

# **Kentucky Visiting International Teacher Program Guide**



## **Kentucky Department of Education**

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# **Kentucky Visiting International Teachers Program Guide**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Section I. Welcome**

### **Section II. General Information**

### **Section III. Employment Requirements**

Initial Paperwork, Visa and KY Teacher Certification

### **Section IV. Moving to Kentucky**

Travel

Arrival to the Airport

Orientation

After the Orientation

Social Security card

Bank account

Cellphone number

Kentucky State Driver's License

Initial District Trainings / Professional Learning opportunities

### **Section V. During the school year**

Salary

Insurance

Taxes (Social Security/Medicare and Income)

Child enrollment

Extensions

Cross-cultural activity component

Annual Report

Professional Learning Event

Suggested Roles and Responsibilities

### **Section VI. Returning Abroad**

### **Section VII. References**

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Internal Revenue Service

U.S. Social Security Administration

Kentucky Department of Education

Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board

## **Section I. Welcome**

Thank you for hosting a Visiting International Teacher in Kentucky Public Schools! We are glad that you and your school district have become an active participant in the educational experience of Kentucky students to acquire global competency and World Languages skills.

We look forward to working with you to make the transition to Kentucky easier for your teacher, while ensuring that his/her work throughout the year is efficient and effective, and sharing your experiences to do what is best for the students.

Enclosed you will find information that will assist you in helping your new Visiting International Teacher during his/her transition to the state of Kentucky.

## Section II. General Information

The Kentucky Department of Education Visiting International Teachers Program is a program that provides World Languages services to students and school districts in Kentucky, and that aims for the improvement of the quality and extent of the teaching of language and culture in Kentucky, and the English language and North American culture in the home country of the selected visiting international teachers.

This program enables local school districts to hire highly-qualified native speaker teachers to teach foreign language (or specific content areas such as Math or Science if selected for Dual Language Immersion), at the elementary, middle and/or high school level.

Teachers are selected from a pool of candidates who have been rigorously screened by the education authorities of the country with which the Kentucky Department of Education has developed a partnership\*; and then extensively interviewed by the KDE's World Languages consultant (and/or a representative of the agency with whom KDE is partnering), to ensure that they have the necessary skills and qualifications to work in Kentucky, as well as they meet the requirements established by the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), which state that selected teachers shall have the following qualifications:

- Minimum qualifications for teaching at the primary, including pre-kindergarten, or secondary levels in schools in his or her home country;
- Possess, at a minimum, a degree equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree in either education or the academic subject field in which he or she intends to teach in Kentucky;
- Possess, at a minimum, two years of working experience in education (elementary, middle or high school);
- Sufficient proficiency in English language to participate in the program;

In addition to those requirements, selected teachers shall:

- Satisfy the teaching eligibility standards of the U.S. state in which they will teach, established in the state of Kentucky by the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB), so that they can be granted a one year limited teacher certification (per Kentucky Administrative Regulations, [16 KAR 4:070. Foreign teachers serving under the teacher exchange program](#)).

Selected teachers will be introduced to the schools that have applied for a candidate from this program (depending on the schools' needs and availability of the requested profile), so that an interview between the school and the candidate can be scheduled if necessary, and the school can make a decision in regard to the hiring of this candidate as a Visiting International Teacher.

*\*As of 6/30/2017, the Kentucky Department of Education has a Memorandum of Understanding signed with education authorities of the Government of Spain, and an official partnership with education authorities of the People's Republic of China.*

## Section III. Employment Requirements

### **Initial Paperwork, Visa and KY Teacher Certification**

Once a school has communicated to KDE (and/or the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program) its decision on hiring a candidate as a Visiting International Teacher, a process starts so that this teacher can complete the necessary paperwork to travel to the United States and work in the school which has hired him/her.

