IIE Teacher Program

The Teacher category of the BridgeUSA Program offers international teachers the opportunity to teach full-time in accredited public and private primary and secondary schools in the United States. Exchange teachers may also teach at the pre-kindergarten level in language immersion programs.

The goal of the program is to promote cultural exchange between foreign teachers, their students abroad, and the U.S. school community. Teachers will return home after their exchange and share their knowledge of U.S. culture and educational practices in their home countries.

For an overview of eligibility requirements for interested teachers, please visit the U.S. Department of State Teacher Program website.

Teaching Positions

U.S. host schools or school districts must provide a full-time position as a teacher of record, with a minimum of 32 hours per week of teaching or teaching-related administrative activities.

Teachers must be employees of either their U.S. host school, host school district, or their home school during the exchange. Positions are temporary, do not lead to tenure, and are commensurate in responsibility and compensation to those of similarly situated U.S. teachers in the host school or school district.

This program is not intended to fill staffing shortages or long-term employment needs. Host schools must agree not to offer continuing employment to the teacher during the exchange.

Duration and Repeat Participation

The standard maximum duration for programs in the Teacher category is three (3) years. Teachers may be eligible for an extension beyond maximum duration of up to two (2) additional years, at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State. At the end of the program teachers must depart the U.S. to put their experience to use in their home country. Past participants are eligible to apply for another Teacher category program through BridgeUSA after a period of at least two (2) years residency outside of the U.S.

IIE Sponsorship and Program Fees

IIE strongly encourages U.S. host school systems to cover the cost of our sponsorship fees. Some schools request that teachers reimburse the cost of sponsorship via payroll deduction, and IIE will review such arrangements on a case-by-case basis. Any fees that a teacher is expected to reimburse, either in whole or via payroll deduction, will be included in the IIE Terms of Appointment (our teacher agreement), provided to the teacher for review prior to DS-2019 issuance.

Fees to be paid to IIE by the U.S. host school system or partner:	
Initial application fee and sponsorship for up to 12 months	$1,950
Extension of sponsorship, per year	$1,000
Extension beyond maximum duration application	$750 (inclusive of $367 fee for the Department of State)
Expedited processing service (optional)	$1,000
New host school vetting (one-time fee with first application)	$300

Fees to be paid to IIE by either the host school system or the teacher:	
Dependent fee (one time, per dependent)	$500
DS-2019 reissuance fee (if needed)	$50
Health insurance costs	$75 - $400 per month, see “Health Insurance” section below

Fees not included in IIE’s services that are required for the nonimmigrant J visa process:	
SEVIS fee	$220
Nonimmigrant visa application* (per application, per person)	$185
Visa Integrity fee**	$250

**In addition to the nonimmigrant visa application fee, some countries have a Visa Reciprocity Fee.*

***The Visa Integrity fee is considered effective as of October 1, 2025 but the collection and proposed reimbursement processes are yet to be implemented.*

Health Insurance

The U.S. Department of State regulates the minimum health insurance coverage requirements for J-1 Exchange Visitors (the candidate) and their J-2 dependents. It is the responsibility of the teacher to fully understand these requirements and to maintain sufficient coverage throughout their program. Detailed information on the requirements is provided in IIE’s online application.

Some host school systems will provide health insurance benefits that fully meet J visa requirements, and teachers typically pay a portion of these costs monthly via payroll deduction.

However, the host school system health insurance plan may not meet all requirements necessary for J visa compliant coverage. In those cases, additional coverage must be purchased through IIE or independently. While some host school systems cover these additional costs, it is usually the responsibility of the teacher. Most host schools do not cover additional costs for dependent health insurance.

IIE offers the following enrollment options through our group policy with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI): A. Travel Accident and Sickness Insurance or B. Supplemental Coverage for Evacuation and Repatriation only.

2025/26 Rates	**J-1 (under 60 years) rates per month**	**J-1 (60 years or older) rates per month**	**J-2 (any age) rates per month, per dependent**
A. Travel Accident and Sickness Insurance	$209.66	$1,362.64	$461.13
B. Supplemental Coverage for Evacuation and Repatriation only	$5.71	$5.71	$12.57

Please note that while the Travel Accident and Sickness Insurance policy is compliant with J visa requirements, this policy is not comprehensive medical insurance and is not Affordable Care Act (ACA Compliant). Should the teacher or their dependents have more complex medical needs we recommend considering additional coverage.

Enrollment in the CISI plan is **OPTIONAL**. CISI fees are invoiced annually and subject to carrier increase annually.

