CSIET Guidelines for Short-Term International Educational Travel Programs

These guidelines are intended for use in evaluating both inbound and outbound youth exchange programs whose in-country duration is generally eight weeks or less. For programs of longer duration, please refer to CSIET Standards for Long-Term Programs.

**Agent:** Individual or organization authorized to represent or act on behalf of the organization in administering one or more aspects of the program, for example, an overseas partner.

**Organization:** Entity that sponsors international educational travel activities.

**Program:** Organized international educational travel activity that begins with participant recruitment and selection, includes the components outlined in the standards that follow, and terminates when the participant returns to his or her point of origin or otherwise severs the relationship with the program sponsor. Programs applying for CSIET listing must have a minimum of one current exchange participant in each cycle that is being evaluated for each program (i.e. long-term inbound and outbound; and short-term inbound and outbound).

**Volunteer:** 1. A representative who is compensated for out-of-pocket expenses only. If a representative receives regular compensation, such as a per student placement fee, this individual cannot be considered a volunteer. 2. A host family that provides room and board gratis to a student.

**Federal Waivers:** The CSIET Board of Directors has ruled that if the State Department or an agency of the U.S. government provides an exception that may affect compliance with CSIET standards, the organization to whom the waiver has been granted may operate under that exemption upon written presentation of such waiver to the CSIET Evaluation Committee.

**Important Note:** Organizations that apply to CSIET for listing are provided with a list of “Materials to be Submitted” to demonstrate compliance with CSIET Standards. If you wish to obtain the complete set of Standards with “Materials to be Submitted” please contact CSIET for a free copy.

**GUIDELINE 1: EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**
A. Programs are designed to fulfill educational purposes related to an international experience.

B. The organization sponsoring the program has clearly established goals and learning objectives to fulfill the educational purposes of its programs.

**GUIDELINE 2: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**
A. The structure and administration of the organization is clearly defined.

B. The organization has personnel needed to administer its programs effectively.
   1. The organization is accountable for the full scope of the programs it administers, including actions taken and representations made by its agents, and maintains responsibility for its students both within the United States and abroad.
   2. The organization maintains, hands-on control of the placement and supervision of inbound students and the hiring, firing, and remuneration of local representatives. It may not enter into a relationship with another entity that appears to exercise such control.

C. The organization is organized under the laws of one of the 50 states of the United States or the District of Columbia.

D. The organization demonstrates success in international educational travel through at least one full year since its incorporation.

**GUIDELINE 3: FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**
A. The organization is capable of discharging its financial responsibilities to all participants.

B. The organization has sufficient financial backing to protect all monies paid by participants and to ensure fulfillment of all responsibilities to participants.

C. The organization has an independent Certified Public Accountant annually prepare an audited or review financial statement.
GUIDELINE 4: PROMOTION

A. The organization’s promotional materials should professionally, ethically, and accurately reflect its purposes, activities, and sponsorship.

B. The organization cannot publicize the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc., that:
   a. are not sufficiently in advance of the student’s arrival
   b. appeal to public pity or guilt
   c. imply in any way that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately
   d. identify photos of individual students and include an appeal for an immediate family.

   Following are guidelines for public media advertisements:

   CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be unacceptable: Urgently Needed, Don’t let me be homeless, This is an emergency...

   CSIET has found the following words or phrases to be acceptable: Open your hearts and homes, Host a foreign Exchange Student...

   It is possible to use a picture of a student, a first name, age, country of origin, and a composite or generic listing of interests in an advertisement in order to demonstrate the personal nature of the program and the types of interests that students have. It does not identify that specific student as needing a home, nor should it to refer to a student’s athletic ability or accomplishments. Written waivers should be obtained for the use of any student photographs.

C. The organization should not promote or recruit for its programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families or schools. Specifically, programs should not include personal student data or contact information (including address, phone or email addresses) on websites or other promotional materials.

D. All promotional materials/activities distinguish the program and the sponsoring organization from others operating under:
   a. affiliated or related corporate structures
   b. the same or similar names or symbols.

E. The organization should fully disclose all fees, including school tuition, host family reimbursements, and other required or optional costs to prospective students and their natural families before enrollment. (If host families provide room and board gratis to the students, publicity should state that fees cover "selection and placement in host families" and not imply in any way that the fees paid by the students cover "room and board.")

