SCHOOL GUIDE TO RECRUITING INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD EXPECT AND CONSIDER

We are thrilled you are considering recruiting internationally to enrich your school and support your students' learning. There are many benefits to hosting educators from overseas, but we also want to make sure you are thinking about more than just the hiring and immigration needs of the program. You'll need to consider the resources you need to dedicate to managing the process, unique needs in on boarding these staff, support you can provide for relocation and, importantly, state licensing requirements.

Step 1: Who needs to be involved in considering this path?

Consider all parts of the process — sourcing, recruitment, interviewing, licensing, human resources and payroll, vendor management, and so on. Working with candidates that are not U.S. citizens could impact various aspects of your hiring process and you want to make sure all parties are prepared and signed on.

Example questions to consider:

- Has your HR ever processed an I-9 for a non-U.S. citizen? Do they know about tax exemptions? Can they add someone to payroll without an SSN?
- Does a visa sponsor need a vendor contract with you?
- Does your team know the licensing process for such teachers?
- Does your legal counsel need to weigh in?

Step 2: Budget

Just as important as #1, you need to establish your budget. How much can the school invest towards hiring and visa sponsorship? We consider it best practice to bear some of the costs rather than the teacher bearing all costs. Relocating to the U.S. adds up quickly and the teacher will have many additional expenses beyond just the visa such as flights and setting up house. Paying at least some of the costs also widens the pool of available teachers as you recruit and compete with other schools.

If you source and hire candidates through CV, the recruitment fee is borne by the school, but the others can be shared.

Recruiting	$3000 per hire

Year 1

- Program Sponsorship Fee $1750 (One Year)
- Medical Insurance through CV $60-120/mo
- DHS SEVIS fee- one time $220

Additional Fees

Teachers will initially be approved for a period of 3 years, though the program must remain in compliance for the teacher to continue year to year. Then there is a special request process to extend for 2 more years.

Beyond year 1, there will be annual extension fees and on-going insurance if your teacher sticks with our policy. There could also be dependent related costs if they bring a spouse. You should go ahead and consider if you plan to continue covering any of these costs so prospective teachers can assess their costs. You'll also want to decide if you plan to cover any licensing related costs.

Tip: some candidates will simply not have several thousand dollars in savings necessary to get here and set up life. Some schools offer advancements or loans that are paid back through payroll deductions allowing them not to miss out on great candidates.

Step 3: Understand the licensing requirements for international teachers in your state and the J-1 Visa

This is critical to ensure that you can vet candidates according to both visa requirements, if you have your own candidates, and licensing requirements and be clear to your candidates on licensing steps and cost involved. If recruiting through Cultural Vistas, we'll be doing the initial screen, but your school should be focusing on licensing needs. J-1 teachers are required to follow existing state requirements for licensing and are not exempt. A few things to keep in mind:

- Just because they hold degrees and are employed as a teacher in their country does not mean they have exactly what's necessary for the license in your state.
- Does your state have a special license for international teachers?
- It is important to closely review your state's requirements as it relates to specific coursework, credit hours, or other elements of acceptable education. Teachers will need to present credential evaluation reports comparing their education to U.S. standards.
- When are the steps and timing for licensing and how does that correlate to the J-1 Visa process?
- Bear in mind fingerprinting for background checks may require Social Security Numbers which the teacher will not have before arrival and may take several weeks. So, you need to consider what happens if there is a delay and how that impacts their ability to start the job. (more on this in part 2: Guide to Hosting International Teachers)

Step 4: Establish a timeline

We recommend making offers by March to set everyone up for a smooth process and sufficient time. Consider that after making an offer, you and the teacher still need to be approved by Cultural Vistas for visa sponsorship. This could take 4 weeks after an offer. Then, the teacher must make an in-person visa interview appointment which could take two weeks or two *months* to secure. Thus, starting this process early is critical. Teachers are allowed to enter the U.S. up to 30 days ahead of the official start date of the program and arriving early helps them begin the steps towards active employment, such as applying for a Social Security Number, and settling in before starting work. We can absolutely take applications on through the summer and can discuss the potential timelines of each case with you.

