

speaking out

why your
sponsor
matters

second in a series;
generating thoughts
and discussion in the
work exchange
community

cīee

About CIEE

The CIEE mission is “to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world.” To fulfill that mission, CIEE provides both outbound international education experiences for university students, faculty, and administrators, and study, work, and internship opportunities for people coming into the U.S.

CIEE supports initiatives, viewpoints, and policies that are conducive to advancing international education and exchange. We champion the cause by lobbying government officials, collaborating with advocacy groups, and raising public awareness.

CIEE was founded in 1947 and is the largest sponsor of Work & Travel USA and Internship USA programs.

The logo for CIEE, featuring the lowercase letters 'cīee' in a white, sans-serif font. The letter 'i' has a small white arch above it, resembling a checkmark or a stylized accent.

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The purpose of this “Speaking Out” is to provide employers with a better understanding of the role of a Sponsor, their value, and the things you should take into account when selecting a Sponsor.

The Summer Work and Travel, Intern, and Trainee Programs are J-Visa programs that allow students and young professionals to come to the United States to work for four, twelve, and eighteen months, respectively. The programs are authorized under the Fulbright Hays Act of 1962 and operated under strict guidelines issued and monitored by the government. The U.S. Department of State designates organizations to serve as Sponsors of these programs. Some Sponsors operate all three programs, some only one. Overall, these Sponsors serve more than 100,000 program participants each year, the majority of whom are on the four-month Summer Work and Travel program.

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Each Sponsor is responsible for students on their programs from the initial selection of the students to the time they return home. Sponsors screen and select program participants to ensure they have sufficient English ability and proper motivation to successfully complete the program. Participants have to be vetted in terms of full-time student status or similar thresholds if they are young professionals. Sponsors are also required to see that participants are provided with appropriate health insurance, meet various government reporting and tracking requirements, leave the country at the end of their program, and are supported if and when problems arise.

Sponsors

Summer Work and Travel participants usually perform relatively unskilled work in the hotel, amusement park, restaurant, and other tourism-centered and seasonal industries. They make beds, park cars, sell food, take tickets, and a wide array of other activities. Interns and trainees perform more skilled tasks and because

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these programs are career-centered, a training plan needs to be filed and approved for each program participant. This process ensures that the experience is appropriate to the participant and the host organization.

Thousands of employers are familiar with these students and use them annually to supplement local labor resources. Many employers seek diversity within the populations they hire, but many others are partial to one group of students or another, believing that those students are culturally a better fit for the jobs they are offering. In addition, since participants on Summer Work and Travel are only allowed to work during their summer holidays from college, and those holidays vary from country to country, many employers select staff based on student availability dates.

CIEE is one of the originators of these work-based public diplomacy programs and is the largest and oldest Sponsor. While employers think of these programs as a source of labor, and the participants think of them as opportunities to work in the U.S., improve their English, and make money, the U.S. government authorizes

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these programs as part of U.S. public diplomacy. Over the years these programs have shown to be incredibly successful in building positive relationships between participants from all over the world and the U.S. It is important to remember that every stakeholder in the programs has slightly different motives in participation, but unless all stakeholders—participants, recruiters, Sponsors, employers, and the U.S. government—are happy, the programs will not work or be sustained.

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Most employers of seasonal staff are familiar with the program. They are called upon by a variety of Sponsors. Some are very attached to one Sponsor or another, but in our experience, many are puzzled by the array of Sponsors offering to help recruit on their behalf and have difficulty choosing between and among the options. But, all Sponsors are not the same, just like all hotels are not the same, all restaurants are not the same, and so forth. Picking the right Sponsor to work with in finding, recruiting, and hiring students for the season is a very important choice.

So, what's the difference?