F. Neither the organization nor its agents should promote its programs as providing opportunities for school athletic participation, high school graduation, driver's education instruction, household domestic service, child care, employment, or other activities that might compromise the student, program, or school. Guideline 4F strongly discourages the organization and its agents (this includes foreign partners) from promoting its programs as providing any of the aforementioned activities. The word “promote” as it is used in Guideline 4F includes any specific focus on or prominence of pictures and/or text depicting these activities. No prominent pictures and/or text will be considered to be in compliance.

G. The organization should not state or imply in its promotional materials/activities that persons who are compensated other than out-of-pocket expenses are volunteers.

GUIDELINE 5: STUDENT SELECTION AND ORIENTATION

A. The organization should select participants on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program, minimally through a review of student applications to ensure the participants’ suitability for placement in host families.

B. Selection should be completed in advance of the students’ departure from their home country. (It is recommended that participants be given the program rules and regulations in advance of the program.)

C. Students should be given a suitable orientation either before departure or shortly after arrival in the host country. (The orientation must include program rules and regulations, acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other information that suitably prepares youth for successful program participation.)

GUIDELINE 6: STUDENT PLACEMENT

A. For short-term programs that include a homestay, the organization:
   1. selects host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
   2. personally interviews all prospective host families in their home
   3. matches students and host families on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
   4. provides suitable orientation and training to the host family. (CSIET suggests that host family orientations include information on family life, customs, religion, and mores of the student's native country, and information on potential problems in hosting exchange students and suggestions on how to cope with such problems.)

GUIDELINE 6: STUDENT PLACEMENT (Con’t)

B. For programs that include accommodations other than a homestay, the organization:
1. arranges accommodations on the basis of criteria appropriate to the program
2. ensures the suitability of the accommodations with respect to location, cleanliness, safety, nutrition, and supervision
3. confirms the accommodations sufficiently in advance of the student's departure from home.

C. For programs that include short-term attendance at a U.S. high school, the organization secures written acceptance from the school principal or other designated responsible school administrator prior to the exchange student’s departure from his or her home country.

D. Organizations do not knowingly place students based on athletic abilities, whether initiated by a student, a natural or host family, a school or any other interested party.

GUIDELINE 7: OPERATIONS

A. The organization ensures adequate care and supervision of students.

B. Local representatives of the organization maintain regular personal contact with students and host families. (Contact should take place with students at least once every other week in “total immersion programs.” For programs with teaching or other activities, contact is more frequent. An English-speaking chaperone is present on all planned group activities.)

C. The organization notifies the student, host family, and/or other supervisor of accommodations regarding the travel itinerary in advance of the student's departure from the home country.

D. The organization provides appropriate support services to assist with program-related needs and problems (for example, counseling services, medical care, language problems, changes in host family, emergencies).

E. The organization maintains an effective system of screening, selecting, training, and supervising program representatives and group leaders.

F. The organization provides students with the host family’s name, address, and telephone (or similar contact information if placement is in other than a household); the program leader's name, address, and telephone; the address and telephone of the organization's national office; and relevant emergency telephone numbers.

G. When classroom learning is a part of the short-term program experience, the organization has a curriculum or education plan in place for the teacher to follow.

H. The organization provides an opportunity to the student, host family, and the program escorts or chaperones to participate in a post-exchange evaluation.

I. The organization has in place adequate plans and procedures for dealing with emergency situations that may arise during the program.

J. The organization responds in a timely and appropriate fashion to complaints received from students, families, schools or others concerned with the program and its quality.

GUIDELINE 8: STUDENT INSURANCE

A. The organization guarantees that every student is covered with adequate health and accident insurance. Such insurance:
   a. Protects students for the duration of their program
   b. Provides for the return of the student to his/her home in the event of serious illness, accident, or death during the program.

B. The organization provides students, host families, and appropriate supervisor(s) with detailed printed information regarding the terms and limits of insurance coverage and procedures for filing a claim.

C. Compensated officials and employees of the organization should not receive compensation from the sale of insurance to its participants.

GUIDELINE 9: ADHERENCE TO GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

A. The organization complies with all appropriate government regulations regarding international exchange or any other activity under its auspices.

As revised by the Board of Directors, May 2018