Third Party or Partner Fees

IIE does not partner with third-party recruiters or staffing agencies that charge any fees to the individual teacher. U.S. host school systems working with a third-party recruiter must disclose their arrangements to IIE during the application process. It is IIE's strong preference that U.S. host schools cover all recruiting and placement fees.

Teachers who have independently worked with a third-party to find their teaching position must disclose any associated fees and contracts in their application to IIE. IIE will assess our ability to provide sponsorship on a case-by-case basis. IIE does not provide sponsorship to programs where the teacher is determined to be responsible for unreasonable fees.

At time of application to IIE U.S. host schools and teacher applicants must disclose if they have worked with any third parties and any fees associated with the placement, sponsorship, or visa application process that have been paid, will be paid, or will be reimbursed by the teacher. A summary of any fees that the teacher is responsible for will be included in the IIE Terms of Appointment.

IIE has current agreements in place with RVP Consultants, Lattice Global Teachers and the American School of English, Math, and Sciences to provide program support as the placement agency contracted by a U.S. host school system. Placement fees are paid by the school system.

Initial Funds

Each teacher applicant must demonstrate that they have $3,000 available in personal funds, at time of application, to help cover costs associated with their application and initial travel and living costs in the United States.

Application-related costs: May include but are not limited to credential evaluation, document translation, professional licenses and background checks. Teachers must obtain a certified translation for any document that was not originally issued in English, such as their academic degrees, transcripts, and professional licenses. A full list of required documents is provided by IIE within our online application. Please note that IIE does not provide translation services.

Travel and arrival costs: Initial travel may include domestic travel for visa appointments, international flights, and initial living expenses such as housing deposits, rent, groceries and meals and transportation prior to receiving the first paycheck. Housing deposits will vary by landlord, but may be equivalent to one to two months of rent.

Some school systems may require that the teacher has a Social Security Number (SSN) before they can receive a paycheck, and the SSN can only be applied for after arrival in the U.S., and IIE receives a complete and accurate set of arrival documents to validate you in SEVIS. The SSN application process itself and may take 4-6 weeks to process. *IIE will provide detailed information on this process if you are approved for sponsorship.*

Please see estimated ranges of initial and application-related fees, based on current teacher and host school reporting:

	Range	Average
International travel and airfare to the U.S.	$250 - $3,500	$1,650
Credential evaluation*	$100 - $300	$200
Certified translation of application materials	$20 - $150 per document	$85

**Please review member organizations in the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES).*

Cost of Living

During the program, IIE recommends that each teacher have a minimum of $2,500 per month available, either through wages or combination of wages and personal funds. Additional funding must be shown for J-2 dependents (legally married spouse or children under 21). Please be aware that wages and/or stipends from a host school, host school district, home school or home government might not cover all living expenses in the U.S., or emergency health or personal needs, and teachers are advised to have access to additional personal funds.

The cost of living can vary greatly depending on where the host school or school district is located. Prior to accepting a position, teachers should research online to budget accordingly. Housing in a large city can cost approximately $2,000 per month, while housing in a smaller town might cost closer to $500 per month. Utilities may include electricity and/or gas ($50 - $100 per month, depending on the size of the housing), cable and internet ($50 - $200 per month depending on plan), and phone service ($15 - $150 per month depending on plan). In a single-family home, the tenant may also be responsible for water and trash collection, about $150 - $200 annually. Cost of food may range from $200 - $500 per month, depending on location and preference to cook or eat out regularly. Teachers wishing to bring dependent children should be aware that childcare is very expensive in the U.S., with options ranging from $100 to $2,000 per month depending on the number and age of their children.

After initial application review, IIE provides teachers with a budgeting workbook tool to plan their finances. Please review the *Summary of Significant General Costs* and *Addendum* sections below for data on in-program costs that current teachers are paying.

Local Transportation

Most urban areas have public transit, such as subways, buses, and trains and this is a great environmentally friendly option. The price of a monthly public transit ticket may range from $25 - $135 for local service, or higher for regional service. Owning a car in the U.S. can be expensive, with gas prices between $2 - $5 per gallon. Drivers need to make sure they have or obtain the proper license (through the Department of Motor Vehicles for the state) and vehicle insurance which will vary by location and amount of coverage selected, between $50-$200 per month.

Work-Related Fees and Deductions

During the application process, the U.S. host school will provide information to IIE on the teacher's salary, estimated deductions, union fees and costs for certification or background checks (if applicable), and any non-monetary compensation. Work-related deductions may include health insurance costs, retirement benefits, social security tax (FICA) and income taxes. The amounts for each deduction or fee will be summarized in the teacher's Terms of Appointment with IIE.