*IMPORTANT: In some cases, after the candidate has been offered a position, he/she will be required by the school district to complete an online application for employment. It is important to remember that these teachers are not the “typical” candidates for a teaching position; for example, they cannot provide some specific information when filling out an application, such as the Social Security Number\*, because they do not have it at the time of completing the form. Schools and school districts need to keep in mind this circumstance at the time of applying for a candidate from the Kentucky Department of Education Visiting International Teacher Program, and when interviewing such candidate and later offering him/her a position .*

The Kentucky Department of Education, in collaboration with the education authorities of the countries with which it has developed a partnership, as well as the local school districts and the Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board, works with the Visiting International Teacher so that he/she can obtain the following:

- Letter of Intent / Invitation Letter / Funding Letter (*from the school district*)
- J-1 Visa (*from the US Embassy*)
- KY Teaching License – One Year Limited Teacher Certification (*from KY-EPSB*)

Before you can apply for a visa to enter the United States as an exchange visitor, you need to pay the I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee, which is currently USD \$220. The cost to apply for the required J-1 visa is USD \$185. There is an additional cost for each dependent’s J-2 visa. Exchange Visitors will also have to pay for an international credential evaluation fee (+ \$176-\$220) required for securing a Kentucky teaching license. the Visiting International Teacher will have to schedule a J-1 visa interview at the local US Embassy or Consulate, after providing embassy officials with any required documentation at the time of the interview, including his/her passport, a document issued by the sponsoring agency (in this case, the Kentucky Department of Education) called “**DS-2019**”, and a document called “**Letter of Intent**” (also known as “Invitation Letter” or “Funding Letter”) issued by the school district stating their intent of hiring the Visiting International Teacher. Per regulations of the US Department of State’s Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), such letter of intent must include information about the following items:

- Salary;
- Healthcare benefits;
- Teaching assignment; and
- The school and community where the Visiting International Teacher will be living and working.

\*Please, see “section IV. Moving to Kentucky – Social Security” to find more information regarding this matter. 5

Meanwhile, the Visiting International Teacher will have to work together with the local school district and the Kentucky Department of Education (and/or the agency with whom KDE is partnering if needed) so that he/she can obtain a valid **Kentucky Teacher Certification** (a one year limited teacher certification per Kentucky Administrative Regulations, [16 KAR 4:070](#), [Foreign teachers serving under the teacher exchange program](#)), to satisfy the teaching eligibility standards of the U.S. state in which they will teach, established in the state of Kentucky by the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB). The one year teacher certification is done at no cost to the exchange visitor.

In order to do this, the Visiting International Teacher will have to obtain an evaluation report of his/her education credentials, which will need to be sent to the [Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board \(EPSB\)](#), together with any other required documentation so that a valid Kentucky Teacher Certification can be obtained. An Education Credentials Evaluation Report can be obtained through several different national credential evaluation agencies; Visiting International Teachers participating in this program usually request it through [WES \(World Education Services\)](#). The cost of the report will range from \$176-\$220.

## **Section IV. Moving to Kentucky**

Visiting International Teachers are always advised to **not** purchase a plane ticket to the United States until **after** they have successfully completed their visa interview and have been told by an embassy official that they will be receiving a J-1 visa prior to their intended date of departure.

Only when the J-1 visa is secured, the Visiting International Teacher can start making arrangements for the trip and the arrival to Kentucky.

### **Travel**

Visiting International Teachers are always urged to use one of the three big airports available in Kentucky for their arrival: Lexington's Blue Grass Airport, Louisville International Airport or the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

### **Arrival to the Airport**

The hiring school or district and/or a representative of the agency with whom KDE is partnering will welcome the Visiting International Teachers at the airport. Then, he/she will take the Visiting International Teachers to the hotel (or selected arrangement) where they will spend the time until they are able to find permanent housing..

### **After the Arrival**

After the arrival of the exchange visitor a representative of the school district that has hired a Visiting International Teacher will come for the teacher and take him/her to the school to see the building and its facilities, and to the place where he/she will spend the following weeks until he/she has found appropriate housing.

In order to help the Visiting International Teacher focus on his/her work as soon as possible, schools participating in this program are strongly encouraged to help the Visiting International Teacher find housing and adjust to the community. Some schools choose to assign a host family for the Visiting International Teacher for the first two or three weeks, some others choose to help directly the Visiting International Teacher in finding an apartment or a house.

For the first two weeks, if possible, it is strongly recommended that Visiting International Teachers stay with a family in the community that has the time, ability and interest to help him/her familiarize with the community and find appropriate housing. This process may include as well any of the following:

- -getting a Social Security Card, opening a bank account, obtaining a cellphone number, traveling back and forth to the school or the school district's central office, obtaining a Kentucky State Driver's License, purchasing a reliable vehicle, acquiring car and renter's insurance, identifying a good local doctor, moving and settling in an apartment or a house, etc.