March-April – offers
May- July- visa interviews
July- August- arrivals

Step 5: Establish a process and assign responsibilities

Who has responsibility for the program, ensuring relevant staff are informed and working with CV? Someone needs to be assigned to communicate with us throughout the hiring and visa process as well as during the school year as needs arise. You can expect to fill out an application or form detailing the basic profile of your school and the position you offered, as well as how you plan to support the teacher along with our host school agreement.

What does the screening and interview process look like and are there any extra considerations for this type of candidate? Some schools may have HR do an initial screening and interview and then refer the candidate to the next level for interviews with principals they think are a good fit. Do candidates need to complete your standard online job application as well? Do you require demo lessons?

Interviewing. They will be in other time zones! It's helpful if you can check this out when scheduling. Remember that U.S. interviews may be different from other countries. The style, typical questions, HR practices or even laws are not the same. Thus, the teacher may not be familiar with your format or techniques or may even discuss something Americans typically do not. Additionally, hot topics and trends in education here in the U.S. may not be trending in other countries or the applicant may not be as familiar as you'd expect from a U.S. teacher. We encourage them to read about what's happening in American education but just keep in mind their perspectives from a non-U.S. country.

Step 6: Make an arrival and on-boarding plan.

Sure, you have on-boarding for your U.S. staff, but these teachers need some additional consideration and support to be set up for success. Just like the whole child approach, you have to consider the whole experience for the teacher. These teachers are uprooting their whole life! *Do you have the resources for this and if, not, is this program right for you?* Things to consider:

- Airport pick up
- Initial housing such as coordinating host families for a few days or couple of weeks. Lack of credit and SSN make finding housing challenging.
- Community orientation- familiarizing with the area, neighborhoods for long-term housing options, using public transportation, organizing carpools
- Dedicating someone as a buddy mentor or general go-to for advice like doctors, banks, etc. or cultural questions.
- Welcoming staff who will include them in social outings

*Tip: strongly consider whether a car is necessary to live in your community and do not suggest public transportation unless it is truly convenient and widespread as well as available near your school locations. Be honest about this as this will avoid teachers arriving thinking they can take the bus but quickly learning it's not necessarily a good option. Getting a car and a license will significantly increase initial costs for the teacher and they need to know this upfront before accepting offers.

You should also make sure supervisors and key staff are ready with patience. No matter how much experience the teacher has there will be a large adjustment period both at school and in general. Some teachers will have a lot of questions and may be more anxious and challenged by the transition.

Realize how differences in culture may show up in school.

- ✓ Some may come from cultures where authority is not questioned and they may be less used to direct communication, sharing feedback and opinions, etc. in their interactions with supervisors.
- ✓ This may also mean they are used to a quiet/more lecture-based classroom with students not as interactive, vocal, debating, etc.
- ✓ Expectations around parent communication and relationships may be very different.
- ✓ Gender norms may be different.
- ✓ Work relationships may be more formal or less formal than the U.S.
- ✓ The consistent feedback is that classroom management is the steepest area of learning. There are likely differences in how we handle many situations with students. This definitely includes student-teacher boundaries and cultural norms around physical touch.

- ✓ Employment specifics that need review: hours and overtime, availability during off hours, punctuality, benefits. The corporate environment, workplace protections, and leave can vary widely in other countries.

U.S. Arrival preparation

Upon approval, teachers receive an online orientation from us to help them navigate certain necessary procedures, understand the reporting expectations during the program, when and how to contact us along with details like applying for Social Security, U.S. taxes, healthcare and our 24-hour emergency service. These are some items that will help you in the on-boarding stage. **For more details on what happens after they arrive, CLICK HERE!**