Please review the below for estimated ranges of teaching-related fees and deductions, based on current teacher and host school reporting:

	Range (where $0 is indicated, not all teachers pay this cost)	**Average (when teacher is responsible for cost)**
Certification or licensure (including exams)*	$0 - $210	$120
Background checks	$0 - $30	$27
Union dues	$0 – 262	$125.61
Retirement benefits	0% - 14% of salary	11.75%
Federal taxes	12% - 24% of salary	22%

State taxes	5% - 8% of salary	5%
Local taxes	0% - 2.4%	1.95%
Other deductions (disability benefits, FICA)	0% - 12%	4.48%
Nonresident tax preparation services	$44.95 – $96.90	$48

**Teachers in private schools generally do not require state certification or licensure.*

If the teacher is being compensated by the host school or school district, taxes will be deducted from each paycheck. J-1 exchange visitors are subject to federal, state, and local income taxes but are generally exempt from FICA (as long as they remain non-resident aliens for tax purposes) and you may ask your employer to waive this deduction. Each school system will manage deductions differently, and IIE recommends asking school administration or Human Resources to review your first paycheck with you so that you fully understand each deduction. For more information on qualifying as a resident versus a non-resident for tax purposes, teachers should review the IRS Substantial Presence Test.

For general guidance on expected federal tax deductions from an exchange teacher's salary, please review the IRS Marginal Tax Rates for 2025, by income- level (also listed below).

For reference, the average salary in 2024/2025 for an IIE-sponsored teacher was **$55,417** annually, before deductions.

Tax Rate	Income level for single taxpayers	Income level for married, filing jointly
37%	Over $626,350	Over $761,600
35%	Over $250,525	Over $501,050
32%	Over $197,300	Over $394,600
24%	Over $103,350	Over $206,700
22%	Over $48,475	Over $96,950
12%	Over $11,925	Over $23,850
10%	$11,925 or less	$23,850 or less

Teachers are responsible for being aware of all personal tax filing requirements. Specific questions should be directed to a tax professional with experience in nonimmigrant filing.

Summary of Significant General Costs

The below averages are monthly costs that current IIE teachers in year two or more of their program reported in academic year 2024-2025. Cost of living and monthly expenses can vary greatly based on U.S. region, personal preferences, and familial situation. For example, some teachers are placed at boarding schools and report $0 for housing costs. (Data shown is averaged for teachers who reported a cost greater than $0.)

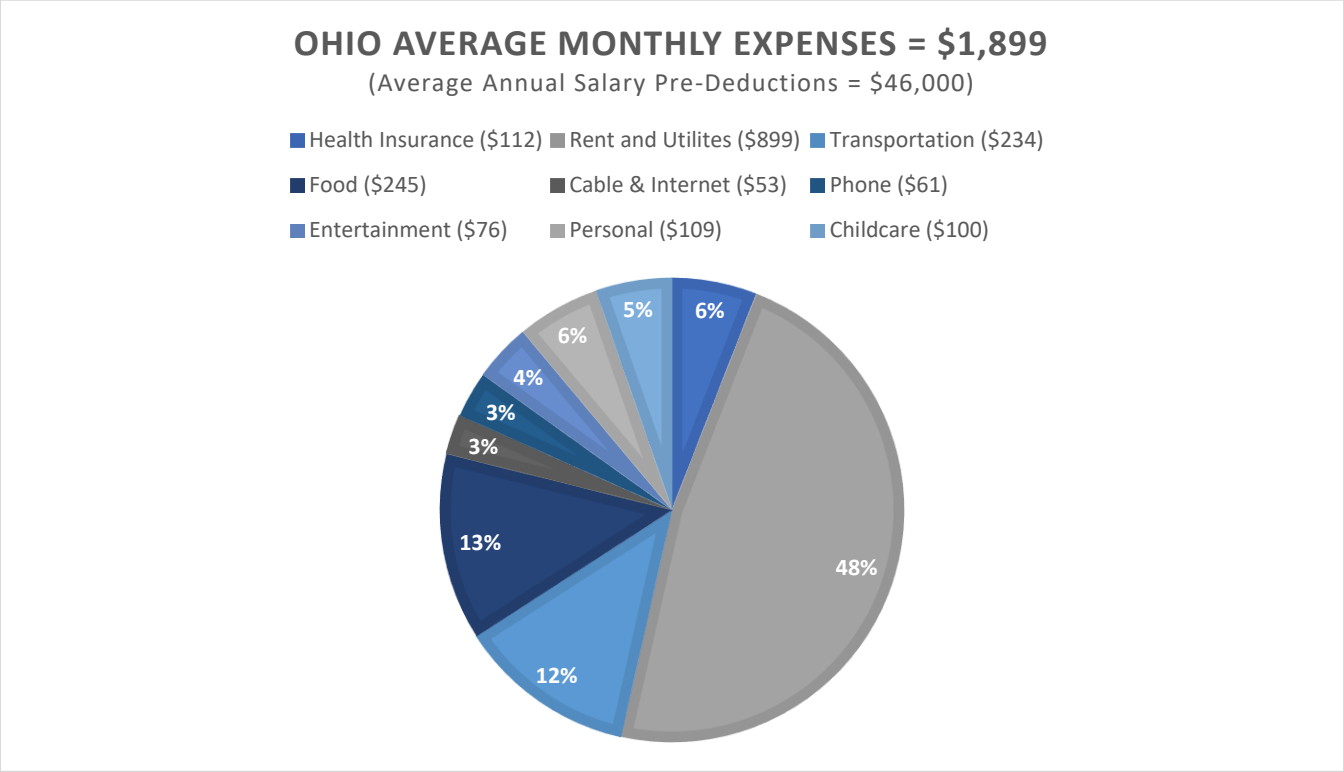
Health insurance costs:	$269
Housing (rent):	$786
Utility bills (ex. Heat/gas, water, electric):	$131
Local transportation (vehicle and insurance, public transit, ride-share):	$319
Food and groceries:	$320
Cable, internet, streaming services:	$77
Phone:	$88
Entertainment (cultural activities, sightseeing):	$142
Clothing, toiletries, personal needs:	$162
Childcare:	$450

