Ensuring Safety and Success on YFU Exchange: Host Family Vetting and Placement

Presenters: Amy Ballard, Director, Quality Assurance & Chris Jacobs, YFU Registrar
Objectives

- Describe the importance of compliance
- Use acronyms correctly in work
- List key compliance requirements associated with the three compliance areas: 1) Host family; 2) Area Representatives; 3) School Enrollment
- Identify the correct paperwork for Special Placements
Why???

Why should I care about compliance during host family vetting and placements?

- High quality, **SAFE** programming for students, host family and school

- Two sets of **overlapping** rules: YFU Basic Standards & US DOS J1 visa regs

- Placement **requirements** keep YFU in **compliance** with the standards and regs
Acronyms

People & Stakeholder Groups

Std - Student  IS - International Student  NP - Natural Parents

DOS - Department of State  PO - Placement Organization

DD - District Director  FD - Field Director

AR - Area Representative  RS - Registration Specialist

SSM - Support Services Manager  DOC - District Office Coordinator (is the RS in NE)

HF - Host Family;  HFa - Host Father;  HMo - Host Mother
Acronyms

**Activities, Actions and Locations**

**CBC** – Criminal Background Check

**HFI** - Host Family Interface

**NO**- National Office

**PO**- Placement Organization

**SAF**- School Acceptance Form

**SEE** - Student Environmental Evaluation
Initiating Placement Activity

First Placement (summer or winter program start IS)
- Arrival OR
- Permanent

Replacement (Change in HF)
- Temporary OR
- Permanent
Three Required Components for Placement:

- Host Family
- Area Representative
- School Enrollment
Host Family Requirements
Host Family Sources

** Newly Recruited or Returning HF **

- Prior host family from another org \(^{(1)}\)

** Direct Placements **

- Personal connection of NP/IS

- Not permitted with any relatives \(^{(2)}\)
Special Placements

- **Double Placement**
  - Two IS cannot be from the same country or speak the same native language (3)

- **Single Person Placement**
  - Single male host may not host a female student
  - Single female host must be at least 15 years older than the male student

- **Domestic Partnerships**
  - Unmarried couples and same sex host parents
Double Placement: J-1 OR F-1

- J1 + J1 = signed consent forms from both students, NP, HF, and school
- J1 + F1 = signed/dated consents from J-1 IS only
- YFU IS with different PO IS
  - Consent outlined with PO
  - Required explanation on why

Special Placement Paperwork
Special Placement Paperwork cont.

Single Person Host

Additional Checklist

• Oversight & Recommendations (5)
  - Single Person new to hosting with YFU: requires SSM, FD, AR oversight agreement via email
  - Single Person with YFU hosting experience: requires SSM recommendation via email

• IS/NP consent form

• Additional references (5)
• Oversight & Recommendations<sup>(5)</sup>
  - New to hosting with YFU: requires SSM, FD, AR oversight agreement
  - With YFU hosting experience: requires SSM recommendation

• IS/NP consent form

• Additional references<sup>(5)</sup>
Host Family Screening Checklist

- Used by Registration Specialist (RS) to ensure that ALL parts of the placements are complete

Signed/dated documentation is central to YFU’s compliance.

“If it isn’t signed/dated - it didn’t happen.”
Step 1 – Our partners find stds who want to study abroad in the US and begin collecting their paperwork in a system called fileflow. Those stds are contracted once their documents are all submitted to fileflow and once that’s happened the std files are made available to us in my.yfu.org.

Step 2 – We review those files for missing info, HF letter redaction, 10% issues, church attendance questions, and other important items that require follow up

Step 3 – The volunteer profile writing team is assigned those files and when complete they are reviewed for compliance and quality. I then assign those files equitably among the districts, with consideration given to direct placements, national wishlist kids, and profile writer picks.

Step 4 – DD’s determine when the files are field assigned and released to volunteers, sometimes with the help of their Registration Specialist.

Step 5 – Field staff find prospective HF’s and schools to enroll stds, they assign volunteers to area rep and do in home interviews, and once the whole app is complete the registration specialists finalize the placements.
Host Family

- Registration Specialists verify and record all required HF screening elements prior to transacting placement
- HF Application Data & HF Agreement
- Interview & Annual Home Review
- Photos
- References
- CBC’s
- Area Rep
- School Acceptance Form
- Signed/dated documentation is central to YFU’s compliance. “If it isn’t signed/dated - it didn’t happen.”

