

Field Director Training Manual



Youth For
Understanding
USA

Youth For Understanding USA
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This is meant to be an ever-evolving document used in its electronic format. Please forward all edits, additions and suggestions to training@yfu.org.

*Thank you to the following people for their contributions and edits to this document:
Gordon Snow, Jacob Carter and Ruthann Adams.*

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Chapter 1: Overview of Youth For Understanding

Mission and Vision Statement

Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA) is a nonprofit, volunteer-based, educational organization. With significant help from more than 1,500 active volunteers, YFU staff enables the exchange of over 2,600 high school students each year. Additionally, the growing community college program has 160 international participants who attend 22 community colleges across the United States.

Since its inception in 1951, Youth For Understanding has remained committed to its mission: to prepare young people for their responsibilities and opportunities in a changing, interdependent world. Worldwide, Youth For Understanding (YFU) is a movement of over 50 committed yet autonomous organizations that share a common mission and vision for the future.

In order to remain true to this common vision, all YFU partner organizations agree to adhere to the YFU International Basic Standards.

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History

YFU's global history began very humbly in the United States. In 1951, State Department officials agreed that teenagers from war-torn Germany would be brought to the US to live with a family and attend high school for a year in an effort to heal the wounds of World War II. The hardships prevalent in Germany after World War II were having devastating effects on the country's youth.

It was felt that an exchange experience could help them to break out of this cycle of bitterness, hopelessness and despair. By teaching a group of young people how families lived together in the United States, the hope was that they would be motivated to go back to Germany and rebuild a new country, a democracy, according to what they had observed in the United States.

In 1951, 75 German teenagers were selected by the Army of the Occupation to come to live in the US with American families for one year. The students selected were from the oldest age group, which had not been part of the "Hitler Jugend" (the youth organization of the Nazi regime).

The students were between 15 and 18 years old and, as it later became apparent, it was exactly this age group, which seemed to be most able to naturally participate and adjust to the lifestyles and values of a foreign family and community.

Community and religious organizations in the Detroit, Michigan area helped place the students in American homes on a voluntary basis. Dr. Rachel Andresen, Executive Director of the Ann Arbor/Washtenaw Council of Churches, an educator and social worker, was asked to lend her assistance. In 1952, the Council received permission to act as the official agency for this program. It was named "Youth For Understanding." Dr. Andresen served the program as Executive Director for over 20 years until she retired in 1973.

In 1955, the first American teenagers went to Europe for ten weeks during summer vacation. These students were placed in European families with the assistance of returned exchange students and their parents.

These initial exchanges provided the impetus for YFU expansion to other parts of the world. In the mid-fifties, the program grew to include Scandinavia, and later Western and Central Europe.

YFU bridged the Pacific in 1958 when the first students came from Japan. The Pacific program now also includes Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, and China. YFU was introduced to Latin America in 1958, beginning with Mexico; South American countries opened their doors to YFU in 1959.

As the program increased in size, it became clear that incorporation as a non-profit educational organization was necessary. This status was achieved in 1964. As organizational relationships with international corporations and groups were forged over the years, YFU was determined to strengthen its national and international ties by relocating. The International Center moved from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Washington, D.C., in 1978.

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International Basic Standards

YFU is committed to conducting high quality programs. The [YFU International Basic Standards](#)¹ embody this commitment and set the minimum requirements that a YFU program must meet. The International Basic Standards spell out the expectations that all YFU organizations around the world share with respect to student and host family selection, support, orientations, and organizational management.

The standards balance universal and local requirements; they establish the areas of activity for YFU organizations and fundamental qualitative expectations, but remain sensitive to individual country constraints, perceived interests and needs, cultural considerations, degrees of economic feasibility and differing value perspectives.

The YFU International Basic Standards represent a consensus within the YFU community regarding how a YFU program should operate. Additionally, they serve to define the educational goals of YFU and develop operational standards based on these goals.

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International Secretariat

The [International Secretariat](#)² is the professional staff serving the international YFU community. It acts as a communication and resource coordination center, assists YFU National Organizations and plays a major part in the development of new YFU programs and the YFU community. In order to establish a username and password for this website, please contact mmelchior@yfu.org.

The International Secretariat receives guidance from the Chair of YFU's volunteer International Advisory Council (IAC). The activities of both the IAC and International Secretariat are funded by YFU National Organizations, which pay a per-student Fee for International Services (FIS). Currently, four people are working for the International Secretariat along with support from alumni interns and National Organization project consultants working on an as-needed basis.

The International Secretariat staff serves the YFU international community in four major areas: organizational development, communication and resources, community development and operational support.

¹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/International_Basic_Standards_2007_MASTER.pdf

² <http://noi.yfu.org/>

The International Secretariat is located in the Bethesda, Maryland offices of YFU USA, but is legally separate, incorporated under the umbrella organization known as YFU International Educational Services (YFU-IES), which has an executive Board of Directors.

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The International Advisory Council (IAC), which takes broad direction from the YFU International Conference (held every two to three years), works on issues of mutual concern within the YFU world, including formulation of International Basic Standards, setting of student policies, approval of new programs, planning for organizational development and contingencies, and overseeing the work of the International Secretariat.

When originally founded in 1981, the IAC was an advisory body to the President of the YFU organization in the United States. At the International Conference of May 2001, an Agreement on International Cooperation and Consensus Building (AICCB) was signed. Under this agreement, the IAC is designated as official advisor to all YFU national organizations.

The IAC meets twice a year and is made up of 15 members from the international community of YFU as follows:

- one from each of the largest programs (USA, Germany and Japan), appointed by and representing the executive leadership of these YFU National Organizations;
- two co-opted members elected by the IAC itself;
- ten members elected by National Electors, of which two regional representatives for Latin America, one regional representative for Europe, one regional representative for countries not otherwise represented, and five international at-large representatives.

All positions on the IAC must be filled by persons who play a significant role within their own YFU national organization. No YFU National Organization except YFU USA may have more than one member on the IAC, while YFU USA, as long as its programs account for more than half of all YFU exchanges, may have a maximum of three IAC members.

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Partner Organizations

Youth For Understanding is comprised of over [50 international partners](#)³ who exchange students with the United States and with each other. Most partner organizations adhere to the International Basic Standards, though there are a few countries with which YFU USA exchanges students that are not full YFU partner organizations and may not follow all parts of the International Basic Standards.

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Department of State and CSIET Standards and J1 Visa Regulations

[The United States Department of State](#)⁴ (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs) sets out guidelines for all exchange organizations. These guidelines are designed to ensure that all students are provided with basic services ranging from where they will sleep to how they will be oriented about the exchange experience. By adhering to the Department of State's guidelines, YFU is able to administer J-1 visas which allow students to enter the United States.

The [Council on Standards for International Educational Travel](#)⁵ (CSIET) also has established [Standards for Long-Term International Educational Travel Programs](#)⁶ to which YFU USA must

³ <http://www.yfu.org/>

⁴ <http://exchanges.state.gov/>

⁵ <http://www.csiet.org/>

adhere in running its programs. Being listed as an accredited program with CSIET provides YFU with the credibility to place students in local high schools across the country. Some schools will not consider enrolling international students until they see the sponsor organization listed on CSIET's website.

CSIET is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs, to provide leadership and support to the exchange and educational communities so that youth are provided with meaningful and safe international exchange experiences, and to promote the importance and educational value of international youth exchange. CSIET has been promoting international youth exchanges since 1984. CSIET also provides detailed information about [J-1 visas](#)⁷.

In order to carry out the highest quality programs possible, YFU USA chooses to follow the standards established by the United States Department of State and the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), and also YFU International Basic Standards. On the Education and Training page in my.yfu.org there is a list of other [policies](#)⁸ developed and adhered to by YFU USA.

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YFU Acronyms

Youth For Understanding employees and volunteers use a wide range of acronyms in daily communications. A more comprehensive list of [YFU acronyms](#)⁹ can be found in the FD Lounge.

AC	Area Coordinator	HF	Host Family
AC	Admissions Counselor	IER	Involuntary Early Return
AL	Alumni Coordinator	IS	International Student
AO	American overseas student	IAC	International Advisory Council
App	Application	NFa	Natural Father
AR	Area Representative	NM	Natural Mother
CDR	Change of Departure Request	NO	National Office
COP	Coordinator of Outreach Programs	NP	Natural Parent
DD	District Director	PDO	Pre-Departure Orientation
DO	District Office	SLEP	Secondary Level English Proficiency
DOC	District Office Coordinator		Test
DCRD	District Coordinator for Recruitment and	Std	Student
	Development	VER	Voluntary Early Return
FD	Field Director	VOL	Volunteer

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Chapter 2: The District and Field

Youth For Understanding in the United States is divided into five districts, each with its own District Office. Each district is responsible for overseeing staff operations, student placement and support in their area. The National Office located in Bethesda, Maryland, supports and oversees the work of the District Offices.

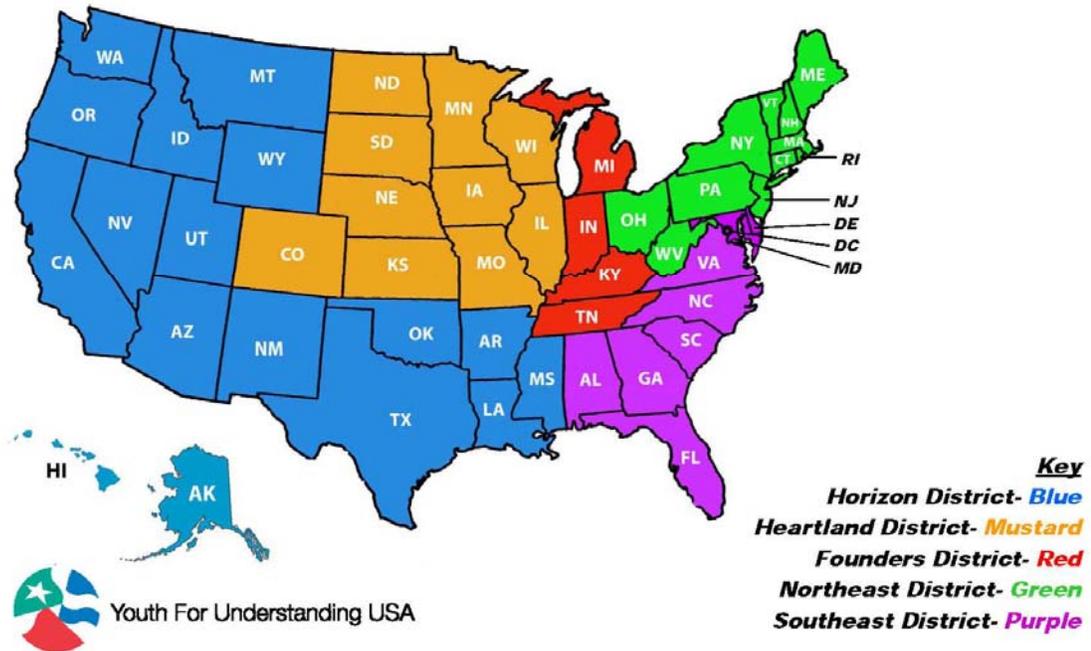
⁶ http://data.memberclicks.com/site/cosfiet/LT_Standards_-_April_2006.pdf

⁷ <http://www.csiet.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=34133&orgId=cosfiet>

⁸ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/publications.htm>

⁹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/YFU_Acronyms.pdf

Map of YFU Districts



In addition to the local numbers listed, a toll-free number, 1.866.4YFU.USA [493.8872] will automatically connect callers with the District Office covering their state. Each Field Director can access his/her district page on my.yfu.org, which lists all staff members and contact information.

Founder's District
 6264 Dixie Highway
 Bridgeport, MI 48722
 989.777.4420
 989.777.3270 fax

Heartland District
 8230 Hickman Road, #300
 Des Moines, IA 50325
 515.276.6301
 515.276.8513 fax

Horizon District
 1355 NW Parkway, Ste 201
 Azle, TX 76020
 817.444.7382
 817.444.1042 fax

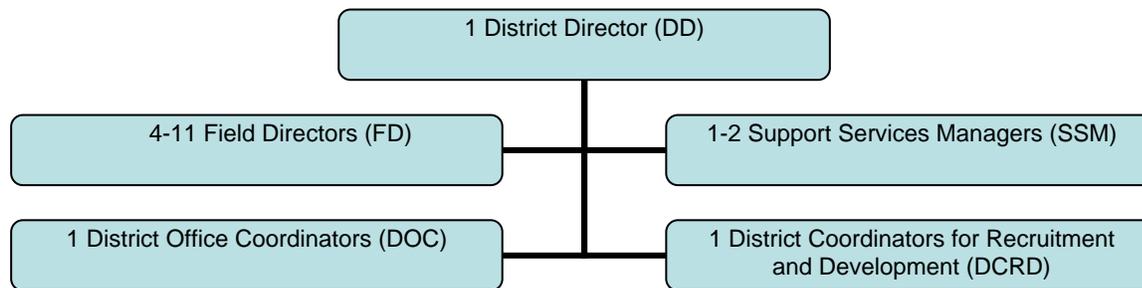
Northeast District
 2380 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 101
 Cambridge, MA 02140
 617.868.3660
 617.868.3774 fax

Southeast District
 6400 Goldsboro Road, Suite 100
 Bethesda, MD 20817
 240.235.2102
 240.235.2115 fax

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District Organizational Chart

Each District includes the following positions:



District Director (DD) – (office based)

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The District Director directs, manages, and generally oversees the program and staff within the district. The District Director designs, implements, and evaluates the delivery of staff training, student and host family support, enrichment programs including orientations, and student placement and host family and volunteer recruitment.

The District Director also oversees volunteer management, budgetary responsibility, YFU partner country relations (when applicable), and personnel management related to the district.

Field Director (FD) – (office and/or home based)

Working closely with the District Director and volunteer Area Coordinators, the Field Director develops and implements plans to achieve volunteer, host family, and American overseas recruitment and development goals as agreed upon with the District Director and detailed in the annual Field Plan.

This position provides planning, management, and administrative oversight to a volunteer team in an assigned geographic field. The volunteers, in turn, deliver a quality program to international students, host families and American students.

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District Office Coordinator (DOC) – (office based)

The District Office Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the efficient operation of administrative and information systems for the district. The District Office Coordinator serves as the point of contact for communication regarding district operations.

This position also assumes responsibility for administrative tasks that directly support volunteers and participants. In some districts, the District Office Coordinator completes data entry of inquiries. Contact your District Office Coordinator to find out how inquiries are entered in your district.

District Coordinator for Recruitment and Development (DCRD) – (office based)

The District Coordinator for Recruitment and Development works with the District Office staff, volunteers and the Field Directors to build a sustainable volunteer base to support both international student (IS) and American overseas (AO) programs.

This includes developing a quality host family pool in the field, and cultivating school relations to expand the YFU presence in the district. In addition, DCRDs should be used as a resource for marketing outreach efforts via newspapers, Public Service Announcements, community events, social networking sites, etc, based on the needs of each field.

The DCRD may also help with securing student placements within schools. The DCRD's role may vary from district to district. Contact your DCRD for details of his or her role in your particular district.

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Support Services Manager (SSM) – (office and/or home based)

The Support Services Manager coordinates support for all participants in a district. The Support Services Manager is the primary contact for volunteers and Field Directors when there is a student and/or host family support issue that needs documentation and may need consultation with the overseas partner office.

The Support Services Manager also serves as the liaison between the District Office and Partner Offices and consults with the Student Support Liaison in the National Office if a support case escalates.

The Support Services Manager makes referrals to the District Counselor whenever necessary.

District Counselor (DC) – (home or professional office based)

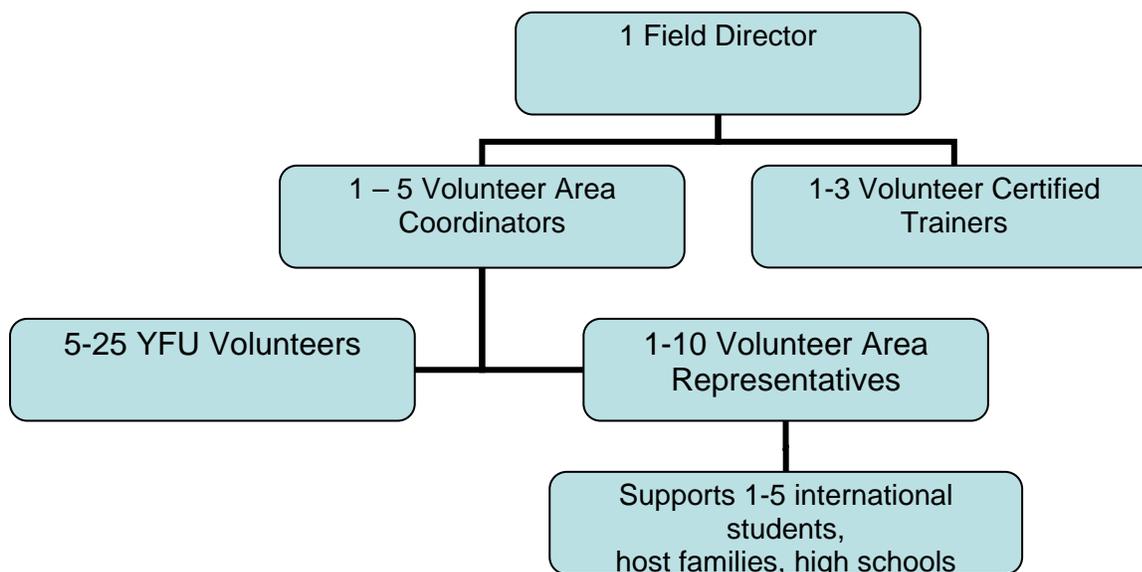
Each district has at least one District Counselor. District Counselors are independent contractors with YFU – not YFU staff members - and are paid on a fee for service basis. A referral for counseling is meant to allow for a clinical assessment, which will add more information toward a plan for the student.