Questions?

We welcome the opportunity to speak with interested host schools and international teachers. Please call us at 212-984-5313 or email jvisasponsorship@iie.org with any questions.

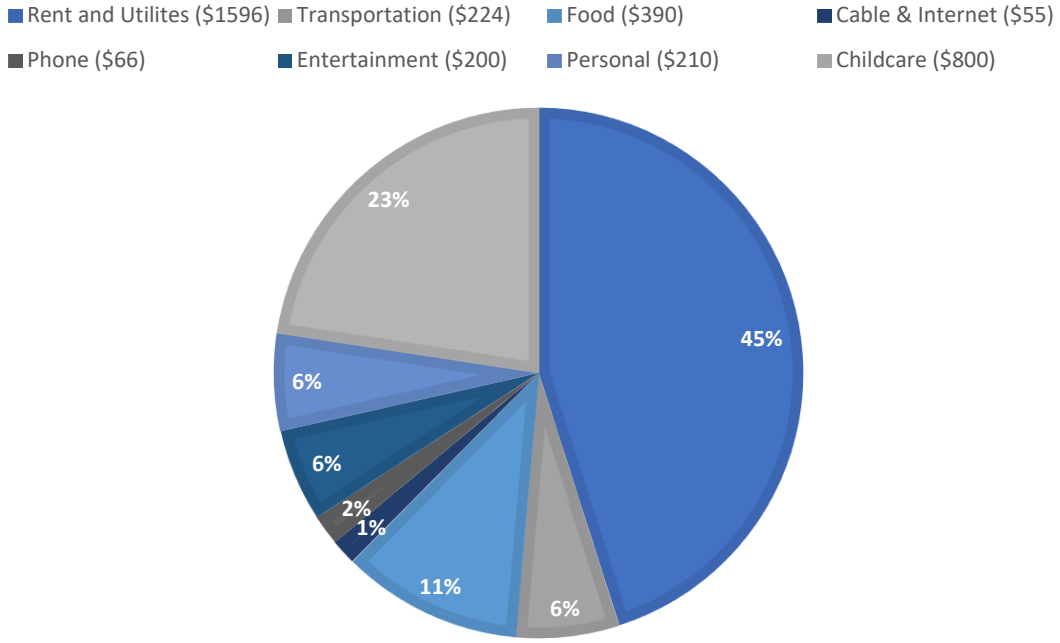
Addendum: State-by-State Summary

Below is salary and budget data during academic year 2024-2025 in select states where IIE is currently sponsoring larger groups of teachers. This is not reflective of all costs of living that might be applicable to you – it is provided to show a general idea of major monthly costs and the variance by geographic area. If a cost does not appear for a specific state, such as childcare costs, this only indicates that IIE teachers in that state may not have childcare needs. We encourage you to carefully do research in the states that interest you.



