



**U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Private Sector Exchange**

May 17, 2012

## Guidance Directive 2012-05

### **Intern and Trainee Categories: Social Service and Social Science Activities**

**This Guidance Directive is issued to provide clarification on appropriate and inappropriate placements under the social services and social sciences occupational categories. This guidance specifically addresses placements in facilities and residences that could potentially place exchange participants in unsafe environments and include internship or training activities that are clinical or may require participants to have patient contact or perform unskilled labor.**

The Department requests sponsors to review the regulations governing the Intern and Trainee categories of the Exchange Visitor Program, being particularly mindful of 22 CFR § 62.22 (b) *Purpose* (1)(ii), 22 CFR § 62.22 (g) *Use of third parties*, and 22 CFR § 62.22 (j) *Program exclusions*.

The Department has been monitoring the use of the social service occupational category to ensure that interns and trainees meet their training goals, enhance their skills in their related educational and professional fields, and ensure that their health, safety, and welfare are being protected while in the United States. The Department has noted troubling incidents/reports concerning internship and training programs located in juvenile justice facilities and in residences for children and adults with developmental disabilities and emotional disorders. Exchange visitors are consistently being required to have direct contact with clients of these facilities through activities including meal preparation, bathing, restraining, transportation, administration of medication, etc. These types of activities are to be conducted by the host employer's trained personnel with interns and trainees present only in an observational role.

Please see best practice placements in the following section.

### **What is Social Services?**

Merriam-Webster defines social service as an activity designed to promote social well-being; *specifically*: organized philanthropic assistance (as of the disabled or disadvantaged); or benefits and facilities such as education, food subsidies, health care, and subsidized housing provided by a

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government to improve the life and living conditions of the children, disabled, the elderly, and the poor in the national community that cannot afford it on their own.

#### **Best Practices of Social Service Placements**

Internships and training programs in the field of social services are intended to allow exchange participants to shadow employees in state, county, and local agencies that provide social services to the communities they serve. Many social service positions are clinical in nature or require a professional license, which make them unsuitable for interns or trainees. Examples of acceptable social service internship or training programs include social work administration, research, and policy; volunteer management, community outreach, job coaching, and social and human services that help social workers, healthcare workers, and other professionals provide services to people, but that do not include patient contact, counseling, therapy, or administering medications.

#### **Prohibited Activities**

Facilities and Residential Placements - The Department is aware that sponsors are placing interns and trainees under the occupational category of Education, Social Sciences, Library Science, Counseling and Social Services in juvenile justice and in residential facilities for children and adults with developmental disabilities and emotional disorders. These types of placements have resulted in unsafe working and housing conditions and/or have been exposed to clients who are unsafe or even violent. These conditions and situations are inconsistent with the intended utilization of the Exchange Visitor Program. Such placements are contrary to the program intent of the Intern and Trainee categories and are prohibited.

Through the review of complaints and a representative set of related training plans, the Department has become aware that interns and trainees are being used as child care workers, residential support specialists, residential direct care workers, Autism case specialists, and as host parents in therapeutic group homes and foster care settings. The following training activities that have been performed in these positions are now deemed prohibited under the intern and trainee categories: any activity conducting physical and therapeutic intervention, restraining, monitoring clients, and assisting them with meals, housekeeping, and hygiene; or activities in which the intern or trainee may find themselves in situations where the delivery of clinical and/or therapeutic services or performing unskilled labor (as defined in Appendix E of 22 CFR Part 62). These prohibited activities are inconsistent with the objective and intent of the Exchange Visitor Program and sponsors must cease placing interns and trainees in such positions.

Sponsors are also reminded of their regulatory obligations to carefully screen and vet all third party organizations (see 22 CFR 62.22(g)). Sponsors may engage third parties to assist them in the conduct of their training and internship programs; however, sponsors are not to outsource the core responsibilities of screening, selecting, placing, and monitoring exchange participants to these entities.

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#### What is Social Science?

Merriam-Webster defines social science as a branch of science that deals with the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society; a science (as economics or political science) dealing with a particular phase or aspect of human society. These include: anthropology, archaeology, criminology, economics, education, government, linguistics, international relations, political science, sociology, geography, history, law, and psychology.

The Social Science occupational category is separate from the Social Service occupational category.

#### Designation

Sponsors are permitted to place interns and trainees only in the occupational categories for which they have submitted, and the Department has approved, a generic Training/Internship Placement Plan (T/IPP). Although occupational categories are grouped together in the regulations, each field requires its own approved T/IPP. For example, if a sponsor is designated for a training program under the occupational category of Education, that sponsor is not permitted to place trainees in Social Services training programs. A sponsor that offers classroom training and is approved for an 18-month training program in Agriculture is not approved to offer the same in Forestry or Fishing.

Thank you for your continued commitment to exchanges and to the Department's public diplomacy mission.



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for Private Sector Exchange