The role of the District Counselor is to provide professional counseling (assessment) support to YFU participants, (usually international students, but potentially host family and natural family members, and others, as well) referred by the Support Services Manager.

The District Counselor is expected to submit a written report, following YFU guidelines, to the Support Services Manager within 72 hours of seeing the participant.

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Field Organizational Chart



In YFU USA's field structure the 'front line' work is completed by volunteers and managed by a Field Director.

Each placement (host family/student/school) is supported by a volunteer Area Representative. While some Area Representatives support a single placement, others support five or more. In some fields, Area Coordinators, who are former Area Representatives, support the work of from one to ten Area Representatives.

The Field Director supports the work of all volunteers working in the field.

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Job Performance and Expectations

Each Field Director's performance expectations are based on the major responsibilities outlined in the [position description](#)¹⁰.

Specifically, the District Director conducts an annual performance review of each Field Director based on his/her development and implementation of plans to achieve volunteer, host family, and American overseas recruitment goals and development needs within their field.

One of the major expectations of the position is that each Field Director will proactively engage both old and new volunteers to play a significant role in the support of international students, and recruitment and support of host families and American overseas students.

Additionally, each year specific expectations are set for international student placement and American overseas student recruitment. Assessing job performance related to expectations is part of the annual performance review process.

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International Student Placement Goals

Each field's international student placement goal is determined in cooperation with the District Director who receives direction from the National Office. USA National Office staff develops

¹⁰ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/FDManual/FD_Position_Description_revised_2007.doc

goals based on the anticipated numbers of inbound students from each of the YFU partner organizations around the world.

The number of students to be placed in a given field depends on historic placement numbers, development plans, and other factors specific to the field that may influence placement possibilities. Once the Field Director and the District Director agree on a goal, it is expected that the Field Director will reach this goal through the successful management of volunteers who will [recruit host families](#)¹¹ year round.

Further, fields may be asked to find families in excess of the pre-determined goal when other areas of the nation experience difficulty in meeting their placement goals. Placement is considered a national team effort: the placement cycle is not complete until every student has a host family.

While the ideal situation is a permanent host family for each arriving international student, conditional, welcome and arrival families constitute placements as well. Field Directors, working with their placing volunteers, are responsible for finding permanent families for students who arrive with temporary (conditional or welcome/arrival) placement status.

Many factors have an impact on a field's ability to meet international student placement goals. Field Directors and placing volunteers must consider a school's willingness to enroll YFU students, the number of students a school is willing to enroll, along with enrollment deadlines that schools in their field may establish.

Strategies for locating host families must be geared toward early recruitment in areas where schools have early deadlines. The Field Director or placing volunteers must maintain contact with school administrators to verify the deadline annually, since Board of Education policies are often updated and an administrative change may also signal a deadline change.

Placing volunteers or the Field Director must also be aware that reaching an administrator in order to secure a signature on a [School Acceptance Form](#)¹² (SAF) during the summer may be difficult or impossible.

Each placement also requires an Area Representative who lives within 120 miles of the student and host family. Field Directors should consider where volunteers will be needed early enough in the placement cycle so the Area Representatives can be recruited if necessary and adequately trained prior to the students' arrival in the US.

See the section below on international students for more information regarding placement of students.

The Field Director may be asked to meet placement benchmarks during the placement cycle. In addition, the Field Director, working with Area Coordinators and Area Representatives, is expected to implement strategies for securing host families so that every student has a placement (host family and school) 96 hours prior to flight time.

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American Overseas Recruitment

YFU is distinguished from most other exchange programs operating in the US by its American overseas (AO) program. YFU offers US teens extraordinary opportunities to study abroad

¹¹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Volunteer_Lounge_HF_Recruitment/host_family_recruitment.htm

¹² http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HF_Application_2008/School_Acceptance_Form.doc

through summer, semester and year programs, many with scholarship funding. American overseas student recruitment is dependent upon all YFU field staff and volunteers making school personnel, families and teens they talk to aware of the opportunity for American teens to go abroad with YFU. YFU international students are also wonderful resources for this type of word of mouth outreach. The YFU USA National Office publicizes the American overseas program through mailings, web advertising and outreach strategies delivered through efforts of staff and volunteers with an American overseas recruitment focus.

Since most school contact for YFU is conducted by field staff and volunteers, it is imperative that the field keep school counselors updated about available scholarships and their deadlines, particularly when making October school contact calls to check on international student first quarter progress. Volunteers often give presentations in area schools about YFU opportunities to go abroad or host international students. Scholarship flyers and host family and American overseas posters can be delivered or sent to the appropriate guidance officers with the request that they be posted in strategic places around the school. Field Directors and volunteers can request promotional materials from the District Office.

The YFU District or National Office can supply volunteers with American overseas brochures and request that they distribute brochures to interested teenagers in their local area. A table or a booth may be set up at a variety of community events, providing print materials as well as an opportunity for individuals to make a personal contact with YFU staff or volunteers. Inquiries resulting from these activities are entered into my.yfu.org for follow-up.

An American student's first encounter with YFU is usually through word of mouth: teachers and other school personnel, current YFU international students or American alumni, or a YFU representative - staff or volunteers. Increasingly, American students also learn about YFU through the internet. Many students contact the Admissions & Registration Department in the National Office with an inquiry. Once an inquiry is entered, the Contact Center makes an initial follow up call before passing the inquiry to the Admissions Counselor with more specific questions or an application.

Although Field Directors do not get notification of an American overseas inquiry, they can monitor American overseas inquiries on my.yfu.org. Normally the inquiry is assigned to a Field Director if the Field Director opened the inquiry and wants to do the follow up.

Annual Field Plan and Calendar of Activities

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Creating an annual [Field Plan](#)¹³ with a calendar of activities can be an extremely helpful means of tracking upcoming events. Working with an experienced volunteer or fellow Field Director to develop such a plan, provides a set of goals and expectations that can be communicated to the volunteer team, host families and students and the District Director. Activities to be included on the Field Plan are orientations, YFU presentations at schools, fairs, etc., recruitment activities, participant trips and social activities, etc. Overall an Annual Field Plan serves as a superb planning tool, keeps your District Director up-to-date on what you are working on and provides valuable information to your volunteer team.

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Field Budget

In November, Field Directors consult with their District Director by phone or in person to begin the budget planning process. In preparation, the Field Director is provided with a budget

¹³ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/FDManual/Sample_Field_Plan.doc

variance from the previous year as well as a 'trends analysis'. Considering expenses from the previous program year as well as development plans for the upcoming year, the Field Director makes budgetary requests in a line-item format.

The District Director is responsible to adjust field budgets so that each field is allocated an appropriate portion of the district budget. The Field Director substantiates each request with a specific plan for activity in each area of the field. In some districts, the Area Coordinators are consulted, as appropriate.

While expenditures from the previous year are evident, the Field Director must anticipate funds that may be required for field development. This may include a substantial amount of travel to areas geographically distant from the Field Director's office location – a potentially significant budget item.

Other cost areas that may be required for field development are lodging and meals for the Field Director, volunteer training events, orientations, advertising and marketing costs, fees for attendance at fairs, and activities for alumni involvement.

Furthermore, the Field Director must consider the anticipated cost of the required orientations for host families and international students, including possible costs for using community facilities, printing and postage, and food, which is sometimes provided by the host families themselves.

Finally, the Field Director should consider appropriate volunteer recognition and training, including field- or district-wide conferences as applicable. Such training conferences incur considerable expense—for lodging, meals and transportation--and must be planned well in advance so that adequate funds can be budgeted.

There are many ways a Field Director can arrange for special recognition of the efforts of volunteers. Some have no cost: public recognition for special efforts and activities, asking a veteran volunteer to mentor a new volunteer, etc., while others have minimal cost: handwritten thank you notes, small gifts, etc.

In some districts, Field Directors receive, each month from the District Director or District Office Coordinator, a copy of the field's monthly financial statements. Each Field Director will receive two statements: the "year-to-date" report (YTD), and the "trend" report. The YTD report will show three important things:

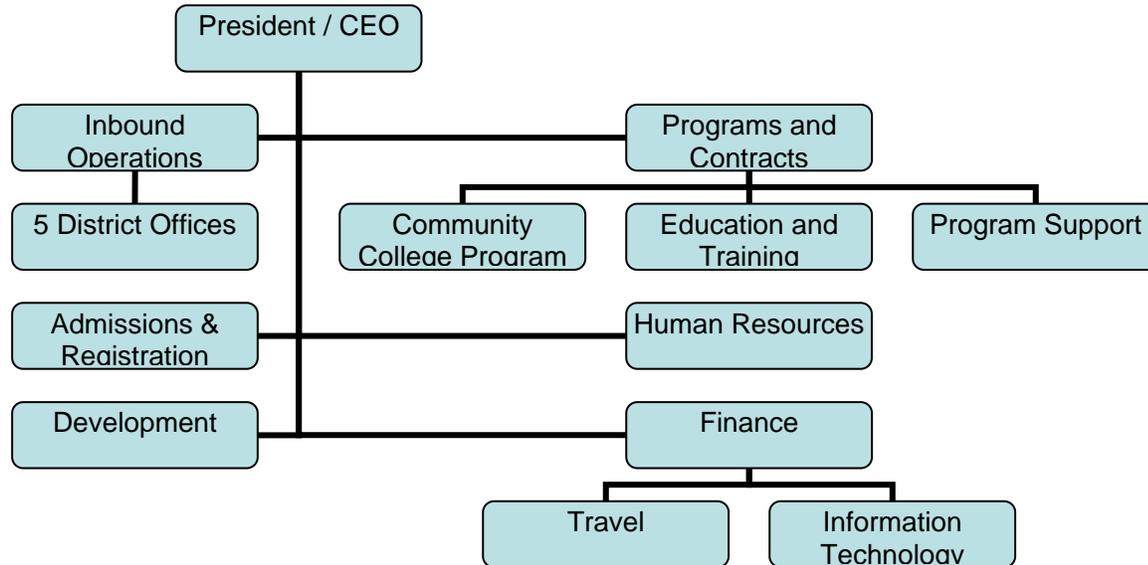
1. The amount of money spent in the field for the month.
2. The variance, or difference, between the money budgeted and spent in the field.
3. The remaining amount of money budgeted to the field for the rest of the year.

The trend report will show how the field has spent money in the current month as compared to prior months. The District Director or District Office Coordinator can assist the Field Director in reading the monthly financial statements. They are a great resource for planning future expenditures as well as planning the budget for the next year.

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Chapter 3: The National Office

National Organizational Chart



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President & Chief Executive Officer

The President reports to the Board of Directors through the Chairman, and as a member of the Board, the President and CEO is responsible for leading and managing the organization in delivering a successful and quality international student exchange organization. The President accepts full responsibility and accountability for total performance consistent with the interests of the Board, YFU Partners, participants, employees and the general public. The key responsibilities of the President's office are:

Planning: Develop the vision for the organization and guide the planning process to set the direction to achieve the vision; and ensures that there is alignment between vision and strategy and the operational goals.

Communications: Serve as the chief spokesperson for the organization. Ensure that all communications channels within, from and to the organization are open and functioning well. Foster positive relations with all stakeholders, including the Board, management, Partners, employees, participants, volunteers, and public bodies.

Board Relations: Work closely with the Chairman to ensure that Board and Committee meetings are focused on the right issues, and that information provided to the Board is timely

and complete in order to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. Participate in Board discussions as a director of the organization.

Developing People: Ensure that the organization continues to improve as a developmental environment by offering challenging assignments, attracting and retaining top quality people in their fields who can both mentor others and to continue to grow themselves and to create a climate where risks may be taken, opportunities seized and organizational learning is practiced. Foster a culture of personal accountability in balance with an acceptance of the importance of teamwork.

Executive Leadership and Succession: Coordinate the efforts of the management team in developing current and long-range objectives, and in their execution and monitoring.

Maintaining Awareness: Continuously collect and analyze information on the current business and economic climate and trends, and on conditions in technologies, programs, and people which may present risk or opportunity to the organization. Ensure that this intelligence is communicated appropriately and influences our short-term behavior and long-term directions. Foster a culture which enables the company to respond to new developments.

Ethics, Values, and Conduct: Set an operational philosophy that meets the highest of ethical standards. Ensure all operations are conducted in harmony with organization values and the Code of Business Conduct, conducted in full compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

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Inbound Operations

The Inbound Operations Department has primary oversight of the YFU USA District Directors and overall responsibility for placement and planning of the inbound student program. This department works directly with the District Directors in executing a successfully strategic volunteer-based program meeting and exceeding set benchmarks and goals. The Inbound Operations Department also leads in the development and execution of a new Field Director Training to ensure that new field staff are fully trained for their responsibilities as a volunteer manager.

Admissions & Registration

The [Admissions & Registration Department](#)¹⁴ coordinates the American overseas application and enrollment process, working with district staff and volunteers to conduct interviews and orientations. Admissions & Registration processes the applications of all international students, coordinates the writing of their profiles, and assigns them evenly among the districts based on nationality, gender, and special conditions.

Admissions & Registration also works with overseas YFU partner offices to resolve all pre-program issues related to American overseas and international students, including completion of files, meeting program regulations, etc.

In addition to these main responsibilities, the Admissions & Registration Department also:

- Answers – 1.800.TEENAGE for all telephone American overseas inquiries

¹⁴ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/index.html>

- Answers admissions@yfu.org for all email American overseas and host family inquiries
- Produces direct mailings and e-mails working toward American overseas and host family recruitment
- Coordinates all national advertising and marketing efforts including online marketing, press releases, radio Public Service Announcements, etc.
- Manages the American overseas scholarship selection process, coordinating with district staff to interview applicants
- Coordinates all international student file processing and profile writing
- Works with YFU partner organizations to update program information, set contracts, etc.

The Admissions & Registration Department also manages the Contact Center, which is responsible for follow-up calls to students, parents, educators and volunteers who express interest in YFU programs. Additionally they produce and distribute the Inquiry monthly newsletter. The Contact Center is divided into two areas of focus: American overseas calls and host family calls.

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Programs and Contracts

The Programs and Contracts Department:

- Issues the annual hosting offer to YFU partner countries, including pricing and admissions criteria,
- Ensures YFU USA programs are in compliance with YFU Basic Standards, US Department of State guidelines, and the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) standards,
- Ensures that host family and volunteer selection procedures, training programs and documentation are in place to insulate YFU from risk,
- Conducts program evaluations with participants,
- Houses the Participant Support Liaison position for YFU USA. The Liaison supports district SSMs by offering case management support, reviewing disciplinary measures, providing liaison with partner organizations and responding to participant complaints.

The Programs and Contracts Department also oversees the Education and Training Department, Support Services Department and the Community College Program.

Education and Training

The [Education and Training](#)¹⁵ Department oversees development and publication of all of YFU's educational and training materials and runs the country-specific orientation programs for American overseas Students.

Specifically, The Education and Training Department develops *Passport to the USA*, the *American overseas Parent Handbook*, the *Host Family Handbook*, the *Volunteer Handbook*, and the *Volunteer Training Manual*.

¹⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/home.html>

The *World Traveler Handbook*, which is distributed to American students traveling overseas, is produced by the International Secretariat.

The Education and Training Department also trains YFU's volunteer Certified Trainers, and develops volunteer training curriculum and orientation curriculum for all participant orientations provided by YFU USA.

All questions and suggestions about volunteer training or orientation materials should be directed to the Education and Training Department.

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The Community College Program (CCP)

The Community College Program, also a sub-department of Programs and Contracts, works with 17 partner community colleges to offer exchange opportunities in the US for young adults. Students from YFU partner countries can pursue English language studies and/or regular academic coursework for a semester, year, or two-year Associate's Degree. They live with American host families or choose a US mentor family/college dormitory combination.

YFU staff work with campus coordinators at each college to provide academic and cultural support. Additionally, US college students can travel to Denmark and earn college credit on two-week programs in agriculture and energy, as well as a semester-study program to study Danish culture, European politics, and views on globalization.

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Program Support

Program Support, a sub-department of Programs and Contracts works closely with YFU USA's eight Support Service Managers and International Partners in more serious case management issues by providing consultation, advice and mediation as needed. Specifically, this department provides support and consultation to Natural Parents when a situation has escalated, processes all early return requests and informs all parties accordingly and keeps records of all voluntary and involuntary returns. This department also investigates and drafts responses on any program complaints, handles unresolved insurance issues, assists in updating the Support Manual, policies, procedures and guidelines, and provides back up on call coverage to all districts 24 hours a day. Alternate Program Officer duties include processing DS 2019's for travel validation; canceling any early return or off program students in SEVIS.

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Finance Department

The [Finance Department](#)¹⁶ oversees YFU's cash and investment management and prepares the annual budget and financial reports for the Directors and YFU USA's Board of Directors.

