

2026–2027 Academic Year

Through its role as a U.S. Department of State-designated [BridgeUSA](#) sponsor, Cultural Vistas can provide qualified individuals with the J-1 Visa sponsorship necessary to pursue full-time, paid teaching positions at accredited K-12 schools. This program is designed as a means of providing cross-cultural exchange of ideas between the U.S. and other nations in the American classroom. Participants gain exposure to American teaching methods while host schools bring a fresh perspective and valuable cultural understanding into U.S. classrooms strengthening the intercultural competency skills of their students and fostering a global perspective.

As the official sponsor of this visa, we will issue the visa document (Form DS-2019) the participant will need to obtain the J-1 Visa and teach in the U.S. and provide in-country support throughout the program. As part of our sponsorship, we offer medical insurance coverage, orientation and acculturation assistance, various networking opportunities and cultural events, ongoing guidance and support, free federal tax software and a 24-hour emergency hotline. We do not offer housing or transportation services or assist with teacher licensing.

Schools can work with Cultural Vistas to recruit international candidates or bring your own candidates to us.

Program Details

Cultural Component: The mission of BridgeUSA is to allow participants the opportunity to engage broadly with Americans, share their culture, strengthen their English language abilities, and build skills that will help them in future careers. Teachers, with the assistance of the school, will develop cross-cultural activities during their program designed to share their home culture with U.S. audiences and create engagement between U.S. students and students in their home country.

School Eligibility: Schools must be in operation for at least one academic year and accredited either by a private academic accrediting organization or by the state. If no accreditation process exists at the state level, public schools must be able to demonstrate they are meeting the state's standards annually unless they have a private accreditation certificate. Cultural Vistas reviews publicly available data on school accountability or other metrics to assess public school eligibility. [Check our website for a current list of states where we can place teachers in public schools.](#) Accredited private schools in any state are eligible. Schools that include daycare, pre-school and kindergarten only do not qualify.

Positions: The J-1 Teacher program allows for full-time positions as teacher of record where the teacher is responsible for delivery of instruction, lesson planning, grading and assessment of student progress. Schools may offer positions in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade or in pre-kindergarten if they are part of a regular course of study in an accredited language-immersion elementary program. Positions, including duties, responsibilities, hours of employment, and compensation, must be commensurate with those of similarly situated teachers in the school or district. Teachers can only be appointed temporarily to positions, even if the teaching positions are permanent, and they cannot lead to tenure.

- Assistants, aides, administrative positions, or other non-instructional positions are not permitted.
- Speech, Language and Hearing pathologists or other occupational services are not permitted.
- Special education teachers may qualify depending on the position.
- Teachers should be assigned to one school and cannot act as itinerant teachers.
- J-1 teachers cannot make up more than 20% of a school's teaching staff.
- Online teaching or schools are not permitted.

Program Duration: Five years maximum. Teachers are expected to start their program at the beginning of the school year (Fall). Teachers will be approved initially for three years of program eligibility and schools will confirm renewal each spring. In the third year, teachers have the option to request an additional two years if all requirements are met. This is a non-immigrant visa, meaning it is intended as a temporary experience and the teacher will return home at the end of the program. Non-immigrant visa applicants must demonstrate this intent to the consular officer, in addition to us, in order to be approved for the visa.

Written Offer: The host school in the United States must make a formal, written offer to the international candidate outlining the terms and conditions of employment, compensation and benefits, and all costs or deductions associated. (Schools must provide a copy of this offer as part of the application)

Teacher Eligibility ([Download our Teacher Qualifications Checklist](#))

- ✓ Meets the qualifications for teaching in primary or secondary schools in his or her home country
- ✓ Minimum two years of full-time teaching experience at primary or secondary schools outside of the U.S. relevant to the position offered in subject/grade level. (student teaching, internships, tutoring, assistants, university teaching do not count)
- ✓ Is currently teaching outside the U.S. at the time of application in K-12 schools (not tutoring, online schools, university teaching etc.) or,
 - if not currently teaching, has had at least two years of full-time teaching experience in K-12 schools outside the U.S. within the past eight years *and* within 12 months has received or will receive an advanced degree in education or the subject you plan to teach. **AND**
 - has not been in the U.S. more than two years

- ✓ Possesses the equivalent of a four-year bachelor's degree *in education or the subject they plan to teach*.**see below for more details on this.
- ✓ Satisfies the teaching eligibility standards of the state in which he or she will teach (licenses, tests, etc.)
- ✓ Is of good reputation and character
- ✓ Is able to plan and implement cross-cultural activity to foster dialogue between students
- ✓ Seeks to come to the United States for the purpose of teaching full-time, and share their culture, temporarily and will return home to apply their learning. Program does not lead to citizenship/residency.
- ✓ English proficiency

Education Requirements (regardless of work experience)

Possesses the equivalent of a four-year bachelor's degree *in education or the subject they plan to teach*. Take this statement literally as you evaluate your own diplomas against the criteria. See below for how to match diplomas with U.S. positions. Keep in mind licenses issued by state departments of education are not required for private school teachers in most cases and not for charter school teachers in many cases.

For grade level elementary positions, i.e. all subjects third grade, you must have a bachelor or higher equivalent in EDUCATION. Some state licensure authorities will require your degree be in elementary education specifically.

For subject specific positions, i.e. grade 7 math or grade 10 chemistry, you must have a bachelor or higher equivalent in EDUCATION or that specific SUBJECT. In some states, you need both to be licensed.

If your degree is ENGLISH or specific to teaching the English language, you are only qualified to teach ENGLISH in many cases despite your work experience. Our assessment depends on the credential evaluation report equivalence statement which could be either of these.