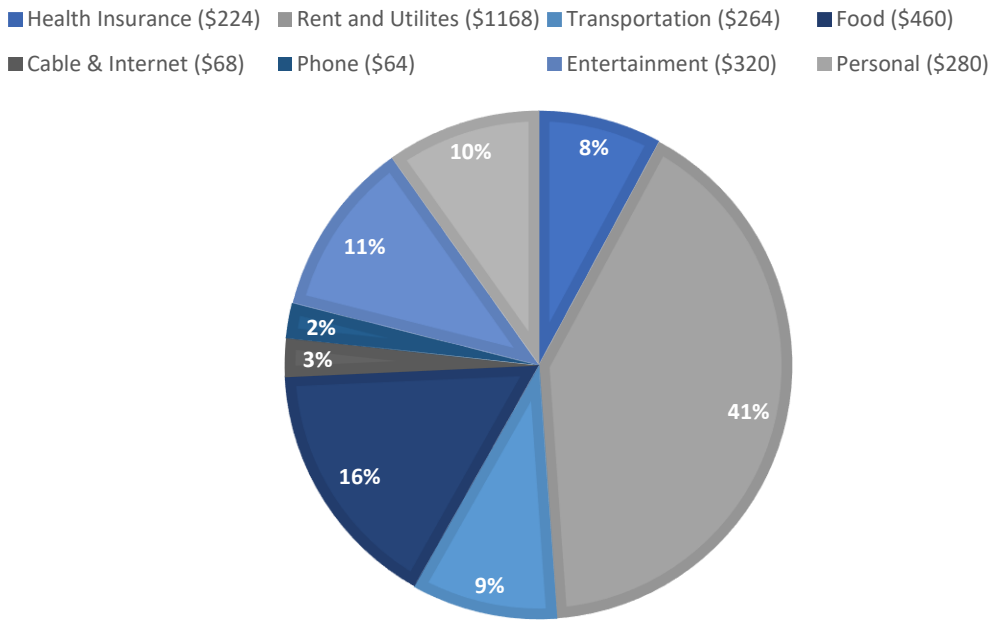
MASSACHUSETTS AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES = $3,541

(Average Monthly Salary Pre-deductions = $73,597)



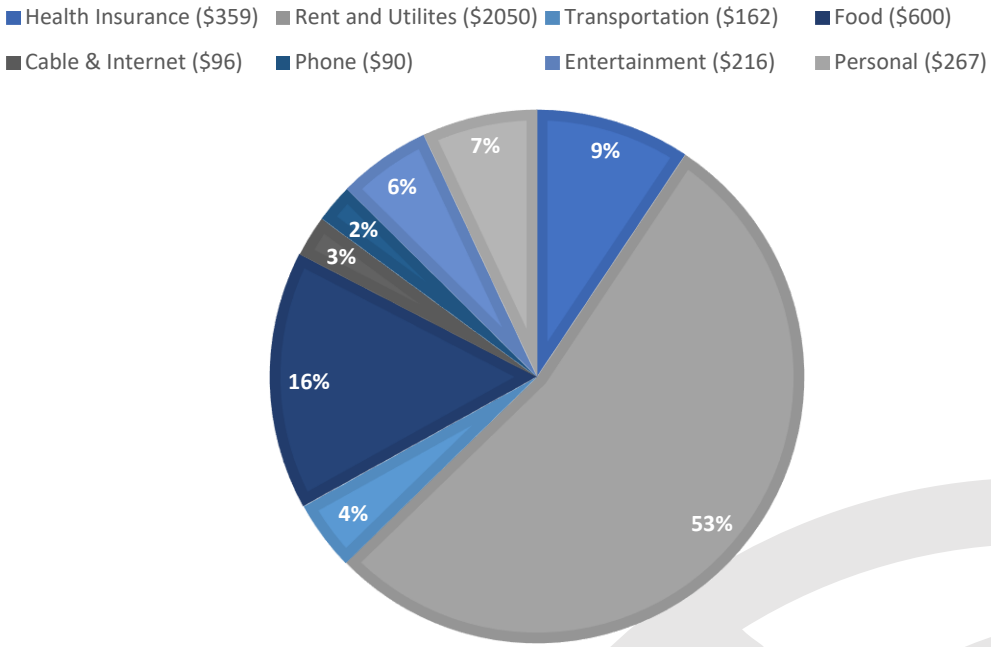
WEST VIRGINIA AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES = $2,848

(Average Annual Salary Pre-Deductions = $55,044)



NEW YORK AVERAGE MONTHLY EXPENSES = $3,840

(Average Annual Salary Pre-Deductions = $74,470)



Information from this Fact Sheet references from https://j1visa.state.gov and eCFR Part 62