Additionally, the Finance Department oversees payroll, payables and receivables, and audit compliance. In order to efficiently process financial information, the Finance Department utilizes a number of resources and forms, which are described in more detail below:

Timesheets: YFU employees enter their time daily by visiting <https://timesheet.yfu.org>¹⁷. This site uses the same login credentials as my.yfu.org. Timesheets are submitted to managers by Friday at noon of the two-week pay period. Direct Deposit of Pay forms are available from the

¹⁶ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/index.html>

¹⁷ <https://timesheet.yfu.org>

Human Resources Department. This direct deposit form is only used for payroll. A timesheet [user guide](#)¹⁸ can be found on the Finance Department page on my.yfu.org.

Expense reports (staff and volunteer): Expense Reports are used by employees and volunteers seeking reimbursement for personal expenses incurred while working for YFU. [Employee Expense Reports](#)¹⁹ can be downloaded from the Finance Department webpage on my.yfu.org, where Field Directors can also find [Volunteer Expense Report](#)²⁰ forms. Employees and volunteers complete a separate form for the Finance Department in order to have their Expense Report reimbursements sent by Electronic Funds Transfer (see below).

When completing the Expense Report form, be sure to include the correct activity code and cost center so that the expenses will be connected to your district's budget. The [Chart of Account Information](#)²¹, which includes coding information, can be downloaded from the Finance Department webpage on my.yfu.org and is also found on separate tabs of the expense report form.

All Expense Reports must be signed by the Field Director and District Director. Field Directors should check with their DOC to determine their District's process in the absence of the District Director. Field Directors should coordinate with their District Director regarding how to get approval for volunteer expenses.

Expense Reports must be submitted as original documents with all corresponding receipts. Volunteer expense reports (with appropriate receipts) are submitted to the Field Director; Field Director's expense reports (with appropriate receipts) are submitted directly to the DOC.

If an Expense Report is submitted by Thursday, the intent is that payment will be sent on the next Tuesday. Expense Reports submitted on Friday or Monday will not be processed until the following week. Payment will be in the form of a check that will be sent by mail or an Electronic Funds Transfer (see below).

Electronic Funds Transfers (staff and volunteer): Electronic Funds Transfers allow the Finance Department to make direct deposit of funds into the personal accounts of YFU employees.

In order to set up Electronic Funds Transfers, employees must submit to the Finance Department an original voided check and a completed [Electronic Funds Transfer form](#)²², which can be downloaded from the Finance Department web page on my.yfu.org.

In addition to receiving payments from YFU more quickly, changes made to Electronic Funds Transfer records take effect immediately, while changes to normal payroll records take 2-3 weeks to process.

The Finance Department processes checks on Tuesday and Electronic Funds Transfers are submitted on Wednesdays. Volunteers are also eligible to set up Electronic Funds Transfers by

¹⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Timesite_reference_guide%20for%20Users.doc

¹⁹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/2008%20Employee_Program_Exp_Rep.xls

²⁰ http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/2008%20yfuusavolunteer_exp_rep.xls

²¹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/Chart_Of_Accounts/Master%20Chart%20of%20Accounts.xls

²² [http://my.yfu.org/cgi-](http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.wa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Employee_Electronic_Funds_Transfer_Form.xls)

[bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.wa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Employee_Electronic_Funds_Transfer_Form.xls](http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Employee_Electronic_Funds_Transfer_Form.xls)

completing the [Volunteer Electronic Funds Transfer Form](#)²³ available on the Finance Department's webpage on my.yfu.org.

Airline Advance Reimbursement Request (staff and volunteer): Employees who are traveling for work but do not want to wait to be reimbursed until after completing their travel can submit an [Airline Advance Reimbursement Request](#)²⁴ form which can be downloaded from the Finance Department webpage on my.yfu.org.

Airline Travel must be occurring at least 3 weeks after to the date of submission of the Airline Advance Reimbursement Request form. In order to be approved, this form must also be signed by the District Director. The Airline Advance Reimbursement Request form should be sent to the Finance Department with all original back-up materials.

Field Directors can send the original travel itinerary printed from the internet as back-up for their reimbursement request. After the travel is completed, Field Directors submit an Expense Report with all boarding passes and itineraries included. On the Expense Report Form there is a line to indicate the amount received as an advance.

Check Requests: The check request form is used by YFU employees to set up a direct payment to vendors, schools (for tuition), or host families, when appropriate. [Check request forms](#)²⁵ can be downloaded from the Finance Department web page on my.yfu.org. All back-up documentation in the form of original receipts that show the amount being requested must be included with the check request when submitted. All check requests must be signed by the Field Director and approved by the District Director before being forwarded to the Finance Department.

Inter-Company Account Forms (ICA): ICA forms are used for inter-company transactions between YFU partner organizations throughout the world. These transactions do not generally involve the Field Directors.

This is a service that is offered by the International Secretariat in order to save transaction fees when partner organizations exchange money. For example, if YFU USA is going to pay for an expense related to an international student, an ICA form will be filled out, sent to the partner country of the student where it will be signed by the managing director. The form will then be returned to YFU USA for processing. [ICA forms](#)²⁶ can be downloaded from the Finance Department webpage on my.yfu.org.

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²³ http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Volunteer_Electronic_Funds_Transfer_Form.xls

²⁴ http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Airline_Advance_Reimbursement_Request_Employee.XLS

²⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Checkreqform.xls>

²⁶ http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/ICA_Notification_Form_for_YFU_USA.doc

Travel Department

The YFU USA [Travel Department](#)²⁷ arranges international student travel for many of our partner organizations. Flying students in group flights (designated by a three-digit YFU group flight number unrelated to the *airline* flight number) allows YFU Travel to block seats at a lower cost and provide better management and support of student travel, particularly during the summer months when over 2,600 students are traveling.

YFU Travel provides YFU airport staff at about a dozen international gateway airports. The airport staff meets international arrivals, helps students with domestic connections and re-bookings, and chaperones hotel overnight stays when necessary.

The YFU USA Travel Department offers to book and arrange round-trip group travel for each partner country's students. This travel offer also includes staff assistance in international gateway airports and hotels, and 24-hour on-call telephone assistance.

When the offer to book and arrange travel is accepted by the YFU partner organization, the YFU USA Travel Department takes on the risk and covers all unplanned expenses incurred during travel such as hotel overnights because of flight schedules or inclement weather and issuing new tickets because of delayed flights, etc. It is the decision of each partner country whether or not to use the services offered by the YFU USA Travel Department. For a current list of countries that choose to arrange their own student travel, refer to the [Travel Department Frequently Asked Questions](#)²⁸ in the Volunteer Lounge on my.yfu.org.

Information Technology (IT) Department

The IT Department manages and develops my.yfu.org, yfu-usa.org and database applications, including the AS/400.

In addition to its full-time staff of programmers, the IT Department also uses part-time and full-time consultants to develop software and support older applications.

Employees can offer their suggestions and requests for repairs by submitting a Service Request in my.yfu.org. For more information on how to submit a Service Request, refer to Chapter 9 in this Handbook - my.yfu.org and the AS400.

The IT Department provides support for all applications including PC, network equipment, phone systems and third-party software such as Microsoft Office.

The IT Department provides an e-mail account for all staff and interns. Staff can access e-mail via Outlook or from any computer connected to the Internet at <https://webmail.yfu.org>²⁹. All requests for staff and intern account creation for e-mail, AS/400, and my.yfu.org must come through the HR Department.

All procedures and complete detail about YFU USA's Information Technology Department can be found in the [IT Departmental section of the Wiki](#)³⁰.

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²⁷ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/travel/index.html>

²⁸ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/about/travel_faqs.htm

²⁹ <https://webmail.yfu.org/>

³⁰ <http://jbod/confluence>

Human Resources Department

The [Human Resources Department](#)³¹ is a support resource for staff of YFU USA. All employee personnel records are housed and updated in the HR office.

The HR Department is responsible for the development, implementation, administration, and evaluation of:

- Employment policies, processes, and procedures
- Benefits;
- Compensation administration
- Employee relations
- Performance management
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission compliance and diversity
- Federal and State compliances
- All areas of employment administration including recruitment, retention, and legal matters
- Creation and distribution of the [Employee Policy Handbook](#)³²

Development

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Development activities are currently shared between the President's Office and Admissions.

YFU USA makes an annual fund appeal seeking individual donations, and maintains sponsorships from over 30 companies and foundations. YFU USA seeks to increase corporate funding and pursues government grant opportunities that are consistent with our mission.

YFU USA publishes an annual report, an electronic version of which is available through my.yfu.org.

Field Directors are encouraged to coordinate with the President's Office if they plan to pursue funding opportunities from their local communities. YFU USA relies on alumni, natural parents and volunteers to help initiate contacts, which can provide sponsorship and funding for the organization.

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Chapter 4: Volunteers

Overview

YFU welcomes volunteers who, in addition to demonstrating a willingness to carry out YFU policies and procedures want to learn more about the world, enjoy helping teenagers and families, value developing friendships with like-minded people, excel in problem resolution situations, and want to promote increased intercultural understanding. More than 1000 active volunteers involved in the YFU USA community deliver the YFU program to more than 2000 international students and their host families annually, and select and prepare more than 500 American students for their sojourn abroad. Although the tasks that YFU volunteers perform

³¹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/hr/index.html>

³² http://my.yfu.org/dept/hr/pdf/policy_manual.pdf

vary widely across the country, generally speaking, volunteers identify and select host families, support YFU students and families through orientations and regular contact, promote YFU to the public and provide administrative support to YFU staff.

Position Descriptions

[YFU Volunteers](#)³³ are the key YFU representatives in local areas and provide programming and support for students, families and schools. Volunteer positions and tasks show the many ways volunteers can contribute to YFU. Complete volunteer position descriptions can be found on my.yfu.org or at www.yfu-usa.org. The four basic YFU volunteer positions are:

Special Projects Volunteers perform any one or a variety of tasks, which usually have a defined time commitment.

Area Representatives, with a moderate to high level of time and sustained commitment, place international students with host families; provide support for and problem solving with international students, host families and schools.

Area Coordinators, with a moderate to high level of time and sustained commitment, provide leadership and supervision to volunteers in a specific area. Area Coordinators must be experienced YFU volunteers.

Certified Trainers, with a moderate level of time and sustained commitment, train YFU volunteers. Must be certified by YFU or provide evidence of prior training experience.

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Outreach

Outreach is one of the fundamental tasks of leading a volunteer effort, and also one of the biggest challenges. The goal is to motivate qualified, productive, and enthusiastic people to volunteer for the work one needs to be done. Some fundamentals of outreach are:

- Know what tasks you need to be done before recruiting someone to do them!
- The ability to recruit the best volunteers is directly connected to being specific about what they are being asked to do.
- The goal is to allow people to accurately self-screen themselves by giving details of what it is they can do for YFU in an initial correspondence.

Motivation

Positive inspiration and motivation are keys to why people volunteer, and also why they remain committed over time. While individuals are internally motivated for many different reasons, finding out what each volunteer's motivation is can be vital to keeping them committed.

In fact, sustaining motivation and inspiration is integrated with all other volunteer management activities, especially outreach, work design, supervision, mutual evaluation, training, and recognition. Placing a volunteer in a position that they are suited for both by their skills and the level of commitment they would like to give to YFU is also a key element to maintaining a motivated volunteer force.

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³³ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Volunteer_Position_Descriptions/volunteer_position_descriptions.htm

Recognition

There are two types of volunteer recognition: “formal recognition” meaning events that are planned, institutionalized actions, and “informal recognition” meaning small, everyday gestures to express gratitude. Both are critical to successful volunteer management.

While formal events take a broad brushstroke to thank volunteers more generally and collectively, informal recognition is an action initiated by a Field Director or other staff member that is personal and spontaneous in nature, focusing on the unique characteristics or specific accomplishments of an individual volunteer.

Such informal validations reinforce the vital concept that it is *people*, coming together and sharing their individual strengths, which make for a vibrant and resilient group.

By combining both formal and informal methods of recognition, a Field Director can create a “culture of appreciation” in which volunteers feel respected and valued for their contributions, and have a deeper sense of connection to YFU and its mission. This results in increased retention of volunteers and improved quality of work.

For more materials on creative approaches to informal recognition, refer to [Informal Volunteer Recognition: Creating an Atmosphere of Appreciation](#)³⁴. In setting the field budget, consider what funds might be designated for volunteer recognition.

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Volunteer Training Manual & Volunteer Handbook

The [Volunteer Training Manual](#)³⁵ and [Volunteer Handbook](#)³⁶ are designed to be used together. The *Volunteer Handbook* orients volunteers to YFU by illustrating the company’s organizational structure, providing position descriptions for staff and volunteers and outlining roles and tasks offered to the volunteers.

The *Volunteer Training Manual* complements the Handbook by providing training aimed at specific volunteer duties including guidelines on how to find a host family, how to place an international student and how to support YFU students, host families and schools.

These two handbooks are mailed to every new volunteer once they have become activated. Together they serve as a volunteer’s first resource when questions arise about volunteer work and are good resources for the Field Director, too.

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Volunteer Training

YFU’s online orientation, [Share Your Time - Change Your World!](#)³⁷ is a volunteer’s first training piece, available on the front of my.yfu.org and also on the public website for the general public to learn more about YFU. Completion of this training piece provides new volunteers sufficient knowledge to then work with their field manager to select the roles that they would like to fill as a YFU volunteer. Specific further training then can be offered to help the volunteer succeed in those roles.

³⁴http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Everyone%20Ready/SIGs/Informal%20Volunteer%20Recognition_Creating%20a%20Culture%20of%20Appreciation.pdf

³⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Publications/VTM.pdf>

³⁶ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Publications/VHB.pdf>

³⁷http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Introduction_to_YFU/Introduction_to_YFU/Introduction_to_YFU/player.html

Volunteers must be aware that the training provided by YFU comes in a variety of settings, from having an experienced volunteer accompany him/her on a first host family interview, to large-scale in-person volunteer training events.

YFU volunteer training materials are located on the [Education and Training Department page](#)³⁸ on my.yfu.org. Specifically, housed on this page there are many self-paced training pieces, such as handbooks, guides and policies. There are also training modules to be trained in-person and sometimes over the telephone. Ideally an experienced trainer, such as a YFU volunteer Certified Trainer or someone else who has extensive training background, will facilitate these units. These units range from those that train fundamental support skills to advanced mediation. If there is a training topic that is not listed on this page, the Education and Training Department is able to develop new units as needed.

The approach to volunteer training varies from district to district. While some districts prefer to hold district-wide in-person training events, others prefer field-level training events or conference call trainings. Some districts provide all three types of trainings. The Field Director should consult with the District Director and veteran volunteers to find out how volunteer training is traditionally conducted in a particular district.

Another training resource which is available is a set of volunteer training modules on my.yfu.org in the Volunteer Lounge. These may be accessed and completed by volunteers on an individual basis. These modules are ideal for volunteers who cannot attend a training due to logistics, or for volunteers who prefer to work at their own speed.

All districts have volunteer Certified Trainers who are available to facilitate volunteer training modules at a variety of locations throughout the district. To become a volunteer Certified Trainer, volunteers must attend a special training event conducted by the Education and Training Department. A list of the Certified Trainers in your district may be found on the front page of my.yfu.org. Certified Trainers have committed to conduct a minimum of four training events within a two-year period, meaning they can be a great resource for each field and/or district. Field Directors should find out who their Certified Trainer is and engage them immediately.

Furthermore, for on-going training and support purposes, it is recommended that new volunteers be paired up with an experienced volunteer for mentoring. For example, it is extremely helpful for a new volunteer to conduct his or her first host family interview with a veteran volunteer or possibly an Area Coordinator who is experienced in answering a potential host family's questions, etc. The veteran volunteer can also serve as the new volunteer's first point of contact when he or she has questions.

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Communication with Volunteers

Communication is of central importance to a successful volunteer program, and thus Field Directors must think strategically about the role of communications in regard to motivating, involving and retaining volunteers. Technology makes it a lot easier to communicate with volunteers than in the past.

³⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/volunteer_training.htm

Most YFU volunteers fulfill their assignments away from the close supervision of YFU staff. In fact, the Field Director may rarely see a volunteer once he or she is oriented, trained, and assigned. Because volunteers are widely scattered geographically, from staff and in many cases from each other, ensuring they do not feel isolated from YFU is of paramount importance.

The Field Director must be sure that volunteer tasks are carried out correctly, and that volunteers feel supported and included. No one tool will meet each Field Director's needs for communication with volunteers. Likewise, using all the communication tools available (phone, email, letters, etc.) can lead to information-overload for both sender and recipient. For more information on communications options available for supporting volunteers refer to [Communication is Key: Keep Connected to Volunteers](#)³⁹.

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Chapter 5: International Students

Overview

More than 2000 international students from 50 different countries come to the US each year on a YFU program. Almost all international students arrive in August for an academic year or semester, but others arrive in January for the spring semester program. YFU also coordinates a few special short-term programs such as Windows on America, for Muslim students and the Youth Exchange Program for German students. And YFU offers international students between the ages of 17 and 23 a university-level academic exchange program at community colleges across the United States.

International students apply to and are selected by YFU USA's international partner organizations. Basic selection criteria include age requirements, above average grades, a positive interview and solid English language ability demonstrated by scoring well on the Secondary Level English Proficiency, or SLEP test. In addition to adjusting to the host family's way of life, once selected, international students are expected to abide by YFU Policies and Procedures, attend all orientation events, maintain monthly contact, at minimum, with the volunteer Area Representative and have their own spending money for the duration of the exchange.

