance, and international calls from any location without the necessity of coins for a pay phone or a long-distance account with a U.S. telephone company. You may purchase these cards in \$5 and \$10 increments at convenience stores, supermarkets, drug stores and post offices or through your local telephone company. NOTE: These debit cards often offer the most economical rates for calling overseas and you avoid the various taxes and charges that will accompany your home phone calling plans.

To have a telephone installed in your home, dial the telephone company’s business office (see a telephone directory). Ordinarily, service can be provided within a week. The company charges for initial installation of the line and a monthly fee for local service and rental of equipment (or you may purchase your own phone), with extra charges for long-distance

calls. A deposit of approximately \$50 will usually be required of new subscribers. Although there will be only one company providing local telephone service in a given area, you will be given information and asked to make a selection on a number of competing long-distance companies and their individual service options. If you have a long-distance account with a U.S. telephone company and plan to place international long-distance calls frequently, you may wish to enroll in your company's **international calling plan**. These plans offer special discounts for international calls and can save you a lot of money.

### **Telephone Answering Machines and Voice Mail**

Telephone answering machines or voice mail are in frequent use in many U.S. homes and offices. Although this may seem impersonal at first, you will soon become accustomed to this practice and learn to leave comprehensive messages.

### **Cellular/Mobile Telephones**

"Cell Phones" are very popular and you can find very competitive prices or package deals. There are also many styles of telephones at different prices that offer a variety of tools beyond cell phone use. Unlike in other countries, where prepaid cell phone cards are popular, in the U.S. you will need to purchase a service plan. Many systems in the U.S. require a 2-year service agreement to get the best price; however, terminating the contract early carries a high penalty that may actually make the contract more expensive. Service Agreements carry a number of minutes of services you agree to purchase per month. If you go over your agreed allotment you will be charged by the minute at a much higher rate. Be sure to purchase the amount of minutes that will serve your usage needs. You will need to read the contract carefully and sign only for services that you will need.

### **Internet Access**

You may choose to have a computer at home and will need to have access to the Internet. Most telephone companies offer some form of DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) access for an increased price to your telephone bill. You may also purchase a high speed online connection through your television cable company. If high speed Internet connections are beyond your price range, most Internet service providers (ISPs) still offer traditional dial-up connections for lower prices. There is a large variety of Internet providers available and you should shop around first before deciding.

### **Fax and Electronic Mail**

Americans frequently communicate with others by facsimile (fax) machine or electronic mail (e-mail). It is becoming increasingly popular to seek out information and communicate

with others by computer. E-mail allows you to correspond with anyone in the world with an Internet account. The World Wide Web, newsgroups, and online forums allow you to obtain news and specialized information. Ask your host institution about acquiring and using an Internet account. Sending information by fax is a common way to conduct business because it is quick and costs the same as a telephone call. Fax machines are available in most college and university departments. Some stores also provide fax services for a modest fee.

### ***THE MEDIA (NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION)***

The press in the United States is independent and free of governmental control. The editorial policy of each TV or radio station or newspaper is determined by its owners. Most are supported financially by advertisers, although there are “public” TV and radio stations that broadcast no commercials and are supported by contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Public TV usually features more educational and cultural programs than the commercial stations.

Local newspapers, daily and weekly, abound, but it is also possible to purchase or subscribe to daily papers of regional or national stature. Among the latter, *The New York Times* is best known for general news coverage; *The Wall Street Journal*, for financial and business news.

There are four nationwide TV/radio networks (NBC, CBS, ABC, and Fox), each with affiliated local stations that carry almost all the networks’ programs. These are in addition to independent local commercial and public stations. In most areas, therefore, one can choose from among 6 to 10 stations. There is no fee for TV or radio usage unless one subscribes to a “cable service,” which offers such special programming as recent movies and CNN and requires the installation of special equipment. CNN and the public access stations in your area often broadcast news in a variety of foreign languages. They may provide more information about current events in your home country than is available in the local newspapers.

### ***TRANSPORTATION***

#### **Local Public Transportation**

Without question, the private automobile is the most widely used form of transportation in the United States. There is one car on the road for every two people. Americans jump into their cars for errands even a few blocks from home and view them as an important source of recreation. Because of the prevalence of automobiles, public transportation is less common in the United States than in many other parts of the world; in some rural areas of the United States, it is virtually nonexistent. Unless you can afford to purchase an automobile (see below), it is important to investigate the availability of transportation before you decide where to live.

Cities are served by both public and private bus systems (some of the larger ones have subways, as well). Buses frequently require exact change unless the passenger holds a monthly or weekly pass purchased earlier, while subways are entered with tickets or tokens that can be purchased at the time of travel. It is convenient to purchase a supply to avoid waiting in line each time you travel. There is less need for a private car in these areas unless you intend to travel outside the city with some frequency. Indeed, they can often be more trouble than they are worth, given the scarcity of parking spaces in urban environments.