### **Orientation**

Per regulations of the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program (Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program), "sponsors must offer and record participation in an appropriate orientation for all exchange visitors [...] Orientation must include, but is not limited to, information concerning life and customs in the United States, description of the Exchange Visitor Program and rules of the program in which the exchange visitor is participating."

In this orientation, Visiting International Teachers also receive information concerning life in the state of Kentucky, required paperwork that will need to be completed (such as applying for a Social Security Card) and education in the state of Kentucky (such as instructional practices, standards, classroom management and resources).

Visiting International Teachers are provided with a certification of participation at the end of the session; so they can present it to their schools to show evidence of professional learning.

### **Social Security card**

A Social Security Card is required to get a job and receive other social services in the United States. Due to their immigration status, Visiting International Teachers are not able to provide this information at the time of the interview with schools, nor at the time of completing an online job application should it be required by the school district. However, upon their arrival, they will be able to apply for a Social Security card after he/she has arrived and been in the US for ten days.

Visiting International Teachers are provided information about this important matter in the orientation course organized by the sponsoring agency, in this case the Kentucky Department of Education; so they can have it complete as soon as possible and provide the school district with a Social Security number.

Visiting International Teachers are instructed to ask their local school districts (the principal of the school, a staff member of the school, the host family...) for help in accompanying them to the local Social Security office and in completing the application. .

Please find more information about applying for a social security card at the [website of the Social Security Administration](#).

### **Bank account**

Visiting International Teachers are advised to open a bank account with a local bank; so, they can receive their first paycheck as soon as possible. If they wish and upon availability, they may also use other banks, national brands such as US Bank, Chase or PNC. Schools participating in this program are encouraged to help these teachers in setting up their bank accounts.

### **Cellphone number**

Visiting International Teachers are urged to obtain a local cellphone number as soon as possible, so that they can be located at any time, mostly for safety purposes. Schools participating in this program are encouraged to help these teachers in obtaining an operative cellphone number where they can be reached.



### **Kentucky State Driver's License**

All persons who drive vehicles are required to obtain a Kentucky State Driver's License. Prior to their arrival to the US, Visiting International Teachers are required to obtain an International Driver's License, which will allow them to drive in the US for a specific period of time (1 year), until they are able to obtain a Kentucky State Driver's License. Schools participating in this program are encouraged to help these teachers in obtaining the driver's license.

Please find more information about applying for a Kentucky State Driver's License in the [website of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet](#).

### **Initial District Trainings / Professional Learning opportunities**

Usually, school districts schedule New Employee Orientations right before starting the school year. This is an opportunity for the school district to introduce the Visiting International Teacher to other teachers and staff members, and for the teacher to learn about the school district's expectations and goals.

Moreover, local schools may also schedule several professional learning opportunities right before the school year. This is an opportunity for the school to meet the Visiting International Teacher, and for the teacher to learn about the school and the work that will take place during the year.

## Section V. During the school year

### **Salary**

Per regulations of the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), *"Teaching positions, including duties, responsibilities, hours of employment, and compensation, are commensurate with those of similarly-situated U.S. teachers in the school district or host school where that exchange teacher is assigned to teach."*

Visiting International Teachers possess at least two years of full-time teaching experience within the past eight years at the time of recruitment. The Visiting International Teacher's salary will be determined by the rank granted when applying for a Kentucky Teacher Certification at the [Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board \(EPSB\)](#), and by the years of teaching experience reported through an Education Credentials Evaluation Report, which can be obtained through several different national credential evaluation agencies such as [WES \(World Education Services\)](#), unless the salary is initially determined and paid by the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program.

### **Insurance**

Per regulations of the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), *"all exchange visitors have insurance in effect that covers the exchange visitors for sickness or accidents during the period of time that they participate in the sponsor's exchange visitor program. In addition, sponsors must require that accompanying spouses and dependents of exchange visitors have insurance for sickness and accidents."*

All Visiting International Teachers are required to purchase insurance that can cover them internationally until they arrive to the United States. Once they arrive to their location in the US and start working in their host school, they will have the opportunity to purchase insurance through the school district for whom they are working during enrollment season; or with the information provided by the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program.