Student Files

Each international student has a file, completed during his/her application process, which is received and processed by the Admissions & Registration Department. Staff working on student placement can view the complete student files assigned to their field through a search on my.yfu.org. Volunteers can see only the profile and host family letter in a student file.

Student Profiles

A team of volunteers in the National Office and around the country write a short (one paragraph) profile for each international student. Using information from the international students' files, they highlight the students' personalities, interests and backgrounds. These profiles, which are available to all staff and volunteers, are presented to potential host families as a placement tool. In order to view unplaced students in the field, go to my.yfu.org and search under the 'student'

³⁹http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Everyone%20Ready/SIGs/Communication%20is%20Key_%20Keep%20Connected%20to%20Volunteers.pdf

tab. Field Directors may choose to edit an international student profile in order to add or correct information, based on the student's file. Instructions for editing a student profile can be found in the document [How to Change a Student Profile](#)⁴⁰ in the Field Director Lounge. Some tips on [how to make a profile more compelling](#)⁴¹ are also provided in the Field Director Lounge in my.yfu.org.

Secondary Language English Proficiency (SLEP) Test

Part of the student file is the score on the Secondary Language English Proficiency (SLEP) test, which measures nonnative speakers' listening and reading comprehension abilities. The SLEP, a standardized test that contains multiple-choice questions, is divided into two sections. Section 1 measures the ability to understand spoken English. The questions are based on samples of spoken North American English and test listening comprehension. Section 2 measures the ability to understand written English. Questions cover grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. However, the SLEP test addresses primarily receptive language (listening and reading) and to a lesser extent, speaking or conversational ability. In order to be accepted into a YFU USA program, students must score a minimum of 40 on the SLEP test, on which a score of 50 or higher is considered advanced proficiency. There is more information about the SLEP test on the [Educational Testing Service](#)⁴² website.

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File Assignments to Districts and Fields

YFU USA has found there are certain issues that make students difficult to place with US host families and schools. YFU USA tries to limit the numbers of such students, but does not deny admission based on these factors. Partners are asked to limit the total of any such exceptions to 10% of their total student numbers. Some examples of these issues are allergies, graduated students, dietary restrictions, smokers, or students unable to live with pets.

The Admissions & Registration Department assigns student files to each district by percentage. For example, if a district goal is 27% of all student files, then that district will receive 27% of all Germans, 27% of all Japanese, etc. District's placement percentages can be found through the District Director or District Office Coordinator.

Each district may have a different policy for assignment to fields. Contact your District Director or District Office Coordinator to find out how this is handled in your district.

International students are not swapped between districts unless there is an unusual situation. Swapping student files between fields in the same district is dependent on your district's policy. Contact your District Director or District Office Coordinator for clarification.

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Requirements for Placement

Before an international student placement can be finalized, the District Office must have the following items on file:

⁴⁰ <http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/Documents/ProfileSystemHighlightsandPlacementInformation.doc>

⁴¹ <http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/Documents/AO2006/RewritingHighlights.doc>

⁴² <http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.1488512ecfd5b8849a77b13bc3921509/?vgnextoid=e7d52d3631df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=05bd197a484f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

- [Host Family Application](#)⁴³ signed by the host family or [Renewal Application](#)⁴⁴ signed by a volunteer. The volunteer must have visited the host family home within the past 6 months of the new placement;
- [Host Family Agreement](#)⁴⁵ signed by the host family;
- [Host Family Interview Report](#)⁴⁶ completed by the interviewer after an interview with all family members in the host family home;
- [Two satisfactory references](#)⁴⁷, YFU collects 3 references, one for each of the host parents (or two for the single parent host parent) and one from a relative. These are checked by a volunteer or staff member and can be done on the phone or in person. A placement can be confirmed once two positive references are completed.
- [Criminal Background Check](#)⁴⁸ report reviewed by the District Office Coordinator or District Director. This is required for anyone in the household 18 or older;
- [School Enrollment Form](#)⁴⁹ signed by an authorized school administrator;
- Other documents for special placement considerations (single person placement or double placement);
- An assigned Area Representative living within 120 miles of the host family's home.

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Placement Status

Once a Field Director has students assigned to the field and placement with the prospective host families begins, there are a variety of possible placement statuses:

Hold status can be assigned to a student in my.yfu.org and ensures that a particular student is not placed with another family while one is in the final decision-making process. "Holds" last for 72 hours after which they are automatically cancelled by my.yfu.org. The 72-hour 'hold' period can be extended on a case-by-case basis, if there are special circumstances. If a placement volunteer is seeking a student who has been put on hold, that volunteer should speak with the Field Director who has the student on hold and ask to be 'next in line' for placing that student. There should not be more than 3 students on hold for any one host family. Obtaining verbal or written permission to place a student in the nearby high school is also important, so that a family isn't disappointed if their local school won't enroll a student after all.

Placement pending occurs when the placing volunteer reports that a student has been selected by a host family and accepted by the school. At this point the volunteer must complete all paperwork listed in *Requirements for Placement (above)* and have the paperwork signed and on file in the District Office.

Permanent placement refers to the status of a student file once the student has been selected by a host family, enrolled in a school and the District Office has confirmed that all paperwork is

⁴³ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/Documents/HFApplicaitionForm.pdf>

⁴⁴ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_renew_app.pdf

⁴⁵ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview_agreement.pdf

⁴⁶ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview.pdf

⁴⁷ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview_ref.pdf/

⁴⁸ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/Documents/AO2006/CBCVolHFDDisclosureRelease.pdf>

⁴⁹ [http://my.yfu.org/cgi-](http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/school_enrollment.doc)

[bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/school_enrollment.doc](http://my.yfu.org/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOYFUJava.woa/wa/downloadFile?url=http://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/school_enrollment.doc)

on file. The placement will be communicated to YFU USA's international partner office who will in turn notify the student.

Arrival placement refers to a student placement with a host family that agrees to host for a short time when the student arrives in the United States. Typically, an Arrival placement lasts about 8 weeks, though they sometimes turn into permanent placements if the Arrival family decides that they would like to extend their hosting experience. Arrival placements have all the same paperwork requirements as a permanent placement.

Temporary status placements are typically short, lasting between one day and two weeks and occur when a student already on program needs to move from the previous host family on short notice. Temporary placements do not require a school enrollment due to the short nature of the placement.

Families should never receive enough information to contact a student until 48 hours after the District Office has approved the family and notified the partner office of the placement. The complete student file will be sent to the host family upon confirmation, along with the Host Family Handbook and other pertinent documentation.

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Placement Types and Documentation

Direct Placements: International students with family contacts in the United States have the opportunity to request placement with a specific host family in the US. In order to ensure proper handling within YFU, this request needs to be made in writing in the appropriate section of the international student application. This ensures that the Admissions & Registration Department, the profile writing volunteers, and the District Office all learn early on about the designated host family and can meet with the host family to start the necessary paperwork and ensure school enrollment. According to State Department regulations, international students can not be placed with relatives, so direct placement requests with relatives cannot be honored.

Double Placement (host family, natural family/international student agreement and Department of State approval required): It is possible for a host family to host up to two students at the same time as long as the students come from different countries and speak different native languages. To host two students, host parents request a double placement by signing a [Double Placement Consent](#)⁵⁰ Form double placement consent form on which they will indicate whether the students will have their own rooms or will share a room. After receiving this form, the District Office contacts the YFU offices overseas in order to secure the written consent of the students' natural parents. The natural families and students must sign the [Natural Family & Student Consent Form](#)⁵¹ in order for the placement to move forward. It is good practice to ask the prospective host parents to write a letter to the students and their natural parents giving basic information about the living situation and the family's intention to host two students. This letter can be forwarded along with the Natural Family & Student Consent form in order to allow the student and natural parents to make a more educated decision. These letters significantly improve student and natural parent acceptance of double placements. Once all paperwork is completed and both students and natural families agree to the double placement, all paperwork is submitted by the National Office to be passed on to the appropriate officer at the Department of State for approval. Placing two students—even for one day—without proper double placement paperwork is a violation of State Department rules and regulations.

⁵⁰ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HF_Application_2008/Double_Placement_Consent_HF.pdf

⁵¹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HF_Application_2008/Double_Placement_Consent_NP.S.pdf

Single Person Placement: A host family with only one person in the household is known as a Single Person Placement. Such a placement generally consists of a single adult with a strong involvement in coaching or teaching teenagers in school. Single Person Placements require YFU to ensure that the single person has strong family ties and support in the community, as well as a strong level of support from YFU due to the nature of the host family set-up. YFU strongly recommends that single persons always host a double placement to keep a student from feeling isolated. As with a Double Placement, the student and natural parents must agree to the Single Person Placement in writing prior to the student placement. Your DOC will send to the student's home country forms necessary to complete this type of placement. It is good practice to ask the prospective host parent to write a letter to the student(s) and their natural parents giving basic information about the living situation and their intention to host a student along with the consent form to be signed by natural parents/student. The letter is then forwarded through the District Office to the YFU partner overseas. The additional information about the placement will enable the student to make a more informed decision about the placement. These letters significantly improve student and natural parent acceptance of single person placements.

Domestic Partners: In the case of domestic partners, there is varying acceptance in different communities or cultures of persons "living together" in a committed relationship (whether the couple is opposite sex or same sex). Even within one country, such partnerships may violate community norms and a student placed in such a situation might be ostracized in the community. Refer to the [Host Family Selection and Placement Criteria](#)⁵² for details on placement requirements with domestic partners. If a same sex couple has been in a committed relationship for several years they may be accepted as a host family, each individual circumstance should be decided case by case and discussed with the District Director. Same sex couples may host but prior consent from the student and natural parents must be obtained in writing. This request must go thru the District Office. It is good practice to ask the prospective host parents to write a letter to the student(s) and their natural parents giving basic information about the living situation and their intention to host a student. The letter is then forwarded through the District Office to the YFU partner overseas along with the consent form to be signed by natural parents/student. The additional information about the placement will enable the student to make a more educated decision about the placement. These letters significantly improve student and natural parent acceptance.

Placement with Relatives: Placement with relatives is prohibited under US Department of State guidelines. This prohibition is for any degree of relationship, however distant. The position of the US government is that such placements are not in keeping with the foreign policy and mutual cultural exchange aims of the J-1 visa program, and that such placements should utilize F-1 visas through the school and pay school tuition. This is to guard the youth exchange program from being utilized as a means for families in the US to educate their foreign relatives at taxpayer expense.

Placement in non-English speaking family: Among other reasons, international students come to the US to become proficient in English. Given this, a host family must speak English in the home while hosting.

Placement with non-US citizens: To give the international student an "American" experience, the host family needs to have lived in the U.S. for several years to ensure that they can give the student the cultural experience they came to the US to experience.

⁵² <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Host%20Family%20Selection%20and%20Placement%20Criteria-2007.doc>

Special Placements: Some host families are nontraditional in the sense that they are disabled, have a different lifestyle, or are perhaps a very young couple. In these types of cases, collecting as many details as possible and consulting with the District Director about whether or not the placement will be appropriate is a good course of action. See Chapter 6 to learn more about non-traditional families.

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Orientations

Pre-Arrival Orientation: The Pre-Arrival Orientation is conducted for host families and occurs in the months and weeks before the students' arrival. See the chapter 6, about host families, for more information about Pre-Arrival orientations. Please note that per CSIET standards, this orientation may not be combined with the host family interview and cannot occur on the same date.

Post Arrival Orientation: The Post-Arrival Orientation occurs within two months of a student's arrival and offers students and host families the opportunity come together to discuss mutual issues and concerns, share their experiences so far, and learn more about maximizing their experiences together. The orientation is also an opportunity for people to get to know one another and meet YFU representatives. Students will discuss the adjustment process, the YFU support network, and cultural differences and frustrations. Refer to the Education and Training [Post Arrival Orientation](#)⁵³ page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation. This orientation is mandated by YFU Basic Standards, as well as CSIET and US Department of State regulations.

Midyear Orientation: Occurring in January, the Midyear Orientation provides additional support to students at the midpoint of their exchange experience. It also serves as a "maintenance check" for any issues that may need to be addressed to assist the student in learning skills to continue a successful experience. The Midyear Orientation gives these students an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about their exchange. Finally, the orientation allows students to examine their experience thus far, identify concerns, and set realistic goals for the time remaining. Refer to the Education and Training [Midyear Orientation](#)⁵⁴ page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation. This orientation is part of the YFU basic standards, though it is not mandated by the US Department of State. Thus all international students should be invited to a Midyear Orientation. If they decline the invitation, *we do not need to conduct a conference call or in-person make-up session.* Simply maintain the student's RSVP declining the orientation.

Re-Entry Orientation: The Re-Entry Orientation is held in May before students return to their home countries in order to give students a chance to look at what they have learned during their exchange experience, plan how to draw the experience to a close, and anticipate some of the adjustments that they will need to make when returning home. Refer to the Education and Training [International Student Re-Entry Orientation](#)⁵⁵ page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation. This orientation is part of the YFU basic standards, though it is not mandated by the US Department of State. Thus all international students should be invited to a Re-Entry orientation. If they decline the invitation, *we do not need to conduct a conference call or in-person session.* Simply maintain their RSVP declining the orientation and *follow up with written information by mail or email to the student.*

⁵³ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/PostArrival/PostArrival.htm>

⁵⁴ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/Midyear/midyear.htm>

⁵⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/Re-Entry/Re-Entry.htm>

Change Date of Return

Students may change their departure date by submitting a Change Date of Return request (CDR) prior to returning to their home countries at the conclusion of their exchange experience. Students from some countries are not allowed by the YFU organization in their home country to change their date of departure. Students may request to return home on a different date or from a different airport. Date changes may not fall outside of the student's valid visa, and they must be approved by the natural parents, host family, home country and hosting YFU office. Additionally, the return date may not be later than 30 days past the official program end-date. The YFU USA Travel Department generally accommodates requests for individual travel changes, but must charge a fee for this service due to the additional administrative labor involved. Information on how to submit a Change Date of Return request and the associated fees is mailed to students along with information about their group flight return date.

For June returns, Change Date of Return information is mailed to students/Natural Parents in January. The first deadline to submit requests is April 1, and then the fee goes up, with a final deadline of May 1. For winter returns, the Change Date of Return information is mailed in October and the deadline to submit requests is December 1. More details about a Change Date of Return are in the YFU USA [Travel Department Frequently Asked Questions](#)⁵⁶ document in the Volunteer Lounge of my.yfu.org.

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Insurance

YFU USA is required to ensure that students are covered with medical, accident and personal liability insurance. It is important to note that this insurance does not cover pre-existing conditions, immunizations or physical exams (such as might be required by schools for students to participate in sports). YFU USA purchases a plan for the majority of international students, though some partner organizations self-insure their students. Shortly after arriving in the US students are mailed an insurance packet by the National Office that includes an insurance card with policy number, a handbook, a claim form, a summary of benefits, and an identification card. If students change host families, they should bring all insurance documents with them. In the case of a host family change, a new insurance card is not needed. If a Field Director learns of a student who is having trouble with a claim, the Support Services Manager should be contacted to help resolve the problem. Students, host families and staff can get more insurance information through the [YFU insurance page](#)⁵⁷, which is accessible on the main page of yfu-usa.org or through the Host Family Lounge in my.yfu.org. If a student loses their insurance card, new cards can be printed through the YFU insurance page.

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YFU Student Identification Cards

Shortly after their arrival in the US, YFU USA provides each international student with a YFU student identification (ID) card. ID cards are mailed to students along with their insurance information and materials. When a student changes host families or the host family changes address, a new ID card is generated and mailed from the National Office. If a student loses their ID card, the Field Director can request a re-print from the student's record in my.yfu.org.

⁵⁶ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/about/travel_faq.htm

⁵⁷ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Insurance/Insurance_Main_Page.htm

Monthly Contact Reports

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Monthly contact with international students and host families, at minimum, must be maintained by the Area Representatives or staff member of YFU USA. This contact may be implemented by telephone, a visit to the home, or personal contact at a gathering. Email correspondence does not fulfill the monthly contact requirement. The contact must be interactive! The monthly contact must include separate contact with the student and the host family in order to provide each with the opportunity to discuss issues that might not be raised in the presence of the other. Once contact has been made, a monthly contact report must be completed in order to document the conversation. The monthly contact report should be completed and submitted electronically on my.yfu.org. The [How to Complete a Contact Report](#)⁵⁸ document explains how to complete the report.

Every month [my.yfu.org](#) will automatically email all Field Directors a report detailing which students have not received contact that month. It is the Field Director's responsibility to support the volunteers' efforts to contact students and host families and to complete the contact reports.

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Academic Standards

International students are placed in an appropriate grade level based on their previous course work, English language ability, age and school policies. The policy of YFU USA is that YFU students must maintain an overall "C" average or better in academic classes. Students will receive a warning and/or probation letter from the Support Services Manager concerning school performance if, after an initial period of linguistic and/or academic adjustment, the student is not achieving adequate results (at least an overall "C" grade in academic subjects). There is a difference between students who are doing poorly but trying and those who are doing poorly and not trying. Teachers may agree to offer the student a Pass/Fail grade as well.