### **Long-Distance Travel (Planes, Trains, Buses)**

The United States is covered with a network of air routes, and service is frequent to most destinations. Because distances are great, and because of the value placed on time, Americans frequently choose air travel, despite its relatively high cost. You can easily obtain information on flights and costs by telephone or on the Internet and even reserve a seat that can be paid for when you arrive at the airport to board your flight. Most planes have both first-class and coach- or economy-seating areas. Special low-cost fares, known as “super savers,” are sometimes offered, although they may carry some restrictions as to the length of stay and the days of travel. The lowest fares usually must be purchased at least 7 to 21 days in advance and require that you stay over a Saturday night. Bus transportation from the airport to the city center is usually available and less expensive than taxis.

Many suburban areas are served by commuter rail lines that reach 50 to 60 miles outside major cities. The use of trains for more extensive trips had declined until a decade or so ago, but the railroad is making a comeback to some extent. The passenger service is provided by AMTRAK, which runs trains across the country but to a limited number of cities. A few of the trains travel through particularly impressive scenery and are popular with tourists. Most trains offer two classes of service, first class and coach, and some provide sleeping accommodations. AMTRAK also offers a Eurail-style pass especially for international travelers. A 15- or 30-day USA Rail Pass is available for regional or nationwide travel. This pass is only available for non-U.S. and non-Canadian citizens. Rates are higher for summertime travel. USA Rail Passes may be purchased at any AMTRAK station. Be sure to bring your passport with you when you reserve the tickets. The AMTRAK telephone number is 1-800-872-7245.

The least expensive mode of transportation is the bus, and those that provide long-distance service can be remarkably comfortable—with reclining seats, air conditioning, and rest rooms. Greyhound is the largest bus passenger service provider in the U.S. ([www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)).

Airlines, train, and bus companies sell passes that permit extensive travel within a given time period well below the usual cost and permit those with limited funds to see a good deal of the country. The companies themselves (see the telephone directory) or travel agents can

tell you current prices and conditions, but some of these passes must be purchased before you leave home.

If you find yourself in an airport with any kind of problem, you should seek a representative of the Travelers' Aid Society. This organization has desks in airports (and some railroad stations and bus terminals) across the country, operated by staff ready to assist with emergencies of all kinds, including illness, lost tickets, lack of funds, and language problems.

### ***RELIGION***

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United State, which also mandates a separation of church and state. The practice of religion is considered a private matter and a person's religious preference may not be asked by employers, school, clubs, etc.

The United States is a country that accommodates a large number of different religions and belief systems. It is often cited as the most openly religious country among the industrialized nations, with less than 10% of Americans selecting "None" as their religion in the 2000 U.S. population census. A large majority of Americans identify themselves as Christian (55% Protestant, 28% Catholic). Over 6 million Americans (2.3% of the population) identify themselves as Jewish, with the largest populations residing in New York, California and Florida. The U.S. is also home to a growing number of Muslims (2% of the population) both due to the growing Arab and African immigrant populations (which grew 38% in the 1990s) and a growing number of converts to Islam, especially in the African American community. Some Muslim organizations put the number of converts to Islam as high 135,000 per year.

One of the most important ongoing debates for Americans is the role of religion in public life. While the separation of church and state is a cornerstone of U.S. government structure, it has been an issue for discussion among Americans as far back as Thomas Jefferson. The debate continues today and is prominent both in national and local politics. Some of the more controversial issues involving religion today include prayer in public schools and the role of public funding in religious social services (e.g. homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation centers). As American religious diversity grows, this debate promises to become even more interesting and should continue to play an important role in American discourse.

In large cities, even relatively obscure branches of the main religions have established their own churches, mosques, synagogues, or temples. A list of such groups can be found in the yellow pages of the telephone directory, and many of these organizations also place notices in weekend newspapers announcing the hours of religious services. You will always be welcome to attend the services without invitation, and you may also wish to take part in the social activities many such groups sponsor.