Quality Assurance monitors HF screening elements after placement is transacted.
Host Family

HF Application Data Review & Agreement (Annual Update)

Regulations and standards require financial ability and commitment to support basics for the IS [6]

• Financial (35K+)
  – Income Review
  – No needs-based subsidies
• 3 Meals a day
• Transportation to school and activities
• Housing (bedroom, storage, study space)
• Age requirements for HP

HF agreement outlines responsibilities and collects HP’s signed acceptance
May NOT be the same person who completed the references (8)

- Interview every three years
- Annual Home Review - each app. cycle to collect info that has changed
- Responses requiring follow up: “Do not recommend” or “conditional” recommendation
- Irregular/unclear responses
Interview & Home Review

- Additional Items which must be completed...
  - Collects information which is largely static – not changing
  - Annual update required
  - Collects info likely to change
  - Do not or conditional recommend
  - Irregular/unclear responses
Required Photos (9)

- Front of home
- Kitchen
- Living room
- Student bedroom(s) - annual update required
- Bathroom
- Optional - HF photo

Three year application span, except bedroom
HF References

Three year application span

- Must be completed by YFU rep UNRELATED to the rep who completed the HF interview

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- Responses requiring follow up:

“Do not recommend” or “conditional” recommendation
Host Family Criminal Background Check (CBCs)

- **HF adults requiring CBCs**
  - Ages 17+ and living part-time in house
  - Ages 17+ that join household after STU arrival

- **CBC Review**
  - RS completes initial review against HF disclosures
  - Quality Assurance conducts second review if there are areas of concern
  - Add CBC to HF application

- **Emergency replacements: minimum required components**
Area Representative Requirements
Trained/eligible for AR assignments per my.yfu

- Door-to-door distance to HF is 100 miles or fewer miles
- My.YFU indicator is not exact
- If no AR is within 100 miles:
  - Placements 100-120 miles from HR to AR may be approved via request for exception
  - Identify new volunteer
  - Placements over >120 miles CANNOT be approved
- If AR is “away” for more than a month, a new AR must be assigned
- Mileage in my.yfu is not exact – assignments @ 90 miles or more may be >100 miles and must be verified by door to door mileage check (mapquest)
School Acceptance Form requires (12):

- Names of HF, student, country, AR (for replacements, school is informed of HF by YFU)
- Tuition statement (is cost waived, or amount of payment needed)
- Date and signature of principal or other official

* School packet is sent from RS
Schools Enrolling over Five Students:

- Letter from the school is required stating willingness to accept more than five students.

- How to request the letter?
Orientation!

**Pre-Arrival Orientation for HF**
- HF attendance required; signed/dated proof of attendance
- Group event or One-on-one (in person, online)

**IS Post Arrival**
- 100% STD attendance required; signed/dated proof of attendance
- Group event or One-one-one opportunity (in-person)
**RED FLAGS**

**RS tracks/ follows up on missing requirements:**

- Emergency Replacements
  - missing screening elements

- Home improvements (missing beds, repairs needed)

- Follow up and tracking

- RS/DD asks FD to monitor for completion
References

• [1] “DOS requires placement organizations to verify a HF is in eligible to host again with prior hosting organization.”

• [2] “(d) Program Administration
(4) Place no exchange student with his or her relatives;”

(ii) Place more than one exchange student with a host family without the express prior written consent of the host family, the natural parents, and the students being placed.
Under no circumstance may more than two exchange students be placed with a host family, or in the home of a local coordinator, regional coordinator, or volunteer. Sponsors may not place students from the same countries or with the same native languages in a single home.”
“(j) Host Family Application & Selection
(9) Ensure that a potential single adult host parent without a child in the home undergoes a secondary level review by an organizational representative other than the individual who recruited and selected the applicant. Such secondary review should include demonstrated evidence of the individual's friends or family who can provide an additional support network for the exchange student and evidence of the individual's ties to his/her community. Both the exchange student and his or her natural parents must agree in writing in advance of the student's placement with a single adult host parent without a child in the home.”

“(j) Host Family Application & Selection
(6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and is not receiving needs-based government subsidies for food or housing,”
(j) Host Family Application & Selection
(7) Verify that each member of the host family household 18 years of age and older, as well as any new adult member added to the household, or any member of the host family household who will turn eighteen years of age during the exchange student’s stay in that household, has undergone a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice’s National Sex Offender Public Registry);

(5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references from within the community from individuals who are not relatives of the potential host family or representatives of the sponsor (i.e., field staff or volunteers), attesting to the host family’s good reputation and character;
Host Family Application & Selection

(2) The host family application must be designed to provide a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment (to include photographs of the host family home's exterior and grounds, kitchen, student's bedroom, bathroom, and family or living room),

(5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references from within the community from individuals who are not relatives of the potential host family or representatives of the sponsor (i.e., field staff or volunteers), attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;
References

- (d) Program Administration

(5) Make no exchange student placement beyond 120 miles of the home of the local coordinator authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from that exchange student's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program; NOTE: YFU placement standards require Area Reps to live within 100 miles of the student/host family based on the YFU database measurements.

- (f) Student enrollment

(1) Sponsors must secure prior written acceptance for the enrollment of any exchange student in a United States public or private secondary school. Such prior acceptance must:

(i) Be secured from the school principal or other authorized school administrator of the school or school system that the exchange student will attend; and (ii) include written arrangements concerning the payment of tuition or waiver thereof if applicable.

(2) Under no circumstance may a sponsor facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a written school placement has not been secured.

[96] DOS REGS

References
References

• [13] "(f) Student enrollment. (6) Sponsors may not facilitate the enrollment of more than five exchange students in one school unless the school itself has requested, in writing, the placement of more than five students from the sponsor."
Questions about Compliance and regulations can be directed to Amy Ballard at aballard@yfu.org and Chis Jacobs at cjacobs@yfu.org.