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Language Support

International students arrive in the US with varying levels of English. While nearly all international students struggle with language at first, most will quickly improve. Some students with weak language skills may need additional help. Initial communication problems can be influenced by many factors including being very tired due to time spent traveling to the host family, culture shock, shyness, new surroundings, personality and cultural differences. Unless the need is extremely clear, give the student at least two weeks to settle in before seeking additional language help. In cases where such help is needed, YFU offers students and host families a number of language support options. In some cases, the Support Services Manager and Area Representative may be able to find free resources in the community to help the student such as ESL classes (English as a Second Language) at school. If free resources are not available, the Support Services Manager will choose from one of the three available language support options outlined in the [Tutoring Guidelines and Procedures](#)⁵⁹:

- A language tutor
- [The Oxford Picture Dictionary and Teacher's Book](#)⁶⁰
- The Rosetta Stone Online Language Program

⁵⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Volunteer_User_Manual_for_the_Contact_Survey_System.pdf

⁵⁹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Tutoring/Tutoring_Guidelines.pdf

⁶⁰ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Tutoring/Oxford_Picture_Dictionary_Welcome_Packet.pdf

Policies and Procedures

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These documents can also be found in the Field Director Lounge:

- [YFU USA Policies and Procedures⁶¹](#); This document can also be found on the back page of the Host Family Agreement.
- [Passport to the USA student handbook⁶²](#)
- [Computer/Internet policies for IS students⁶³](#)
- [Cell phone policies for IS students⁶⁴](#)
- [Permission to Travel⁶⁵](#)
- [Dangerous Activities⁶⁶](#)
- [International Student Trip Policy⁶⁷](#)

Passport and DS-2019 Form

Students will have their passports and visas with them when they arrive at their host families' homes. In addition to a passport, the DS-2019 form (along with the I-94 Departure Record), must be kept in the passport at all times. If a student loses their passport or DS-2019 while in the US, they should report this to the Support Services Manager. More information and a sample DS2019 Form can be found in the [Student Support Manual](#).

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Support

The purpose of the YFU USA Support System is to anticipate and respond to the needs of YFU USA participants and the organization in the area of on-program support. This is done by developing and maintaining qualitative systems and procedures through consultation, education and monitoring. The US Field Support System is specific to the United States; other partner countries have set up their support system differently, though all systems adhere to YFU Basic Standards.

YFU USA makes the assumption that being an exchange student is challenging, and that the experience includes high and low points. Failure in some aspect(s) is considered inherent in the process. Obstacles (which provide the depth of the experience) can and will usually be overcome. The structure of the support system is one of checks and balances so that consistency and quality can be maintained. Following is a list of all participants in the YFU USA Support Structure

Student: the program participant who is known personally by all parts of the system is the most readily accessible cultural expert from his/her country.

⁶¹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/YFU_USA_Policies_and_Procedures.pdf

⁶² <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Passport/Passport-to-US.pdf>

⁶³ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/Internet_Safety_Guidelines.pdf

⁶⁴ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/Cell_Phone_Guidelines.pdf

⁶⁵ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/Permission_to_Travel.pdf

⁶⁶ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/Dangerous_Activites_Form.pdf

⁶⁷ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Policies/YFUTripPolicy.pdf>

Host Family: the first source of support for the student, in most cases.

Area Representative (AR): the primary support person for the student, family and school who maintains regular contact with each “client” and acts as a “go-between” or third party helper for students and host families to help them resolve differences.

Area Representatives are the first ones to identify and define the problem and as such have more “power” than they sometimes think. The Support Services Manager communicates the problem as identified and defined by the Field Director, Area Coordinator, and/or Area Representative to the overseas National Office.

Students sometimes believe that the Area Representative and host family are close friends. While this is usually an inaccurate perception, the Area Representative and host family often share commonalities (as stated above) which can make the student feel powerless. It is important that the Area Rep is aware of this perception and acts in such a way to alleviate these concerns.

School Counselor: although a major support for the student, a counselor should not be the first person students turn to with host family or program issues; the Area Rep should be the primary support person for the student, host family and school. An Area Rep, Area Coordinator or Field Director must maintain at minimum quarterly contact with the school either in person or by phone.

Area Coordinator: also a volunteer, the Area Coordinator serves as a consultant and primary contact for other volunteers on issues of support for students and host families.

Field Director (FD): may receive reports of support issues with students/host families/schools from an Area Rep. All information should be reported to the Support Services Manager to inform the overseas National Office and to manage the case according to support guidelines/structure.

Support Services Manager (SSM): The Area Rep should be encouraged to contact the Support Services Manager directly to report any student or host family issues. The Support Services Manager coordinates the support activities for all participants in a District. Working out of a district office or home office, the Support Services Manager is the primary contact for the Area Rep and Field Director. This position is the support liaison between the district office and the Partner Office and consults with the Student Support Liaison in the Programs and Contracts Department as necessary. The Support Services Manager also makes referrals to the District Counselor.

Student Support Liaison (located in the National Office): consults with district and national office staff regarding student problems and helps to identify causes and develop courses of action. All cases involving legal issues of a student or hospital admission of a student must be reported to the Participant Support Liaison. All early returns are also processed through the Participant Support Liaison. All involuntary early return decisions are made by the President of YFU USA. No other volunteer or staff person has the authority to send a student home.

District Counselor (DC): licensed mental health professionals who provide a professional assessment and problem solving assistance for students who are experiencing difficulties that do not resolve themselves easily and/or are clinical in nature. When logistically possible, the District Counselor may also meet with the host family, as well as with the student. Each district has several District Counselors retained on a fee-for-service basis. A visit to the District

Counselor could be a day or two in duration. The District Counselor communicates a recommendation to the Support Services Manager who works with the Partner Office, Field Director and the volunteer to plan the next steps with the student and host family. District Counselors and volunteers should not have direct contact unless approved by the Support Services Manager.

Culturally, Americans often depend on specialists, especially with psychological problems. Other cultures may depend on family members when dealing with a situation of a psychological nature, or feel that an individual has to be “crazy” to need professional help.

The District Counselor’s assessment helps the Support Services Manager to differentiate between cross-cultural issues and serious psychological problems.

National Office/Natural Parents: are an important, and not to be forgotten part of the support system. Both the office and natural parents can provide background and additional information regarding the student’s perspective. The natural parents may be able to influence their son/daughter should behavioral changes be necessary. Early involvement of the overseas Partner Office/Natural Parents is essential so that they fully understand the evolution of the situation and are better able to support any decisions which YFU USA may make. The overseas National Office usually knows their students personally from either the application process or orientation. Many offices keep notes about the student that can be very helpful by providing background information on the student’s personality.

After Hours Support

After hours, the district office telephone-recording machine provides the name and number of a district staff person who can be called directly when there is an emergency. In addition, the YFU USA office toll-free number (800.424.3691) should be given as an alternative if the district or field staff person cannot be reached within the hour. In order to get in touch with the person on-call after business hours, call the regular YFU USA number (800.424.3691). Follow the instructions to reach the answering service. Identify yourself as a YFU staff member and say, “I have a counseling emergency that cannot wait until regular business hours”.

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Replacement

Matching students and host families is not an exact science, and it is not unusual for some students to change host families during the course of the program. Replacements can be easy or difficult depending on what resources the district has, the needs of the student, and the needs of the YFU community. Throughout the cycle, host families should be recruited for students who need replacement. In this way, replacement will be easier because the resources have been identified ahead of time. Replacement is difficult when: 1) there are limited resources; 2) the student’s needs are unrealistic, and/or; 3) the YFU community (either the former host family, the volunteer, or the school) is requesting that the student be removed from the community. Details outlining the procedures for replacement are in the [Student Support Manual](#)⁶⁸.

YFU’s first priority when approaching a replacement case is to assess and quickly react to any situation that might jeopardize the student’s safety. In the case of a very serious support issue such as an inappropriate environment, mental or physical issues, abuse, natural disasters or death of a family member, a student may need to be moved from a host family immediately.

⁶⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/FDManual/Student_Support_Manual_revised_2007.doc

Though placing a student in a home where there is already an exchange student may be a violation of guidelines, since it can be seen as an “illegal” double placement, it may be necessary in an emergency to ensure that the student goes to a screened home. More information about serious support issues can be found in the “Communication Guidelines in Student Support” and “Replacement” sections of the [Volunteer Training Manual](#)⁶⁹.

The Area Representative will likely have the first indication of an issue while making a required monthly contact report with the student and host family. The Area Representative should follow the “Guidelines for Support Issues” in the Volunteer Training Manual and contact the Area Coordinator, Field Director or Support Services Manager. Area Coordinators or Field Directors who learn of a possible replacement issue should contact the Support Services Manager.

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Warning and Probation Letters

YFU support procedures involve an extensive system that includes the host family, host community, the YFU organization and the natural family in the home country. Student-related policies will always need to be carried out with some flexibility, plus mature and reasonable judgment that considers the circumstances of the individual case. For this reason, YFU USA has provisions for warning and probation letters to be issued to students by the Support Services Manager, as interventions and a means for students, host families, volunteers, overseas National Offices, and natural parents to clearly understand the issues and what changes need to occur for the student to remain on the program.

Warning and probation letters offer a way in which issues can be explained and expectations clearly stated. In addition, the letter provides necessary documentation should the case become more serious and early return be recommended.

A warning letter is written to those students who are having chronic adjustment problems and/or the policy violation is such that a warning letter is more appropriate than probation (i.e., unsubstantiated reports/alleged alcohol use, a plan to travel before getting district permission, etc.). The consequences of continued problems could be probationary status and/or recommendation for early return.

Probation letters are given to those students who are at risk of being involuntarily early returned. The probation letter is similar to the warning letter except the consequence of continued problems of the same nature will most likely result in the student’s early return.

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Early Return

It is the intent of YFU USA, that each student who is selected, orientated and arrives in the host country should be able to remain on program for the duration of his/her scheduled program. The goal of YFU USA is to support students, in a timely manner, to overcome the inevitable obstacles of cross-cultural adjustment. However, a small percentage of students will return early.

A **Voluntary Early Return** is when the student makes a decision to return home before the program is finished. Permission from the student’s natural parents for this decision is mandatory. Voluntary early return may occur for a number of reasons. Some examples are

⁶⁹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Publications/VTM.pdf>

unmet expectations, homesickness, inability to adjust, a natural family illness, financial problems, school entrance in home country, military service or medical problems.

An **Involuntary Early Return** occurs when YFU makes the decision to end a student's program participation. Involuntary early return decisions may be made due to YFU policy violations, serious, unresolved emotional problems, serious and chronic behavior problems which make the student unsuited for the family-living, school-based exchange experience or lack of motivation.

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Students who go “Off Program”

If a student is absent without permission from the host family or other place to which YFU has assigned him or her, YFU may determine that this student has removed him or herself from the YFU program. If a student goes Off Program, the student's US high school will be notified that he or she is no longer a YFU student, and the US Department of State will be notified of the termination of the student's YFU program participation. The validity of the student's visa is linked to being on program; therefore, the visa is no longer valid if the student chooses to go Off Program. YFU will, if possible, work with the student to again accept YFU supervision. However, if this cannot be done, the separation from the YFU program is final. The student will then lose YFU support and his/her ticket to the home country where applicable.

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Chapter 6: Host Families

Overview

YFU selects more than 2000 families each year to host our international students. These are American families who volunteer (they are not paid) to welcome a new teenager into their homes and welcome them into their families.

CSIET, State Department and YFU International Basic Standards

There are established guidelines that YFU USA must adhere to when recruiting host families. YFU volunteers and staff may not publicize the need for host families via any public media that are not sufficiently in advance of the student's arrival, appeal to public pity or guilt, imply that a student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately, identify photos of individual students and include an appeal for an immediate family.

It is permissible 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 is not permissible to identify that specific student as needing a home; nor is it permissible to refer to a student's athletic ability or accomplishments. 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...

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Definition of a Host Family

The definition of 'family' is multifaceted and varied. Every YFU partner country has households with the same variations which are found in the US. While the usual host family configuration is

a married couple, with or without children, less common configurations include single individuals and opposite or same-sex couples. The family must be a stable unit, prepared to provide an emotionally supportive environment to the exchange student as he or she goes through his/her adjustment process. The family must be financially able to provide for an additional member including three meals per day and the physical accommodations so that the student has his/her own bed.

Single Person

The YFU USA Host Family Selection Criteria excludes single adults living alone or unrelated, unmarried partners in a committed relationship. This is the stated YFU policy. For years, many National Committees have urged YFU USA not to place students with single persons, as that does not meet the natural families' expectations of what the host family experience should be; American families have also expressed similar concerns for the placement of their children overseas.

The policy outlined in the [Host Family Selection and Placement Criteria](#)⁷⁰, responds to the concern expressed by so many that each student be able to join a family unit. A single person placement generally consists of a single adult with a strong involvement in coaching or teaching teenagers in school. Single Person Placements require a strong level of support from YFU due to the nature of the host family set-up. The student and natural parents must agree to the Single Person Placement in writing prior to the student placement. It is good practice to ask the prospective host parent to write a letter to the student(s) and their natural parents giving basic information about the living situation and their intention to host a student. The letter is then forwarded through the District Office to the YFU partner overseas along with the consent form to be signed by the natural parents/student. The additional information about the placement will enable the student to make a more educated decision about the placement. These letters significantly improve student and natural parent acceptance of single person placements.

Domestic Partners

In the case of domestic partners, there is varying acceptance in different communities or cultures of persons "living together" in a committed relationship (whether the couple is opposite sex or same sex). Even within one country, such partnerships may violate community norms and a student placed in such a situation might be ostracized in the community. Refer to the [Host Family Selection and Placement Criteria](#)⁷¹ for details on placement requirements with domestic partners.

If a same sex couple has been in a committed relationship for several years they may be considered as a host family, although each individual circumstance should be decided case by case and discussed with the District Director. Same sex couples may host but prior consent from the student and natural parents must be obtained in writing. This request must go thru the District Office. It is good practice to ask the prospective host parents to write a letter to the student(s) and their natural parents giving basic information about the living situation and their intention to host a student. The letter is then forwarded through the District Office to the YFU partner overseas along with the consent form to be signed by the natural parents/student. The additional information about the placement will enable the student to make a more educated decision about the placement. These letters significantly improve student and natural parent acceptance. Many cultural differences come into play with domestic partner placements. In

⁷⁰ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Host%20Family%20Selection%20and%20Placement%20Criteria-2007.doc>

⁷¹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/Host%20Family%20Selection%20and%20Placement%20Criteria-2007.doc>

some cultures, it is not acceptable to be placed in a single-person home or same-sex family. Check with your District Office Coordinator on the countries that are most accepting of such placements.

Immigrant Families

Many YFU international students come to the US expecting to perfect their English language skills and expecting a stereotypical, American host family experience. However, the United States of America continues to be a country of immigrants and children of immigrants. Some recent immigrants are interested in hosting. But very recent immigrants may have difficulties hosting because they themselves are still adjusting to learning the English language and adapting to US mainstream culture.

YFU has set up guidelines, which allow recent immigrant families to host. While assuring that YFU students get to experience US culture, we are mindful that US culture varies based on individual family backgrounds (e.g., families of Italian or Jewish heritage will offer students very different, yet still "American" family experiences). Refer to the Host Family Selection and Placement Criteria for details on placement requirements with immigrant families.

Age parameters for host families

There is not a set age for a family to be able to host although 25 years of age is the minimum age most commonly thought of throughout the YFU world. Host parents need to be mature enough to be a parent to an exchange student and not a "friend". This should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Ask your District Director or District Office Coordinator regarding the age policy in your district.

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Electronic Resources for Recruitment

There are dozens of ways that volunteers are harnessing the internet as a host family recruitment tool. There are [instructions and tips](#)⁷² in the Field Director Lounge on my.yfu.org regarding the use of such sites as [MySpace.com](#)⁷³, [MeetUp.com](#)⁷⁴, [Yahoo Groups](#)⁷⁵, [YouTube](#)⁷⁶, Facebook, Flickr, Ning, etc.

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Marketing Materials and Recruitment Resources

The Admissions & Registration Department creates and provides to the District Offices various pieces of marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, pamphlets and Power Point presentations. In the [Field Director Lounge](#)⁷⁷ on my.yfu.org there are copies of these marketing pieces as well as information on how to use a press release, and how to submit a public service announcement to a local radio or television station.

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Bubble Sheets

Bubble sheets are an effective way to promote students to the public and allow potential host families and volunteers the opportunity to get a more personal look at our exchange students. By exhibiting a profile picture and a brief description of the student, we are inviting the onlooker to begin to relate to our students. Photographs tend to draw people in and hold their interest as

⁷² <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/FDLounge/RRHF1.htm>

⁷³ http://www.myspace.com/yfu_usa

⁷⁴ <http://bookcrossing.meetup.com/81/boards/view/viewthread?thread=3208466>

⁷⁵ <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/YFUCentralOhio/>

⁷⁶ http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%22youth+for+understanding%22&search=Search

⁷⁷ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/FDLounge/index.htm>

they look over the differences among the students. Certain comments will spark the readers' interest as they begin to find commonalities and differences between the students. Bubble sheets encourage people to think about the possibility of working in partnership with YFU. It gives them the chance to come up with questions about international exchange, our organization, and the opportunities that we offer. Sample bubble sheets can be found on my.yfu.org.

Content

Bubble sheets attract people by using information that is retrieved from international student applications. This information focuses on aspects of the student that would be appealing to a potential host family. This includes a pleasant picture of the student, age, country of origin, descriptions of the activities that they currently pursue, and comments on what they would like to do in the US.

How do I utilize them?