Structure: J-Visa programs were originally designed to be conducted by non-profit, non-government organizations whose sole purpose in life was to make the programs

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work, not to make money from the programs. CIEE was one of the founders of these programs. We have long supported the idea that it really doesn't make a difference whether you are a for-profit or a not-for-profit. There are good and bad companies in both categories. But our mission is to run these programs,

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not increase shareholder or owner value, and very often we can afford to invest in activities that others cannot or will not support; community meetings, support for individual participants, and much more. When thinking about a Sponsor, understanding who is behind the organization, and how it's managed, is a consideration. There are differences—in attitude, in responsiveness, in concern for participants, and in the ongoing maintenance of these programs.

Experience: CIEE was a pioneer of the work programs almost three decades ago. Over that time, we've brought hundreds of thousands of students to the U.S. for their Summer Work and Travel program or as interns and trainees, more than any other sponsor. Almost all of them, year after year, have a great experience; they leave having worked for good employers, earned reasonable amounts of money to offset the program costs, and of course, thinking far more positively about the U.S. than before they came. We have been around for 63 years, and we'll be around for that long again. We will not be sold or traded to anyone else. You can depend on us year after year knowing that our reputation is our primary asset.

Size: CIEE is the largest program Sponsor of Summer Work and Travel and the largest Third Party Sponsor of Intern and Trainee programs. We represent between 20-25% of the total participants on the program. This affords employers the advantages of size—more students from more countries to pick from and more people devoted exclusively to these activities. Big is not, as the saying goes, always better and small is not always beautiful; but on almost any measure of quality, size has distinct advantages to employers, participants, and all other stakeholders in the program.

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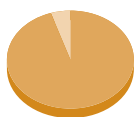
Transparency: CIEE is a public foundation in which the membership, approximately 325 U.S. colleges and universities, and a few overseas institutions, are the voting members. They elect a Board and that Board in turn hires a management. Our 990 financial reports are a matter of public record. Our distinguished Board of educators, former ambassadors, and business leaders provide oversight to our operations in a public and open manner, something that assures that we are open and above board on all our business practices.

Selection: CIEE works with nearly 100 agents around the world in the selection of program

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participants. Most students come from agents that have worked with CIEE for ten years or more. We know that quality students are more likely to receive U.S. Embassy clearance overseas and that they'll do a better job when they are in the U.S. Our visa approval rate runs above 95% year after year. Our agents are experienced business people, often with larger enterprises that go way beyond Summer Work and Travel in size and scope of activities. They too have reputations to maintain and are not the "Johnny come lately" who too often enter these markets without concern for students, families, and/or employer needs.

Insurance: CIEE insures its participants through our own captive health insurance company and participants have access to all physicians through the Aetna Student Health network. This means that, unlike most other sponsors, CIEE has a U.S.-based insurance provider that covers every student from every country. The Aetna network is the largest doctor network in the U.S. and students only need to pay a \$50 co-pay to receive treatment.



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We formed our own insurance company, not to make money, but as a result of our experience of dealing with both U.S. and foreign health insurance providers. By owning our own company, we are in direct contact with providers and there is no one between us and participants/families/hospitals when sickness and accidents occur. When students or an employer dealing with a sick or injured student call CIEE about insurance issues, those calls are handled by CIEE staff, not someone from the insurance company. This allows us to provide far better service and coverage than any other

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Sponsor and be sure that what we promise is actually what we deliver.

Support: We have a full-time staff of multi-lingual professionals providing support to our participants 24/7. Whether it's a lost passport, a work problem, housing issues, sickness, or the myriad of other issues that arise during a participant's stay, we're there to help the participant, the employer, and the family as needed. Each year we field thousands of calls. We also have online chat, online registration of site of activity for SEVIS (the documentation system for students on J-Visas), and extensive online support and training materials to help participants get ready before they come to the U.S. and while they are here.

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No one is perfect. We too make mistakes. Dealing with thousands of young people is a challenge, especially young people away from home, in a strange culture, living and working in a second or third language. There are now some 100 Sponsors who are authorized by the U.S. government to issue DS-2019s, the document the student needs to go to the U.S. Embassy to get a visa. But, authority to run the program is very different from ability and commitment to excellence. Employers thinking about the various options available when selecting a Sponsor should consider all factors when making their decisions.

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