***LEISURE***

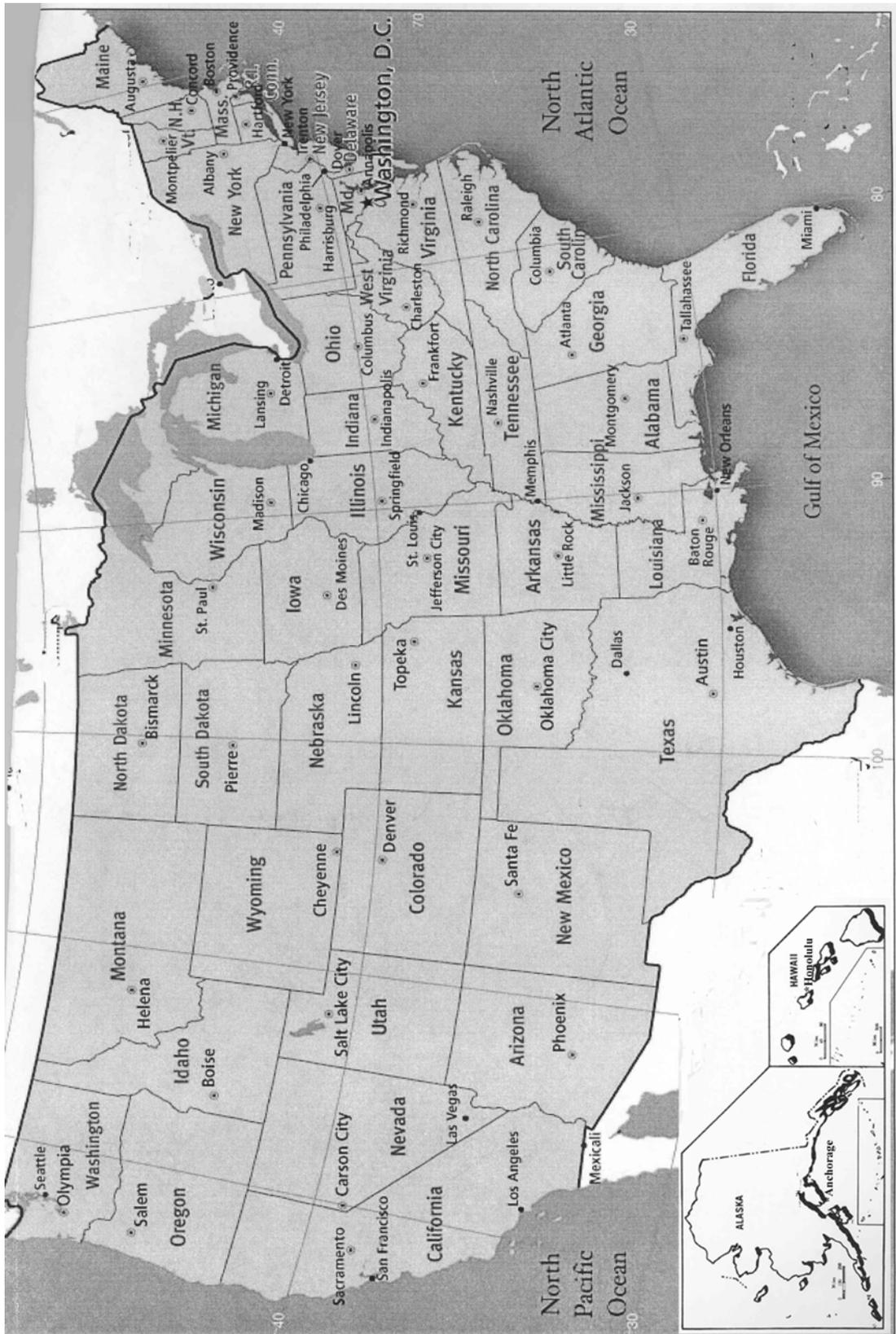
Whatever your leisure interests, you will find a great many pursuits to choose from. Those who prefer the spectator's role will find that university towns abound in concerts, plays, sporting events, ethnic festivals, and, of course, movies, the favored entertainment of young Americans. There are also small museums all over the country, with a number of distinguished institutions in the major cities that house outstanding collections of fine and applied art or objects of historical or scientific interest. Local newspapers (also the campus paper) regularly list upcoming events. City hotels distribute free booklets to visitors listing current cultural events as well as nearby points of interest with their hours of operation.

If you prefer a more active role, you will find it easy to join groups that make music, produce plays, or organize baseball, soccer, or basketball games. There are golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, skating rinks, and bowling alleys open to the public for a modest fee. Again, colleagues and neighbors will often be glad to point you in the right direction.

***SAFETY***

Many visitors to the United States are concerned about public order and safety, and it is true that certain precautions should be taken, especially in urban areas. It is best to ask a colleague for advice about which areas are safe if you will be residing in a large city, but a few general rules should be observed at all times: Do not leave a room, house, or car with doors or windows unlocked; do not carry valuables or large sums of cash with you; do not frequent parks or deserted public places after dark; do not attempt to arm yourself since any weapon you carry can be used against you; do not resist a robber or mugger; do not pick up hitchhikers; do not permit your pre-teenage children outside the house alone after dark; avoid using bank automatic teller machines (ATMs) alone after dark. Be aware that many university security departments offer escort services for students and faculty during the evening hours.

These suggestions are not made to frighten you, for it is very unlikely that you will experience any problems. You can be most certain of avoiding difficulties, however, if you follow these simple rules of safety.



### **Accessing the Fulbright Website for Active Grantees:**

1. On the internet go to <http://www.fulbrightonline.org/foreign>
2. Once at the IIE Fulbright for Non-U.S. Students page, click on “Resources for Current Grantees” found along the top of the page.
3. The Resource for Current Grantees site is where you will find contact information, special alerts, a calendar of events and arrival reporting information. You will also find links to Fulbright forms, guidelines and booklets.
4. Explore this site as it will be an important tool of communication throughout your Fulbright experience.