Bubble sheets can be used in different ways. When a family is interested in hosting or a community group/organization is willing to forward an e-mail, it is very important to promote YFU students' profiles. Since some people cannot see profiles pasted directly into the body of an e-mail, it is always a good idea to attach a bubble sheet so they can open the PDF.

In addition to distributing bubble sheets via e-mail, they can also be useful as hard copies. It is always a good idea to display bubble sheets at a community event, an orientation at a public library, etc. Again, seeing the students' names and faces helps people connect more quickly to the idea of hosting.

Depending on what district your field is in, there may also be bulk mailings to current and/or former host families, current and/or former American overseas families and students, schools, etc. These mailings are usually not the Field Director's responsibility but it is helpful to know that these bubble sheets are getting sent out on a district level.

Internally Generated Bubble Sheets

These sheets are generated from my.yfu.org. In my.yfu.org there is a bookmarking system that allows you to select (and unselect) certain students. When there is a host family that would like to see profiles of Spanish-speaking girls who like sports, you can bookmark the students. Then you go to Profiles and scroll down to "Printable profiles." At this point, you will want to "Generate document for public use." Now you will have created your bubble sheet which will be available as a PDF in my.yfu.org. You can then save this sheet or take "snap shots" of individual profiles to create an externally generated bubble sheet. Another way to create bubble sheets is by navigating to the unplaced students' page on my.yfu.org. When in the "Profile" tab, click on "Printable Profiles" (found directly under the word Profile). Then click on "generate document for public use" and you will have created a bubble sheet.

Externally Generated Bubble Sheets

Once you have created a bubble sheet from my.yfu.org, you can cut and paste from the PDF to make your own. This gives you a bit more freedom to decide how the information is presented and allows you to pick and choose the content of the student profile that you will be sharing with the public. When displaying this information, we are focusing on the positive qualities of the students. Information that may be misconstrued or taken out of context should not be included in the profile. We are allowed to share general information about the student. However, there are certain restrictions regarding the personal information that we can share with the general public. YFU has these restrictions on content in order to protect our students from unsolicited communication.

1. YFU will not share the last name of a student.
2. YFU will not share the hometown of the student.
3. YFU will not include specific information about activities. Ex. "I am part of the boy scout troop 1004B."

By following these guidelines, YFU maintains a level of respect and confidentiality for the individual students while introducing them to interested families in the US.

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Phone Calls: An Overview

Throughout the placement cycle and host family recruitment process, Field Directors will inevitably spend a great deal of time on the phone with potential families, leads, volunteers, etc., to get host families on board. Each Field Director has his/her own style and approach and it will take some time to discover what works best. It is always a good idea to listen in on a 3-way call with an experienced Field Director to hear how they respond to questions, steer the conversation, provide information, etc. Ask a Field Director who you think might have a style you like and they will most likely be happy to have you be a silent participant on a call.

In a sense, these are sales calls; we want to sell our students and program. On the other hand, what we are selling is an amazing experience for these potential host families and we can only do this when we are sincere and genuine in our own presentation. It is best to make these calls when you are feeling positive and excited about them, as that will come across clearly. If you talk with several people who do not respond in a friendly manner or are not interested, take a break and come back to making the calls so as to always be professional, positive and energetic.

Best time to call

The best time to call potential host families is usually between 6 and 9 p.m. If you receive an online application, it will indicate what the best time is to call. In addition, if a cell number is included you may be able to call this number any time. If one or both of the parents work from home or do not work, you might want to call them during the day. If you already have some indication that a family is interested (they have submitted an online application, you have already spoken with them before, etc.) leave a message so that they know that YFU is "on top of things" and quickly responding to them. If, however, it is a cold call or a host family from several years ago that you are contacting for the first time during the placement cycle, you might not want to leave a message, as you probably won't get a call back. It is best to try to call again and talk to someone.

Establish a connection

Some other key points are to quickly remind them who you are and how YFU got their name ("we talked last year around this time," "you were referred to me by...", etc.) because you want to establish that connection from the beginning. Of course, always be polite and if they are not interested it is best to ask if they might be interested in the future or do give them the option of us taking them off our list so that we don't bother them and we don't waste one of our most valuable but limited resources – time!

What do you say on a phone call?

The Call Center in the National Office trains staff on making calls to potential host families. The text below comes from the training materials that the Call Center uses in training their staff:

Hi, this is _____, and I am calling from Youth For Understanding USA, the international high school exchange program. We had spoken with you in the past / you had expressed interest in the past / your friend _____ had recommended our program to you / we did a presentation at your child's school...and I wanted to know if you were still interested in our hosting or volunteering opportunities.

**You can also begin the conversation more indirectly. State who YFU is, then you can start chatting with the prospect. Ex: "You went to Argentina with us in 1985, are you still in touch with anyone from that trip? Or "I see that you live in Seattle, I have always wanted to go there. What's the weather like?" Once you have chatted for a minute or two, you can get into the real reason why you called.*

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Possible Responses

- **Prospect says they are interested "next year":** Ok, great, we will give you a call next year then. In the meantime if you have any questions you can call us at 1.800.872.0200 or you can look on our website: www.yfu-usa.org.
- **Prospect is Interested!:** Great! Do you have any questions about hosting or the application process? (Review Q&A with them) The fastest way to get started with the hosting process is to fill out an online application. Our website is: www.yfu-usa.org. We can also send you an application in the mail if that would be easier. We will also be passing your information along to your local YFU office, and they will contact you to let you know more about the types of students who are coming to your area. If you would like, you can reach your local office at 1.800.872.0200.

In the meantime, we would also be happy to send you profiles of international students who are coming to your area so that you may look through them.

- **Prospect is interested but hesitant about committing for a year:** We also offer 6-week hosting options in some areas. In this situation, you would be an arrival family for a student for a few weeks until we can find a permanent living arrangement for them. This way their spot at the local high school will still be reserved, and it allows them to get acclimated to the area.
- **Prospect is Not Interested and Friendly:** Ok, that's fine. Would you be interested in having us contact you in the future about hosting? (See if you can set up a specific time: next year, 2 years from now, etc.)
- **Prospect is Not Interested:** Thank you for your time. Have a nice evening.
- **Prospect is undecided:** Perhaps I can help by answering your questions. I can also send you more information about our hosting program in the mail. If you would like to learn more about some of our students who we are setting up with families, I can email you the profiles of students who are coming to your area. *(Listen attentively and answer general questions to the best of your ability. If the questions become specific and you are not sure, make a commitment to get back to them with the appropriate answers.)*
- **Prospect needs to check with spouse and other family members:** *(Listen to their concerns.)* That's fine. It certainly makes sense that you want to _____ *(reinforce what he or she has said by paraphrasing.)* I would be happy to speak with your spouse now if they are home. Would it be okay if we followed up with you again in a couple of days once you have gotten the chance to speak to them? *(If available, talk with the spouse and explain*

the program and benefits. Otherwise, try to set a time-frame for a follow-up call or visit, to speak with the parents and/or whole family – this will require assigning the inquiry to a specific staff member.)

- **Prospect is considering other programs:** One of the benefits of hosting a student through YFU is our support network that we provide for both you and the student. Every student and family has a personal, local volunteer representative as well as professional support staff to ensure that all students and families have a great experience. We also have professional counselors and tutors available if needed.

We have exchanged over 200,000 students since 1951. Every year, about 4,500 students are exchanged with among 50 countries worldwide. Our programs are certified by the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET).

(Check out www.yfu-usa.org for more details about YFU, you should do this before making calls)

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Leaving a Message:

Hi (first name of parent you are calling), this is (your name), calling from Youth For Understanding USA, the international high school exchange program. We had contacted you in the past about hosting an international exchange student / you had gone abroad with us in '85 / your friend had recommended hosting to you, and we wanted to follow up with you to see if you are still interested in this opportunity. If you are, you can call us back at 1.800.872.0200. In the meantime, you can learn more about hosting on our website at www.yfu-usa.org . Again, the number is 1.800.872.0200 if you have any questions. Please give us a call, we'd love to hear from you / we'd be happy to help you.

Calling Alumni:

Hi, this is _____, and I am calling from Youth For Understanding USA, the international high school exchange program. According to our records you have been affiliated with YFU in the past, and we wanted to try and reconnect with our alumni to see if you might be interested in hosting or volunteering opportunities.

Calling Alumni when you know which program they did:

Hi, this is _____, and I am calling from Youth For Understanding USA, the international high school exchange program. You went to France in '82 with us, and we wanted to try to reconnect with our alumni to see if you might be interested in hosting or volunteering opportunities.

Benefits of Hosting

- You'll learn about another culture and language—without leaving home.
- If you have children, they'll gain a broader perspective on the world, learning more about geography, communication and international cultures.
- If your children are young, they'll probably love having a big brother or sister from another country.
- "The number one reason students are highly satisfied with YFU is their host family placement." - YFU International Student Survey, 2005
- Teach an international student about American culture. Think of hosting as being an Ambassador on a smaller-scale, and on a more personal level.

- You will get to directly influence someone’s ideas about America – this is a great opportunity, especially if you are frustrated with how Americans are portrayed internationally.
- Build a life-long bond with an international student as you accept them as part of your family.

Common Questions and Concerns about Hosting with Responses:

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“We have no children at home (or no high school age children)”

Only about a third of host families in our area last year had high school age children. This is not a requirement in any way or a predictor of the success/happiness of the child!

“Both of us parents work or are very busy all the time”

Many of the kids come from homes where both parents work, and they often have many responsibilities at home; the kids should have responsibilities here too.

“My child doesn’t want to share the senior year”

Most exchange students are enrolled as juniors; the exchange student’s social life is not your child’s responsibility; sometimes they choose to do things together and sometimes they don’t, like natural siblings.

“My kids are too young”

The young kids absolutely love to have these older siblings, and they are good role models for the kids! Elementary and middle school kids are the most enthusiastic because they are not too judgmental and too cool, as older teens often tend to be. In addition, they can be of help with young children—you probably won’t need to drag the little ones to the grocery store when you make a quick trip. Your teen exchange student can be expected to help with some chores, just as if you had a teen of your own. This is a great experience for younger children to start learning about the global community, and even to start learning another language. Also, a lot of our students come from families with younger siblings as well, and having a similar family structure helps them adjust.

“We don’t have time/money to do lots of tourist stuff”

That is not the expectation: this is a “family living experience” and not a travel opportunity. The kids’ lives revolve around family and school activities. The organization offers some optional trips kids can take to popular places at their natural parents’ expense if they choose.

“What if we don’t like each other? What if it doesn’t work?”

This is supposed to be a happy experience for all parties involved. YFU continues to work in a support role with kids and families all year.

“It’s too expensive.”

The kids bring their own spending money and good health insurance. Yes, you’re putting another plate on the table and driving some more, but most of what you’re giving is non-financial: encouragement, advice, guidance, love!

“We’re too busy.”

Well, a busy home is a happy home for the students. They can be asked to help. They are a complete family member!

“We don’t have a separate room or our house isn’t fancy enough or.... I don’t prepare fancy meals every day.”

This is a real life experience! These are kids. They can share rooms (not a bed!) with same-sex host siblings. They can room in the den or office. The most important thing you provide is the love to get through the experience, and normally, most of us are fortunate that we don’t put a limit on that!

“Our house is too small/we don’t have many bedrooms.”

Many of our exchange students share a room with a host brother or sister. It is not necessary that they have their own room.

“We live in a small town”

Many of our students really enjoy small town life. Sometimes living in a big city is overwhelming for students and in a small town they often meet more people and feel a part of things.

“Why should I help?”

Someone helped me once and made this experience happen for me. It changed my life more than anything else did. Someone helped my daughter too. Beyond that, it simply makes the world a better place!

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Call Summary

In conclusion, making phone calls is an integral part of host family recruitment and is often a more effective way to connect with potential host families than e-mail.

One of the key elements of calling is follow up. If you say, you are going to e-mail profiles to the interested party that evening, be sure to do so. If you ask if you can call back in a few days after the family has had time to look at profiles, do so. Keep track of the calls you make (in the inquiry system and with whatever your own system is) and follow up. Many host families do not say “yes” the first time you call. Sometimes it takes up to 5 or 6 calls to get to a “yes.”

In addition, if you have a host family already on board, keep them abreast of the process. Send them a follow up e-mail to let them know you made contact with the school, were able to contact their references, etc. Host families are appreciative of being kept in the loop and sometimes if you don’t contact them for a while they wonder what has happened.

It is very important to track the conversations and the follow up status in the inquiry system, so that you can remember how things were left. Remember to close inquiries that have no chance of panning out.

Sometimes the answer is “no” and there is no way around that. The polite and professional stance to take is to thank the person for their time. If you present yourself and YFU in a positive light, the family will remember having had a good conversation with someone with YFU and may be willing to host sometime in the future.

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Strategies for placing “harder to place” students

We all will encounter students that are harder to place. Some of the more challenging types of students to place are students with allergies to pets, students with medical conditions, students with dietary restrictions, smokers, etc.

The good news is that what one field might consider a “harder to place” student, others may not. For example, some fields may have an easier time placing a vegetarian student than others.

Some communities may really want to host Latin American students while others may not. The key to placing all students is open communication between Field Directors and shared strategies of what works and doesn't work.

Strategies for placing Asian students:

Contact American overseas alumni and returnees who have recently been abroad with YFU to an Asian country. Contact Asian organizations, community centers, etc. and see if they might be willing to put up posters, etc. Ask current host families who are having a great experience hosting an Asian student to share their experience with their colleagues, neighbors, etc.

Strategies for placing students with allergies, medical conditions, etc:

Often times highlighting the positive attributes of a student encourages the family to downplay the other conditions, such as asthma, or allergies. It is essential to be up front about any condition a student might have, but present it in a matter of fact way. There are questions in the host family interview that address a family's ability to host a student with special needs.

Ask ALL families you talk to if they could accommodate such a student, as then you can tailor your profiles accordingly. For example, even if a potential family is not vegetarian, you might simply ask them if they could accommodate one. But be sure that the family understands what it means, if they have experience with a vegetarian diet, etc. If you have a family with no pets, try to show them profiles of students with pet allergies.

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Using International Students to Promote the Hosting Program

International students can be great resources in promoting the hosting and American overseas program. They can be YFU ambassadors by talking about their own experience in their language classes at school or at their church group, soccer, club, etc. It is best to give the students some brochures, a sign in sheet, and a clear sense of what is expected to them. A tracking form can be useful that asks students to fax in a report of what classes they went to, a copy of the sign in sheet, etc.

Another idea is to send international student profiles of students coming from the same country as current international students, and ask them to share it with friends, people in their community, etc. who they think might be interested in hosting.

An example of a flyer that volunteers can distribute to international students to help them plan school or community presentations about their experiences and exchange/hosting can be found in the Field Director Lounge. Your volunteers may also want to send letters to the host families encouraging their student to follow through with putting together a presentation about their exchange experience.

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Targeting American Overseas' Families

American overseas families are a great resource to tap into for hosting. They are already connected to YFU, and if their son/daughter had a good experience, they may likely want to "give back" to YFU by hosting. It is best to contact both current and former American overseas families.

Former Families

It is likely that your District Office orchestrates mass mailings to former American overseas families, which is a great help. One of the things to keep in mind is that while many students have wonderful experiences, you may come upon an American overseas family whose

son/daughter did not have a positive experience and don't want to support YFU. If that is the case, please make a note of this in my.yfu.org comments and have them removed from future mailing lists. Furthermore, even though the District Office can print labels and do mailings, often a mailing done in a more personal style, with an optional local or nearby phone number, with each letter personally signed by a volunteer or Field Director, will produce more results. Some people are not willing to call a toll free number, because they don't know where it will be answered.

Current Families

Current American overseas year and semester families are a great resource because the students are still abroad and are soon to return home (usually in June). You can call to check in with the student and family to find out how their experience was and then broach the topic of them hosting or at least help to spread the word about hosting. Most American overseas returnees are excited about their experience and want to remain connected to YFU and so will be willing to promote hosting in their communities.

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Host Family Selection

In assessing a potential family against the criteria, volunteers will use the [YFU Host Family Interview Packet](#)⁷⁸. While in the selection process for a host family it is helpful to consider the following questions:

- Is the family warm and friendly?
- Are they open-minded and tolerant in religious and racial matters?
- Is their financial situation such that a student will not present a burden and so they can take part in family activities?
- Are all family members enthused and excited about being a YFU host family?
- Will the student be free of isolation here?
- Is the family involved outside of itself (community, school, church)?
- Is the family flexible in both attitude and approach?
- Is the family free of serious health problems?
- Is the entire family free of serious personal problems (marital, drug, emotional, legal, alcohol)?
- Is the home in a generally safe location and the yard and house clean and free of debris and clutter?

Application packet

All documents can be faxed to the District Office or to the Field Director to be filed. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

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Host Family Agreement

The Host Family Agreement, always paired with a copy of YFU USA's Policies and Procedures, outlines what YFU USA expects of host families. There are two copies of the Host Family Agreement in the Host Family Interview Packet. After the host family has signed both copies of

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⁷⁸ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview.pdf

the agreement, the volunteer interviewer should submit one copy to the District Office, along with the interview report, and leave one copy with the host family.