- Bachelor's degree in education with an emphasis on teaching English may be able to teach more broadly than just English depending on state licensing requirements.
- Bachelor's degree in teaching English can only teach English

To teach your own native language, you must have a bachelor or higher equivalent in EDUCATION or LANGUAGES (generally or specific to your language). A degree equivalent to teaching English only does not qualify to teach other languages.

*All candidates must submit a formal [credential evaluation report](#) they purchase from a professional agency stating the equivalence of their degree in U.S. standards. **Degrees less than 4 years** may not qualify as a bachelor's degree. A one-year teaching certificate may also not qualify.

Important Considerations for teachers and schools

There are many aspects to consider when deciding to participate in these programs and for a teacher to relocate to the U.S. We encourage both teachers and schools to discuss and prepare for the needs of the teacher in this transition to ensure the most successful experience.

Cost of Living: Teachers need to evaluate all the various costs of relocating to the U.S. and will need assistance from the school to evaluate potential expenses in the host community including options for housing and transportation. During the application process, we will ask the teacher to submit an estimated budget to demonstrate they are able to meet expenses. When looking at the total cost of the program, don't forget to consider up front types of costs related to securing housing such as security deposits, up front rent, connection fees for cable and internet, or furnishings that are needed in addition to on-going monthly expenses. You may not be paid for 30 days so having sufficient savings is required. Teachers, [check out our budgeting article](#) for more assistance. You should also investigate public transportation thoroughly in rural or smaller cities. It may be possible to use such systems for commuting, but the extent may be limited to certain neighborhoods, and you should find out how convenient it is for weekends and night needs so that you can fully enjoy exploring your area. Schools are expected to provide support in relocation and acculturation to the community. We recommend bringing \$3000 to the U.S. depending on location. J-2 dependents do not have work authorization automatically attached to their visa and must apply with USCIS after arrival. The J-1 must be able to support the whole family.

Sample Pre-Departure and Monthly Living Costs

Medical Insurance: Teachers and their dependents must maintain medical insurance that meets the specific requirements of the J-1 Visa regulations, and it is our responsibility to ensure they are covered on an appropriate policy at all times. Most school policies do not offer all the coverages that are required. ***New teacher applicants must purchase a policy from Cultural Vistas or alternate options provided by Cultural Vistas for at least the first year to ensure this is in effect at the start of the program without delay.*** Enrollment on a school policy may be substituted later if it meets requirements. Teachers are free to enroll in both school and CV policies to secure the coverage they desire. Teachers should be aware of the costs expected for any school policy. [Download the Insurance Overview](#). **Schools must offer teachers the same benefits as full-time American teachers and this includes medical insurance.**

Licensure or Certification: J-1 Teachers must follow all state laws regarding licensing or other applicable requirements to work as a teacher. Consider the requirements, steps and costs necessary for the teacher to obtain the proper documentation to teach at the host school. This often includes an application, fingerprinting for background checks, transcript evaluations, courses or tests. The school and teacher must investigate what is required for this and the timelines prior to applying to be sure the teacher will be able to obtain what is necessary. Particularly, the type of diploma and education the teacher holds should be evaluated in concert with the state requirements. A course-by-course credential evaluation

is likely needed in addition to a diploma evaluation. Note that the teacher will apply for an SSN upon arrival, but it may take a few weeks which can impact these steps.

Taxes: Teachers should be made aware of the tax deductions expected for their salaries and understand they will be responsible for paying any applicable federal, state and local taxes. Generally speaking, a J-1 teacher is likely considered to be a Non-Resident alien for tax purposes during the first two years. Thus, a teacher may move from Non-Resident to Resident over the course of their program and the withholdings from their paycheck may change. ***While a Non-Resident, the teacher should NOT pay FICA (Social Security and Medicare) or FUTA (Unemployment) taxes.*** Otherwise, J-1 teachers are subject to all other federal, state and local taxes unless exempted such as in accordance with country-specific tax treaties. It is important to note that J-1 visitors may be subject to the requirements of the PPACA which is also based on the teacher's tax status as a Resident. Cultural Vistas provides a free software for Non-Residents for federal tax returns which also allows the teacher to file state taxes where available for a fee.

Visa Sponsorship Fees: Review our [website](#) for current fees including the Program Fee, SEVIS fee and Insurance fees and be sure to discuss who is responsible for payment. Payment is due in full prior to issuance of the DS-2019. *Schools new to CV are subject to the New School Registration fee as well.

Visa Sponsorship Application Process:

Sponsorship process: Processing of applications for sponsorship take about 4-6 weeks from receipt of completed application. This encompasses evaluation of your documentation, interviews, payment processing and issuance for Form DS-2019. We also offer expedited service, which provides processing within 5 days of receiving completed* applications for an additional fee. *Completed applications consist of: Online teacher application with all supporting documentation AND fully completed and signed Host School Application. Note: We have limited spots for new teachers each year.

Visa process: Additional time is required for the teacher to schedule and attend the visa interview at the U.S. Consulate abroad and to receive the visa which could take 2 weeks or 2 months depending on country AFTER receiving sponsorship approval.

Third Party Organizations: Sponsors can work with third parties on administering their program from recruiting to housing to training. However, we must have a written agreement with such third parties. If a teacher engaged an agency to find him or her a position or paid for services related to the program, we may not be able to accept the teacher if it is not a pre-approved agency. Schools and teachers will be asked to disclose any third parties in the application process. Failure to disclose this will result in program cancellation.

- Schools, check to see whether your candidates are using third parties.
- Teachers, if you are registered with or contracted with one, contact us before you apply.

INTERESTED? Reach out to teach@culturalvistas.org for more information.