### **Taxes (Social Security/Medicare and Income)**

Regarding Social Security and Medicare taxes, participants of the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program are temporarily admitted to the United States under section 101(a)(15)(J) of the [Immigration and Nationality Act](#). As a result of this, social security and Medicare taxes are not to be withheld on pay for services of an exchange visitor who has been given permission to work and who possesses or obtains a letter of authorization from the sponsor unless the exchange visitor is considered a resident alien.

Regarding income taxes, Visiting International Teachers sponsored on a J-1 visa are usually considered "Nonresident Alien" for tax purposes. Per regulations of the [U.S. Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#), which can be found in the [International Taxpayers section](#) of its website, nonresident aliens must pay taxes on any U.S. source income received as a result of being engaged or considered to be engaged in a trade or business in the United States during the year.

Taxation of U.S. source income earned by J-1 visitors will vary according to the specific category the visitor was admitted under; the visitor's country of origin; and the duration of the visitor's stay in the United States.

However, and as stated in the [IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens](#), a nonresident alien usually is subject to U.S. income tax only on U.S. source income. If the source of income is foreign, nonresident aliens may be exempt from U.S. income tax. On a related note, nonresident aliens should look (and notify their employers) for any tax treaty that their country of origin may have with the United States, in case there is a provision that exempts their income.

In any case, all Visiting International Teachers, as well as hosting schools and school districts, **must** check with the Kentucky Department of Education (or with the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program) for detailed information about taxes.

### **Child enrollment**

Some Visiting International Teachers may bring their children with them when moving to the U.S. to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program.

If so, Visiting International Teachers who have school age children are instructed to contact their school district of residence to learn more about [public school enrollment requirements](#). They are also informed that in Kentucky, all children must be enrolled in and attend school between the ages of 6 and 18. Please, note that a child who turns five on or before August 1 may enroll in kindergarten. Schools may enroll underage resident children in kindergarten based on local school board policy.

For teachers with young children, the [Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services](#) provides a resource called “[Benefind](#)”, which allows the user to find contact information about child care providers in local communities. This online directory includes address and contact information, child care services (infants/toddlers, preschool, etc.) and hours of operation.

### **Extensions**

Per new regulations of the US Department of State’s Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)) implemented on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, exchange visitor teachers who are at the end of their maximum duration of participation (3 years) will be able to apply for a fourth and even a fifth year extension, given that they are granted permission by their country of origin.

Extension requests will be approved by the U.S. Department of State on a case-by-case basis based on the proven need for the teachers’ continuing service and also the teachers’ performance during the first three years of the exchange.

### **Cross-cultural activity component**

Per regulations of the US Department of State’s Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), “*Sponsors must require each exchange teacher to complete, within the United States, and during each academic year of program participation, at least one cross-cultural activity.*”

The Exchange Visitor Program is first and foremost a cross-cultural exchange program. In the past, participants and hosts have been required to work together to ensure an enriching cross-cultural experience for all involved in the program. Visiting educators have been encouraged - but not required - to share elements of their home culture with their students and communities to raise the awareness and understanding of Americans about their countries and cultures.

Due to the implementation of new rules on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, all exchange visitors are now required to complete mandatory, annual cross-cultural activities from each of the following two categories:

- Organization of at least one activity in a public setting to share aspects of their cultural heritage with their U.S. students and community members.
- Facilitation of an ongoing dialogue through virtual exchange between their U.S. students and students in another country, preferably the exchange teacher's home country.

All Visiting International Teachers are required to complete the cross-cultural activity component, and submit their reports to the Kentucky Department of Education (or the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program) no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

### **Annual Report**

Likewise, all Visiting International Teachers are required to submit to the Kentucky Department of Education (or the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program) annual reports detailing the cross-cultural activity component of their exchange program. These reports shall include elements such as the teachers name, sponsor's name, host institution's name, the dates of the cross-cultural activities, locations where the activities took place, number of participants or individuals in attendance, topics of the presentations or exchanges, a general overview of each activity and information about their overall impact on the larger community where the exchange teacher is living and working.

### **Suggested Roles and Responsibilities**

Many people are involved in the process of ensuring that the Visiting International Teacher can perform his/her duties as described in "Section II. General Information" and have a great experience while teaching in the United States.

Below, the user of this guide will find suggestions for administrators, supervisors, mentors and fellow teachers in regard to what roles and responsibilities they should play in ensuring a good experience for both the school and the Visiting International Teacher.