Criminal Background Check

As part of YFU USA's process to determine a host family's qualifications the organization is required by Federal Regulations (22 CFR 62.25) to perform a criminal background check on all household members 18 years or older, including those who will turn 18 during the exchange year. All exchange organizations must follow this regulation, which has become standard practice for social service and non-profit organizations where adult volunteers work directly with youth. The report will be requested by YFU USA from a consumer credit reporting agency (CRA), but will only include information regarding criminal history and driving history records. The results of the report will be viewed by *select* YFU office staff (not Field Directors or local volunteers) and will remain confidential. A copy of the [Criminal Background Check Disclosure and Release](#)⁷⁹ can be found in the Field Directors' Lounge

The process YFU USA uses to conduct the criminal background check requires a social security number (SSN), name, and date of birth as a means to confirm identity. A name-only check might turn up same-name conviction records that could be attributed to the host family or volunteer by mistake. If an applicant is uncomfortable giving the SSN on the authorization form, he or she may sign and return the authorization without the SSN and report the SSN by phone to the District Office Coordinator or District Director. Though an applicant may have had a criminal background check for another agency, YFU USA must be the initiator of the background check for the current YFU USA application. For more information on the criminal background check procedure, refer to [Criminal Background Check Frequently Asked Questions](#)⁸⁰ in the Field Director Lounge.

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In-home Interview

Conducting an in-home interview is a key volunteer task in the placement process of an international student. Ideally, all family members will be present for the interview. The [Host Family Interview Packet](#)⁸¹ provides a set of questions used as a guide for the volunteer during the interview. The [Volunteer Training Manual](#)⁸² also outlines key preparations and tips for conducting an effective host family interview.

Reference Checks

Host family applicants must provide three references who have known their family for at least three years and who are not YFU USA staff members or volunteers. In order to continue with the screening process of a potential host family, at least two quality references must be on file. It's good to ask for more references than the volunteer will actually need, in case one of them cannot be contacted in a timely manner. Asking for additional references—and calling them-- is one step to take when the volunteer feels uncertain or uncomfortable about the appropriateness of an interested host family. All references must be contacted by telephone, in person or by mail by a YFU volunteer or staff member. The references must provide a positive report before a host family can be approved. If a reference provides a negative or neutral report, it should be passed on to the District Office.

⁷⁹ http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/FDLounge/templates__forms1.htm

⁸⁰ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/Documents/AO2006/CriminalBackgroundCheckFAQ.pdf>

⁸¹ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview.pdf

⁸² <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/VolunteerTraining/Publications/VTM.pdf>

Warning Indicators

Most of the families that your volunteers interview will be appropriate. However, there is a list of [Warning Indicators](#)⁸³ in the selection process of a host family (found in the Host Family Interview Packet and the Volunteer Training Manual) provided to help identify potential areas for further questioning. If the volunteer interviewer finds any of these conditions present, they should discuss the matter further with their Area Coordinator or Field Director.

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Host Family Renewal

For former or repeat host families who have all of the completed paperwork on file in the District Office from a previous year, the volunteer needs to simply complete the one-page [Host Family Renewal Application](#)⁸⁴ and have the host family sign another Host Family agreement. Renewal families are required to have a home visit within the last six months, but do not need to complete a full interview again. Renewal host families are also required to attend the Pre-Arrival orientation.

Welcome Packet

After host families are approved to host and their placements are entered into the AS/400 system, a welcome packet is mailed to them from the District Office. Included in the packet are a welcome letter from the respective Field Director (which is automatically generated by the AS/400), an informational packet (including a letter from YFU USA's President, a W-8 form, a Charitable Contribution form for tax purposes, tips on hosting and tips on what to write in a first letter to their exchange student), a fact sheet on the country where the host family's exchange student is from ("Where in the World"), the exchange student's complete file, photos of the exchange student's natural family and a [Host Family Handbook](#)⁸⁵. For a replacement family, the same welcome packet is sent, with the exception of tips on what to write in a first letter to the student and the photos of natural family. There may be small variations to this content among districts; therefore, contact your District Office Coordinator to verify what is sent from your District. The mailing schedule for packets is at the District Office Coordinator's discretion, but usually occurs as soon as possible after a placement is entered into the system.

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Orientations

Pre-Arrival Orientation: All host families, whether new to YFU or repeat families, must attend the host family [Pre-Arrival Orientation](#)⁸⁶ planned and conducted by YFU volunteers and staff members. This orientation program generally occurs in July or August and is designed to help host families understand the policies, procedures, and support systems of YFU while discussing the preparations they are making for the hosting experience and the expectations they have about hosting a teenager from another country. Telephone orientations may be scheduled for families enrolled after their local orientation has occurred. Refer to the Education and Training Pre-Arrival Orientation page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation. This is a mandatory orientation for every host family, both new and returning. If a host family can not attend the in-person program, there must be a one-on-one orientation session completed. The host family must sign the documentation sheet for an individual orientation which then will be filed in the District Office. The orientation may not be completed at the same time (date) as the HF interview, per CSIET standards.

⁸³ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_interview.pdf

⁸⁴ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/pdf/hf_renew_app.pdf

⁸⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/HostFamilyHandbook/HFHandbook.pdf>

⁸⁶ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/Pre-Arrival/pre-arrival_orientation.htm

Post Arrival Orientation: Host families are also encouraged to attend the [Post Arrival Orientation](#)⁸⁷, which is mandatory for international students. The Post Arrival Orientation is generally conducted in September or October and offers students and host families the opportunity come together to discuss mutual issues and concerns, share their experiences so far, and learn more about maximizing their experiences together. Refer to the Education and Training Post Arrival Orientation page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation.

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Providing Student Contact Information

Families should never receive enough information to contact a student until 48 hours after the District Office has approved the family and notified the partner office of the placement. The complete student file will be sent to the host family upon finalization and confirmation of the placement.

Chapter 7: Schools

Overview

High schools around the country enroll international exchange students every year. Establishing and maintaining strong connections with these schools is critical in their willingness to accept YFU students year after year. Furthermore, the school personnel serve as a key piece of the YFU support structure. Many times teachers and guidance counselors are the person that a YFU exchange student chooses to talk with.

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Quarterly Contact with Schools

Every quarter Area Representatives are required to contact the school counselor or designated school representative of any school that has an enrolled YFU student. The purpose of this contact is to get an update on the progress of each YFU student. After discussing the academic performance and adherence to school rules of YFU students, the Area Representative will complete the school contact survey found in the contact report system on my.yfu.org, which should be completed by October 5th, January 5th and April 5th. As with the student contact reports, only in cases where an Area Representative is not available should a Field Director complete the school contact survey.

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Strategies for Working with Schools

In most cases, the Field Director makes the initial contact with a school or school district to inquire about exchange student enrollment. Often the school will have a relationship with YFU because of students previously or currently attending that school.

The Field Director should keep a file of the schools in the field. The file should include contact information for exchange enrollment. It may be the principal, guidance office, and in some large school districts exchange is handled on the district or county level.

⁸⁷ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/PostArrival/PostArrival.htm>

It is important that Field Directors and volunteers develop and maintain a good relationship with schools. Following school policy and keeping current on policy changes is essential to maintaining good relations into the future.

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School Policies

School policies vary from school to school, district to district, state to state, etc. When making contact with a new school, it is important to learn the guidelines for that school. Often you can research on line the school district policy regarding the enrollment of exchange students. Many schools have age and SLEP guidelines that you should be familiar with. Some states do not allow exchange students that have already graduated from high school in their home country. Most states will not grant a diploma to an exchange student. Some schools have no guidelines at all and accepting an exchange student is up the principal or a guidance counselor. You should ask to be provided with written guidelines for enrolling exchange students if the school system has them.

Many policies will also include enrollment caps and deadlines. Some schools take a limited number of exchange students and have deadlines for enrollment. Knowing these limitations is critical to YFU's success in placing international students. Even if YFU can identify a host family in a certain area, if the school is closed to exchange student enrollment, YFU's hands are tied. Knowing the deadlines very early in the placement cycles assures that you will begin placing students in the right places early on. Even if not in a written policy, a school may request that student files be submitted in a certain form, such as mail, email, fax, etc.

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School Acceptance Form

The [School Acceptance Form](#)⁸⁸ (SAF) is an essential form to finalize the enrollment process so that the student can be placed. A school official must sign this form and send it to the District Office before placement is complete! The SAF can be found in the Field Director Lounge on my.yfu.org.

Chapter 8: American Overseas Students

Overview

Field Directors focus the majority of their time on the international student program, but they play key roles in the American overseas program as well.

American students can apply to go to over 40 different YFU partner countries for either a summer or winter departure. Programs can be a year, a semester or a summer. There is also a Gap Year program offered to recent high school graduates. Generally it is students who want to experience something new before heading off to college.

Field Directors play a role in recruiting American overseas students and in ensuring that all scholarship applicants are interviewed. Field Directors also are responsible for being sure that all American overseas students receive a Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO). Who plans and conducts the American overseas PDO will vary from district to district, depending on many factors, not the least of which is the concentration of American overseas students. In a field

⁸⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HF_Application_2008/School_Acceptance_Form.doc

with a single American overseas, it is not an effective use of the Field Director's time to plan and conduct such an orientation! However, providing a Pre-Departure Orientation for every American overseas student is required and necessary to help them prepare for their exchange experience. For detailed information on how to plan a Pre-Departure Orientation, orientation content, tracking forms, handouts, etc. go to the Orientations page on my.yfu.org and click on "American overseas PDO."

Calls by interested host families and students about YFU's American overseas program can be referred to the Admissions Counselors at 1.800.TEENAGE. They are the ones who can answer all questions related to program logistics, costs, timeframes, etc. That said, it is important to at least gain some basic knowledge about the program (and of course, thorough knowledge of the program if you plan to do American overseas presentations)! You can find this detailed information by visiting our public website, www.yfu-usa.org.

Please note that you can find a great overview of all things related to the American overseas program on YFU's public website, www.yfu-usa.org along with resources in the Volunteer and FD Lounges and Orientations on my.yfu.org Also, the Admissions & Registration Department is more than happy to provide additional information or answer any questions you might have. You are welcome to call them in the National Office or email them at admissions@yfu.org!

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Recruitment

YFU is distinguished from most other exchange programs operating in the US by its American overseas (AO) program. YFU offers US teens extraordinary opportunities to study abroad through summer, semester and year programs, many with scholarship funding. American overseas student recruitment is dependent upon all YFU field staff and volunteers making school personnel, families and teenagers aware of the opportunity to study abroad with YFU.

YFU international students and American overseas alumni are also wonderful resources for this type of word of mouth outreach. The YFU USA National Office publicizes the American overseas program through mailings, web advertising and outreach strategies delivered through efforts of staff and volunteers with an American overseas recruitment focus.

Since most school contact for YFU is conducted by field staff and volunteers, it is imperative that the field keep school counselors updated about available scholarships and their deadlines, particularly when making October school contact calls to check on international students' first quarter progress. Volunteers often give presentations in area schools about YFU opportunities to go abroad or host international students. Scholarship flyers and host family and American overseas posters can be delivered or sent to the appropriate guidance officers with the request that they be posted in strategic places around the school. Field Directors and volunteers can request promotional materials from the District Office.

The YFU District or National Office can supply volunteers with American overseas brochures and request that they distribute brochures to interested teenagers in their local area. A table or a booth may be set up at a variety of community events, providing print materials as well as an opportunity for individuals to make a personal contact with YFU staff or volunteers. Inquiries resulting from these activities are entered into my.yfu.org for follow-up.

An American student's first encounter with YFU is usually through word of mouth: teachers and other school personnel schools, current YFU international students or American alumni, or a YFU representative - staff or volunteers. Increasingly, American students also learn about YFU through the internet. Many students contact the Admissions & Registration Department in the National Office with an inquiry. Once an inquiry is entered, the Contact Center makes an initial

follow up call before passing the inquiry to the Admissions Counselor with more specific questions or an application.

Though Field Directors do not get notification of an American overseas inquiry that comes from their field, Field Directors can monitor American overseas inquiries on my.yfu.org. Normally the inquiry is assigned to a Field Director if the Field Director opened the inquiry and wants to do the follow up themselves.

The most important point of information to provide to potential American Overseas applicants is the 1.800.TEENAGE telephone number into the Admissions & Registration Department. Here the professional Admissions Counselors will work with applicants and families to answer all questions about the outbound programs. Volunteers and field staff are also invited to contact their Admissions Counselor to learn more about American overseas programs.

Presentations

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American overseas presentations can be conducted by Field Directors, YFU volunteers and/or American overseas alumni or current international students. In many fields, the most common locations for American overseas presentations are at high schools in foreign language classes.

For detailed information on everything ranging from how to set up a presentation, presentation content, and tracking forms, please refer to the Admission & Registration section in my.yfu.org under the [Materials and Documents](#)⁸⁹ section.

Mailings

American overseas mailings are usually done by the Admissions & Registration Department and occasionally at the district level. For example, the Admissions & Registration Department does an annual targeted direct mailing to Japanese language teachers to promote American overseas programs to Japan. Consult with your District Director to find out what mailings are being done from your District Office.

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Application Process

Students apply directly through the Admissions & Registration Department in the National Office. The students and their families work directly with their Admissions Counselor. Admissions Counselors guide the students through the application process.

American overseas spaces are limited and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and so early application is encouraged. Many countries will allow late applications after negotiation, but some countries or programs have earlier deadlines.

There are also specific deadlines for the many scholarships offered. It is important to emphasize in American overseas presentations that students should apply for more than one scholarship if they meet the criteria – the more scholarships they apply for, the better their chances to be awarded one! Scholarships are all merit based and not need based.

An overview of all scholarships including criteria and deadlines for each one, is provided on the public website www.yfu-usa.org under “Scholarships” within “American Students.” Deadlines for the scholarships will be extended if we do not have a large enough pool of applicants. Consult

⁸⁹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/MaterialsDocuments.htm>

with an Admissions Counselor if you have a student interested in a program for which the deadline has passed – they may still have the opportunity to apply. Also, there are many scholarships that are provided to students living in specific areas of the country. The Field Director and volunteers can be vital in recruiting applicants for these scholarships. Field Directors can call the Admissions & Registration Department to find out if any such scholarships exist in their field.

Application Status

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When an American student applies to YFU to become an American overseas student, his or her application is classified as either Applied (Reserved) or Applied (Not Reserved):

Applied (Reserved) indicates that an applicant has submitted a full application and paid the required deposit to hold his/her place in the program of choice. In this case, the applicant is either not applying for a scholarship or will pay tuition to go on program if he/she is not awarded a scholarship.

Applied (non-Reserved) indicates that an applicant has submitted a full application but has not paid a deposit to hold his/her place in the program of choice. In this case, the American overseas applicant will go on program only if he/she wins a scholarship.

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Scholarships Interview

All American overseas applicants must be interviewed in person by a YFU representative. When an American overseas applicant is ready to be interviewed, his or her information is uploaded into the my.yfu.org system by the Admissions & Registration Department. In the case where an applicant has applied for a scholarship(s), this interview counts approximately 20% towards the decision to award him/her a scholarship.

Assignments: Field Directors must check my.yfu.org regularly to view this information and assign each interview in the system to a volunteer. Once an interview has been assigned, an automatic email is generated from the system and sent to the interviewing volunteer. The email contains the American overseas applicant's contact information as well as what program(s) and scholarship(s) he or she is applying for.

Interview form: The email sent by my.yfu.org also contains a link to the interview form that must be completed and returned to the Admissions & Registration Department after conducting an interview. The interview form may be printed, filled out and faxed, or it may be typed as a Word Document, saved and then emailed to the Admissions & Registration Department as an attachment. Alternatively, the American overseas interview form may be found in my.yfu.org in the Volunteer Lounge with other American overseas materials.

Thank you letter: When the Admissions & Registration Department receives an applicant's interview report, an interview received date is entered into the system. At that point, an automatically generated thank you letter is sent to the American overseas interviewer for conducting the interview.

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Selection

The selection process happens over a period of several months. American overseas Reserved students, or full paying students, will find out much sooner than their scholarship applicant

counterparts. The process begins when the application is handed in and continues to go through the end of April. By May 1st all applicants should be notified of their acceptance status.

There are a series of letters that are sent out to applicants over the course of their application process. For American overseas Reserved students, the first one is an applied reserved letter confirming their space is held within in a YFU program. Each month thereafter they will receive a letter of their financial statement and the amount of money due to YFU. Once the application process is completed, they will receive a letter notifying them that they have been enrolled into the program.

For scholarship applicants, the process is somewhat different. Once the application is received and processed, a post card is sent notifying them that the process has officially begun. The final letters are mailed out in April notifying scholarship applicants of their scholarship status. There are three possibilities: A full or partial scholarship award, a letter stating they are an alternate, or a letter stating that they have not been chosen to receive a scholarship. The only exception to this is the James Bradley Scholarship applicants to Japan who find out by early January.

Once the students are accepted to the program, there are a series of letters that they will receive. The Admissions & Registration Department will notify them in late April or early May of the countries that require visas. The Travel Department will confirm the departure airport with the student. At some time in the weeks before the student departs, they will be notified of their host family. Lastly, they will receive their exact flight info prior to their departure. Students may also receive welcome letters from their host country.

In addition to the travel documents, once the student has left the country, the parents will receive a letter explaining that all further inquiries need to go to the SSM in their field and/or their District Office.

