

# InterExchange Career Training USA COVID-19 FAQs

For current interns and trainees on-program in the United States:

- + **If I contract COVID-19 while in the U.S., is this covered by my insurance?**
  - Your accident and sickness insurance will cover the coronavirus the same as any other illness. Please find more information on the insurance company's website:  
<https://www.envisageglobalinsurance.com/student-zone/interexchange/coronavirus.php>.
  - Steps on visiting a doctor can be found here:  
<https://www.interexchange.org/handbooks/career-training-usa/participants/insurance/>. If you suspect that you've contracted COVID-19, please contact InterExchange as soon as possible.
  
- + **My company has moved to remote work, but my supervisor is able to continue my training remotely. My training plan will continue to be followed as expected, and my hours and compensation will remain the same. Can I stay in the U.S. to finish my program?**
  - Yes, you may remain in the U.S. to complete your program. However, as the country begins to reopen, you will be expected to return to the office once it is safe to do so. Please remember to stay in contact with InterExchange and alert us of any changes to your program or situation.
  
- + **My company has moved to remote work. Though I am working from home, I would feel more comfortable in my home country with my family. Am I able to fly home and return to the U.S. once the crisis has passed?**
  - In light of the recent executive order issued by the Trump Administration suspending the entry of J-1 Exchange Visitors to the U.S., you should not depart the U.S. unless you plan to do so permanently. We cannot guarantee that you'll have the opportunity to return to the U.S. to complete your in-person program.
  
  - If you would prefer to continue your remote internship from your home country, that is ok, but we will need to shorten your program in SEVIS. You may finish projects with your host employer remotely but you will no longer need InterExchange's visa sponsorship for this, and any arrangements made will need to be between yourself and your host employer. Please contact InterExchange to inform us of your plans, and we will send the final program evaluations for you to complete.

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- + **I've been temporarily furloughed due to COVID-19, but my company hopes to bring me back once the business reopens. I have enough funds to support myself in the meantime. Can I remain in the U.S. until I am able to begin interning again?**
  - You cannot remain in the U.S. without training. If you've been furloughed, you will either need to apply for a Change of Host or return to your home country. Please contact InterExchange as soon as possible to discuss your situation.
- + **I was laid off and had to return to my home country. Will I be able to come back to the U.S. to finish my program once things normalize?**
  - Even though we had to shorten your program when you departed the U.S., we hope to help you return to the U.S. to complete your program once it is safe for you to do so. InterExchange will roll over your program fees to a 'new' program when you are able to return, as long as you return in 2020. The remaining portions of your training plan will be copied over to your new program. However, due to the Trump Administration's recent executive order suspending J-1 visa issuance through the end of 2020, you will only be able to return to the U.S. if your J-1 visa remains valid. If your visa has expired then we will unfortunately need to end your current J-1 program. Please contact InterExchange to discuss your individual return options.
- + **I've been laid off. Can I try to find a new host employer to continue my program with?**
  - Yes, you may apply to transfer to a new host employer for the remainder of your program. You have 30 days to find a new host company, submit a Change of Host Application to InterExchange, and begin interning with your new host after approval from InterExchange. If you've been laid off, please contact InterExchange as soon as possible to discuss your situation and to receive more information on the Change of Host process.
- + **I am nearing the end of my program, but flights to my home country have been banned and I am unable to depart the U.S. What should I do?**
  - If your home country has suspended flights from the U.S. entirely, please let InterExchange know immediately and contact your [Consulate or Embassy](#) here in the U.S. They will be able to assist you with returning home if a travel ban is currently in place.
  - It is extremely important that you let InterExchange know if you're unable to leave the U.S. before the end of your 30-day grace period so that you are not listed as an overstay, which could negatively impact your ability to travel to the U.S. in the future. If flights are still operating to your country, you should

be able to leave on time if you plan accordingly. If flights are suspended, tell InterExchange AND your Consulate or Embassy right away so we can begin to assist you with repatriation.

- + **I was laid off and had to return to my home country. Can I get a refund of my program fees?**
  - Unfortunately, there is no refund for departing early.
- + **I've been laid off/furloughed from my internship. Am I eligible for unemployment?**
  - J-1 participants are not eligible for unemployment benefits.
- + **Am I eligible to receive the Economic Impact Payment (stimulus check) from the government?**
  - Exchange visitors who do not meet the IRS definition of "resident alien" are not eligible to receive these funds. More specifically, exchange visitors cannot even begin to accumulate the time in the United States required to become a "resident alien" until they have been present in the country for two years. So, exchange visitors here on shorter programs would not be considered resident aliens and should not get a Recovery Rebate.
- + **I received a stimulus check in error. How do I return this to the government?**
  - You will need to mail a check (or the voided paper stimulus check) to the appropriate IRS location. Please follow the instructions outlined here: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center#more>
- + **Does the recent executive order from the Trump Administration affect my ability to travel internationally during my program?**
  - If your J-1 visa remains valid, you *may* be able to re-enter the U.S. However, InterExchange cautions against travel outside of the United States unless you are prepared to depart the U.S. permanently. Once you leave the country, you are not guaranteed re-entry, even if you have a valid J-1 visa.

For interns and trainees pending arrival in the U.S.:

- + **President Trump issued an executive order suspending the entry of J-1 Exchange Visitors to the U.S. through December 31, 2020. Does this affect my program?**
  - The proclamation suspends the issuance of new J-1 visas through the end of 2020. If you have yet to apply for and receive your J-1 visa, we regret that you will be unable to continue with your current program. Please contact InterExchange to discuss the cancellation process and how to re-apply for the program in 2021.
  - If you have already been issued a J-1 Visa for your current program and that visa remains valid, then you are able to enter the U.S. to complete your program in 2020. Please contact InterExchange to discuss your options.
  
- + **When will I be able to come to the U.S. to start my program?**
  - If you have a valid J-1 Visa, you are able to arrive on a case-by-case basis if stay-at-home orders have been lifted for your host organization/city in the U.S. InterExchange will contact participants and hosts individually to discuss each program in more detail.
  - Please note that [entry bans](#) for a number of countries, including China, Brazil, and those in Europe still remain in effect. Please remain in communication with your host employer and with InterExchange to discuss the program feasibility and probable future start dates.
  - If you do not already have a valid J-1 Visa then we will need to cancel your current program. Please see the above question.
  
- + **For how long can I postpone my arrival?**
  - You may postpone your arrival through the end of 2020. If you need to delay your internship to 2021 or later, or if you don't already have a valid J-1 Visa, then we will need to cancel your current program. You'll need to apply for a new program when the circumstances allow.
  
- + **I need to cancel my program due to the delays caused by COVID-19. What is the refund policy?**
  - Applications submitted April 1, 2020 or later will be subject to our published refund policy. If you applied prior to this date, please contact InterExchange to discuss your refund options.

- + **I have a valid J-1 visa and am able to safely arrive in the U.S., but my host company is not physically open - they're only operating remotely. Can I arrive in the U.S. and start my program remotely?**
  - You cannot begin your internship remotely. If your host company is still operating remotely, then we will need to delay your arrival until after your host employer has resumed physical operations at their office.
  
- + **Can I begin my program remotely from my home country and arrive in the U.S. once it is safe to do so?**
  - You cannot begin your internship remotely. We will need to delay your arrival until you are able to train at your host's physical workplace in the U.S.