District Level: Human Resources / Minority Recruiter / District World Languages Coordinator

- Organize pre-arrival meetings with participating schools. (DWL and MR)
- Enroll Visiting International Teacher in New Employee Orientations. (HR)
- Support the school in identifying appropriate mentors and mentoring resources. (DWL)
- Support school in providing classroom management coaching & interventions as needed. (DWL)
- Assistance / support regarding certification applications and New Hire paperwork meetings. (HR)
- Provide Access to district instructional and professional development resources, including online resources. (HR)

School Level: Administrators / Supervisors

- Introduce to faculty and staff, facilitate positive professional relationships.
- Provide school tour.
- Facilitate access to school.
- Make available school master calendar as early as possible.
- Make available school handbook.
- Provide orientation of school policies & 1-1 clarification.
  - Orient to employee expectations: contract hours, dress code, extra-curricular responsibilities, getting a sub, dealing with parents, colleagues, managing conflict.
- Arrange IT support.
- Familiarize teacher with school/district web pages.
- Identify appropriate school/district resources for support and professional development.
- Assign mentor.
- Arrange interim transportation. (Assistance by staff)
- Arrange interim housing. (Assistance by staff)
- Support candidate with setting up cell phone, banking, permanent transportation, housing, benefits package.
- Give informal and formal observation and feedback.

School Level: School mentor / English Partner Teacher

- Introduce to faculty and staff, facilitate positive professional relationships.
- Get to know each other.
- Establish common classroom procedures and routines.
- Reinforce school policies and procedures.
- Establish common classroom management policies and procedures.
- Provide support in classroom management strategies.
- Establish patterns for communicating with each other, grade-level team, parents.
- Establish common grading and reporting policies and procedures.
- Collaborate on weekly instructional planning, student monitoring and home communications.

- Help teacher access supplies, materials and equipment.
- Make available instructional resources (including online).
- Give technology support.
- Provide coaching and mentor support when needed.

## Section VI. Returning Abroad

Per regulations of the US Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program ([Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)), *"exchange teachers may be authorized to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program for the length of time necessary to complete the program, which may not exceed three years unless a specific extension of one or two years is authorized by the Department."*

Once a Visiting International Teacher has completed his/her program (or decided to shorten voluntarily the duration of his/her participation in it, which will have to be communicated to the Kentucky Department of Education or the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program), this person is to return to his/her country of origin immediately the day after their program end date. To facilitate the return and help with the many different things that need to be done before leaving, Visiting International Teachers usually have a post-completion 30-day period to leave the country.

Below, the user of this guide will find a list of suggested items that administrators, supervisors, mentors and fellow teachers are encouraged to assist the Visiting International Teacher with to ensure a successful return to his/her home country.

- Ensure that the Visiting International Teacher submits to the Kentucky Department of Education (or the agency with whom KDE is partnering for the Visiting International Teachers Program) the cross-cultural activity component and the annual reports no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Ensure that the Visiting International Teacher provides the school and the district with an e-mail and a postal address in the home country where the Visiting International Teacher can be located (especially for payroll and tax purposes).
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in their request for a refund or withdraw of Kentucky Teacher Retirement System (KTRS) account balance.
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in closing his/her bank account.
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in terminating the house/apartment contract in case of renting/leasing.
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in closing the utilities accounts.
- Remind the Visiting International Teacher to fill the appropriate forms at US Postal Service to ensure that any mail is delivered to the Visiting International Teacher's home country for a period of time after the return.
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in selling any vehicle that he/she has used for personal transportation.
- Assist the Visiting International Teacher in selling (or donating) any furniture and/or clothes that he/she has used and is not taking with him/her.

## **Section VII. References**

### **U.S. Department of State**

- [U.S. Department of State website](#)
- [J-1 Exchange Visitor Program website](#)
- [Federal Register-Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Exchange Visitor Program](#)
- [Immigration and Nationality Act](#)

### **U.S. Internal Revenue Service**

- [U.S. Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\) website](#)
- [IRS Publication 519, U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens](#)

### **U.S. Social Security Administration**

- [U.S. Social Security Administration website](#)

### **Kentucky Department of Education**

- [Kentucky Department of Education website](#)
- [Visiting International Teacher Program in the World Languages webpage at the Kentucky Department of Education website](#)
- [Kentucky Department of Education Visiting International Teacher Program Expectations and Agreements](#)

### **Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board**

- [Kentucky Educational Professional Standards Board \(EPSB\) website](#)