Orientations

Pre-Departure Orientation: The Pre-Departure Orientation seeks to prepare American students to live and learn in a foreign environment. This is a mandatory orientation for every American overseas student. All students who can not attend an in-person Pre-Departure Orientation *must be invited to and attend a conference call* Pre-Departure Orientation. This orientation focuses on general cross-cultural understanding, cultural differences, and very importantly, on how to learn in a foreign setting. This orientation is an essential part of the preparation for going on exchange, helping students get excited about the exchange, aware of some of the challenges they will face, and confident in their ability to meet those challenges. It is also an excellent opportunity for families to learn more about YFU and for Field Directors to recruit potential host families and volunteers. Refer to the Education and Training American overseas [Pre-Departure Orientation](#)⁹⁰ page on my.yfu.org for information on planning, conducting and paperwork for this orientation.

HORIZONS

Designed to expand the educational horizons of the cross-cultural experience, [HORIZONS](#)⁹¹ is a timed, educational sequence of e-pamphlets for American students and their natural families. HORIZONS e-pamphlets discuss a variety of topics, including preparation for the exchange

⁹⁰ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Orientations/Re-Entry/Re-Entry.htm>

⁹¹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HorizonsHome.html>

experience, learning potential during and after the exchange, and getting settled and adjusted in a foreign culture. The Education and Training Department distributes HORIZONS.

The e-pamphlets are emailed to all American students and their parents on the 1st of the month from the time they are enrolled in a program through 1 month of having returned home. Field Directors also receive a copy of the email message.

AO Parent Handbook

The [AO Parent Handbook](#)⁹² is distributed by the Admissions and Registration Department, to the parents of American students once a student has been enrolled. It is designed to provide the family with the information and perspectives necessary for them to support their child's exchange experience in the healthiest manner possible. Included in the AO Parent Handbook is logistical information ranging from how to help the student pack and how to send money overseas to information on what role the natural parents can realistically play in supporting their son or daughter throughout the exchange.

Chapter 9: my.yfu.org and the AS/400



Logging on

Whether home-based or working out of a District Office, Field Directors are issued a computer. Home-based Field Directors are also issued an all-in-one printer, fax, and copy machine. The IT department walk Field Directors through getting set up with a username and password to log into <http://my.yfu.org>, which is known in YFU as "my YFU." Logging into the network will take the user to the home page of my.yfu.org. Detailed information about home based computer software and regulations

regarding the use of your YFU computer can be found on the shared drive. Go to <S:\IT\public\User Manuals\Home Based User Guide.doc>.

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What Field Directors can view in my.yfu.org

My.yfu.org is the "home base" to view and access the majority of data, files, and departments associated with YFU USA. Easy search links for students, host families, departments, volunteers, schools, inquiry system, and the lounges are found in the blue bar at the top of the screen. Field Directors have access to complete student files, volunteer information, student, host family, and school contact reports, and other field and district contact information. These and other links are not accessible to volunteers and host families. From the Dept link Field Directors can access other departments such as IT, HR, Finance, etc to obtain necessary forms for expense reporting and personnel policy for employees.



⁹² http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/AOParentHandbook/AO_Parent_Handbook.pdf

Searching

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My.yfu.org allows people to search for information pertaining to the schools, students, volunteers, alumni, or staff. Examples of simple searches are as follows:

- Host family search - click on **Host Family** tab, enter host family name, click on field and enter your field name, click on search and family name will appear, click on name to get Host Family Display.
- Volunteer search – click on **Volunteer** tab and follow the same procedure.
- School search – click on **School** tab and follow the same procedure.
- Student search – click on **Student** and follow the same procedure, but the Quick Search feature described below is much faster.

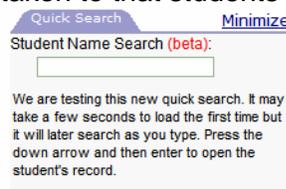
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Advanced Searches

Under the **Student** tab, you can do either a Basic Search or an Advanced Search with many more search fields available. To perform an Advanced Search, click on the **Advanced** tab.

Quick Search Feature

This student search tool is located in the top right corner of your home page. You can enter a few letters of the students first or last name and student names will appear. Click on the name of the student you are searching for and you will be taken to that student's file.



Reports

A very helpful feature in my.yfu.org is the possibility of generating a “custom report.” A report allows users to capture certain information in my.yfu.org and simply convert it to an Excel spreadsheet.

For example, when the user wants to do a mailing to host families and students within the field, rather than manually creating an Excel spreadsheet, the user can select the ‘student’ tab and do a search for all current international students. After the search results appear, the Field Director can select ‘custom report’ which will bring up a screen with different tabs. Clicking on the arrows will bring up an additional menu of choices. After selecting the desired information for the custom report, clicking submit will cause the system to generate the desired report in HTML or as an Excel spreadsheet. After the Excel sheet is created it can be saved or edited as desired.

Inquiry System

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The Inquiry System is a useful tool to enter information and track and search inquiries about YFU from potential host families, students and volunteers. A step-by-step guide to using this system can be found on the shared drive: Go to S:\IT\public\User Manuals\inquiry_system.pdf.

Friends of YFU

This is a YFU constituent category for use in keeping track of those people who do not fit into any of the other categories on my.yfu.org, but who may be helpful. Here's how. From the home page:

- Using the "Select" drop down menu, select "Friends of YFU"
- On the left side, choose New Friend (Person), for example, your local conference center coordinator, or New Friend (Organization), like the local PTA.
- If the system suspects the record already exists, a check screen will pop up allowing the user to select an existing record and save data entry time.
- From this duplicate screen the user can either select the new record or select an existing one.
- Click next and follow the instructions for adding contact information on the next screens.
- The final screen asks the user to categorize and identify the friend's affiliation with YFU.

Click next to complete the entry. You will be returned to the "Friend of YFU Information" page where you can edit your record and/or use the Comments section to keep notes on the person or organization. Once records are created, you will be able to use them in Searches and Bookmarks.

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Service Requests

Service Requests are the way in which you can report a problem you may have with your software, hardware, or accessing information from my.yfu.org to the IT Department. To submit a Service Request go to the pull down box marked "Select" at the top right of your screen located directly under your name. In the pull-down box select **Service Request** and you will be taken to service request screen. Enter your request by clicking on **Submit a New Request** at the top of the screen.



Lounges

The various lounges are sites on my.yfu.org that give you access to documents and information pertaining to all areas of recruitment, training, documentation, orientations, promotional materials, interview packets, and handbooks for students, volunteers, and host families. By clicking on **Lounge** at the top of the page, from there you can select from one of the available lounges:

- [Volunteer Lounge](#)⁹³
- [Host Family Lounge](#)⁹⁴
- [Field Director Lounge](#)⁹⁵

⁹³ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/lounge.htm

⁹⁴ https://yfuusa.securesites.net/vol/my_yfu/hf/lounge.htm

- [YES Lounge](#)⁹⁶

Field Directors have access to all the lounges but most find the Volunteer Lounge to be the most useful and has the most complete information. Browsing the lounges is an easy way to access needed forms and documents. The Field Director Lounge also has shared ideas and tips from other Field Directors about recruitment, recognition, etc. of volunteers and host families.

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Bookmarks

Bookmarks are a way to help organize information on my.yfu.org in regards to the students, volunteers and inquiries. For example, if you have a potential host family and are searching through the student profiles, you can “bookmark” the students that you think might be a good match for them and then generate a PDF with just those students’ profiles.

The bookmark feature is something that, as a Field Director, you will use nearly every day as it is one of the most efficient ways of organizing information in my.yfu.org.

You can find detailed information about how to use the bookmark system in my.yfu.org by going to the home page and then clicking on the help bar in the upper right hand corner. When you click on this, you will see a “help menu” that includes the bookmark system. This will show you How to bookmark students, host families or inquiries.

Now let’s address WHY you will want to bookmark. Here are some common reasons:

1. You want to generate a PDF file (as mentioned above) so that you can share the profiles with a potential host family, volunteer, etc.
2. You want to bookmark inquiries so that you can assign a few particular students to a volunteer, to yourself, etc.
3. You want to move particular students or volunteers to a folder, and then give other people access to that folder, such as a volunteer or another staff person.

Consult with your District Director and/or other Field Directors for clarification on how to use bookmarks and folders, as you will want to know how to use them from day one!

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Profiles

Click on the help box at the top of your home page on [my.yfu.org](#) then on the profile system to find out how Field Directors, volunteers and host families can view profiles. Also how to do a mail merge with profiles.

Weekly Field Director Reports

Field Directors are required to complete a report once a week on what is going on in their field. You will find the weekly report in my.yfu.org on the left side of the home page under “other”.

⁹⁵ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/adreg/FDLounge/index.htm>

⁹⁶ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/YES/yes_lounge_2.htm

American Overseas Interviews

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American Students (American overseas) need to have an interview completed before they can be accepted on program. You will find any American overseas that need to be interviewed on my.yfu.org by looking under “American overseas” from the home page. Click on interviews needed. Click on the students name and you then will be able to assign the interview to a volunteer. Interviews need to be completed within 30 days of the student applying for program. This time may be shortened if the student applies close to the deadline. The interview due date will appear when you click on the students name. You can also find information on how to assign American overseas interviews by going to the shared drive, clicking on IT, then public and then “American overseas inter assign”.

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AS/400

What is the AS/400?

The AS/400 Green Screen (called this because it used to have a green background) is YFU's legacy database system. There are still certain tasks, such as entering a student placement, which can only be done via the AS/400 Green Screen. More and more functionality will be moved to my.yfu.org. As we migrate away from the AS/400 Green Screens, data entry will only be possible on my.yfu.org but you will still be able to access information in a read-only format. For more information regarding the AS/400, please refer to [AS/400 Training Guide](#)⁹⁷.

Searches and data entry

You can search for current and former host families by entering the host family system. Enter the following codes next to their name for the following information:

1. FS (family status) next to the host family name you will get their status, active or non active.
2. FA will get you their application information.
3. FO (family other) will give you other information such as school and volunteer.
4. FI (family interests) will get you information regarding their interests as well as if they have animals, are smokers. Church-goers, etc.

You can also search for schools by entering next to the school name an “I” for international students or a “U” for American students to find out what international students were placed in that school and if any American overseas were sent overseas with YFU from that particular school. A “B” for background will get you information on the school's phone number, address, school personnel and volunteers. Any current information regarding a school should be entered into my.yfu.org.

You can search for students by entering the student system:

1. “B” next to their name will get background information on the student, home address, school, field and area rep.
2. “FA” next to their name will get you the host family application information.
3. “T” will give you travel information.
4. “AC” will give you the airport that they will be arriving to and departing from. This is where you will be required to enter an airport code for those students assigned to you that are not placed within a certain time frame before they travel. The travel department will send out e-mails for when this needs to be done, usually about three weeks prior to the travel date.

⁹⁷ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/Publications/FDManual/AS400_Training.doc

Airport coding

When a new host family is entered into the system, the nearest airport to the family will be computed by the system based upon the family zip code. Key in a new airport code only if the family will be using a different airport (airports with major carrier scheduled service only). If an airport code must be entered for an international student before a host family is identified for him/her, enter the student system, pull up the student by keying his/her last name and key "AC" for Airport Code next to the student's name. Then, next to "Requested Host Family Pickup Airport", key in an airport code of choice. Hit the Enter key to save changes.

Host Family Address changes

To change a host family's address in the system, enter the family system; pull up the family by keying their last name and key "FA" for Family Application next to the family's name. Key in the family's new address and hit the Enter key to save changes.

Deactivating host families and associated codes

When you discover that a former host family should not be hosting again or wants to be taken off of our mailing list you can do this by going to the AS400 pulling up their name in the host family system. Enter "FS" (family status) next to their name. Then enter an "R" (rejected), and "N" (never use) or "D" (defer).

What is exclusively on AS/400

The AS/400 is the only place for entering host family data into the host family system and entering a student's placement (performed by the District Office Coordinator). Additionally, the AS/400 is the only place that offers international student and American overseas history. To view all international students that have been hosted by a family or school or who have been represented by a particular volunteer, enter the system (host family, school or volunteer) of choice. After pulling up the family, school or volunteer of interest by name, key "I" for international student next to the name. To view all American overseas students that have been sent from a particular school, enter the school system, key in the school's name of interest to pull it up and key "U" for American overseas next to the school's name. Alternatively, "IU" may be placed next to the school's name to view all of the international students and American overseas students that the school has hosted and sent abroad.

Migration of AS/400 data into my.yfu.org

All data that is entered into the AS/400 is automatically migrated into my.yfu.org. Therefore, it is not necessary to make changes in my.yfu.org after making changes in the AS/400.

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Chapter 10: Compliance

Overview

Worldwide consistency of quality in program is provided by a set of YFU International Basic Standards developed by the YFU International Advisory Council. The standards guide each country in assuring a high level of quality through its own style, approaches and cultural context. The United States Department of State sets out regulations for exchange organizations. These regulations are designed to ensure that students are provided with basic services ranging from where they sleep to how they are oriented. By adhering to these guidelines, YFU is able to administer J-1 visas, allowing our students to enter the U.S. The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel also has established standards to which YFU USA must adhere. Being listed as an accredited program with CSIET facilitates YFU's efforts in placing students in local high schools across the country.

Frequent audits by the US Department of State and CSIET assure that YFU remains in compliance with their regulations. These audits generally demand copies of YFU paperwork proving that we are contacting our students and host families on a monthly basis, have all of our students placed in appropriate homes, have conducted interviews with all of our host families, etc.

International Student / Host Family / Schools

In order to be in compliance when placing an international student with a host family, specific paperwork must be collected. Additionally, a [School Acceptance Form](#)⁹⁸ (SAF) with a school administrator's signature must be obtained for every international student placement. The School Enrollment Form may either be opened as a Word document (found in the Host Family section in the Volunteer Lounge of my.yfu.org) and highlighted fields within can be typed in manually, or the School Enrollment Form may be automatically generated by my.yfu.org when faxing or emailing a student's documents through the my.yfu.org site.

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Monthly & Quarterly Contact Reports

In order to remain in compliance while international students are in the US on their exchange, monthly contact must be made with the students and their host families, and all contact must be documented in my.yfu.org. While international students and their host families must be contacted monthly, schools where the international students are enrolled must be contacted quarterly by a student's Area Representative or YFU staff member. As is the case with the international students and host families, contacts with schools must be documented in my.yfu.org.

Orientation Documentation

All host family and exchange student orientations must be documented with specific paperwork in order to be in compliance. Furthermore, this paperwork must be submitted to the District Office by the YFU volunteer or staff member who conducted the orientation(s) within 30 days in order for him/her to be reimbursed for his/her related expenses. The required paperwork for each orientation may be found in the Volunteer Lounge of my.yfu.org and includes the following:

- Orientation Reporting Form
- Invitation Record
- Attendance Sheet (Must include the names and signatures of all host families and/or exchange students who attended)
- Program Agenda
- Participant Evaluations

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CSIET and State Department Audits

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs, to provide leadership and support to the exchange and educational communities so that youth are provided with meaningful and safe international exchange experiences, and to promote the importance and educational value of international youth exchange. CSIET has been promoting international youth exchanges since 1984.

⁹⁸ http://my.yfu.org/dept/eandt/HF_Application_2008/School_Acceptance_Form.doc

CSJET's annual publication, the [CSJET Advisory List](#)⁹⁹, contains information about programs which have been evaluated and deemed to meet CSJET's national standards. The CSJET Advisory List contains information about [70 international youth travel and exchange organizations](#)¹⁰⁰. Each organization's listing includes: countries served, brief program descriptions, cost estimates, financial aid opportunities, and complete contact information. The Advisory List is annually distributed to all the high schools in the United States, and hundreds of parents and youth who are seeking interesting and reliable travel and exchange learning opportunities.

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The US Department of State facilitates and oversees activities by designating public and private entities to act as sponsors of Exchange Visitor Programs. The purpose is to provide foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experiences. Americans are also encouraged to participate in educational and cultural programs in other countries. YFU exchange students enter the US on a J-1 visa. The Department of State conducts annual audits of YFU to insure that all regulations and guidelines are met to maintain a quality program. The audits pay special attention to documentation of all regulations and policies concerning host families, volunteers, and students.

Volunteer Liability Insurance Coverage

Active and registered YFU volunteers are covered by the same general liability insurance coverage that protects YFU USA as a non-profit corporation. This coverage is in force while volunteers are acting at the direction of staff and within the scope of their duties for YFU so long as the YFU volunteer is following all YFU policies and procedures. It is important that field directors orient and train their volunteers to ensure they understand the scope of their duties. The liability insurance coverage protects YFU USA and volunteers in matters involving bodily injury or property damage to third parties (i.e., persons other than YFU USA or the volunteer). However, the liability insurance does not extend to situations involving the use of owned or leased automobiles. Such coverage is typically provided under personal automobile insurance policies.

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Rental Car Policy

For complete information on YFU's [rental car policy](#)¹⁰¹ and insurance please visit my.yfu.org. Under "Dept" click on Finance and you will find the policy for car rental. As a reminder, *do not* purchase supplemental insurance when renting a car. This overrides YFU insurance and you will not be reimbursed for it. The exception is when transporting a group of students in a rental vehicle. Please contact your supervisor (District Director) in such situations, as YFU will require and reimburse supplemental insurance in cases of group transportation by leased vehicle.

Additional Insurance for YFU events

Often times a vendor will ask for a copy of YFU's Certificate of Insurance when leasing a venue to hold a YFU event. You can request this from your District Office Coordinator (DOC). When purchasing additional insurance for YFU events, consult with your DOC to find out the correct procedure for your district.

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⁹⁹ <http://www.csiet.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=748>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.csiet.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=66167>

¹⁰¹ <http://my.yfu.org/dept/finance/documents/Rental%20Car%20Insurance.doc>