



## **What to do after arrival to the U.S.**

**Contact CETUSA immediately with the following details:**

- 1. Arrival date to the U.S.**
- 2. US Housing Address**
- 3. US Phone Number**

**This information has to be sent to the Program Manager, Lena Ryzhak**

**[lryzhak@cetusa.org](mailto:lryzhak@cetusa.org) or [internship@cetusa.org](mailto:internship@cetusa.org) • [trainee@cetusa.org](mailto:trainee@cetusa.org)**

**If you do not contact CETUSA upon arrival, you might lose your J-1 visa status.**

Dear J-1 Participant,

One of the first things a new J nonimmigrant typically wants to do after entering the United States is get a driver's license or an SSN. Like many things, however, correct timing is everything. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program wants all J nonimmigrants eligible for a driver's license or an SSN to have the easiest experience possible.

Following these five simple tips makes the process go much smoother and saves a lot of time in the end:

### **1. Wait 10 days after you arrive in the United States.**

You may want to apply for a driver's license or SSN right away, but be patient. The 10-day wait allows time for all the government databases to update with your arrival information.

### **2. Make sure your record in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is up-to-date and in *Active* status.**

SEVIS is the database that contains information for all J nonimmigrants in the United States. An RO/ARO manages an exchange visitor's SEVIS record. The RO/ARO must place your record in *Active* status when you report to the program. Talk with your RO/ARO before you apply for a license or SSN to make sure your record is *Active* in SEVIS. If your record is not *Active* when you apply, your application will be rejected.

### **3. Check your forms.**

Check all your forms to make sure your information is correct. This is data integrity. Data integrity is very important because if you have different information on different forms, it will cause delays. Specifically, check your Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," for handwritten information. If the information on your



Form I-94 is different than on your passport or Form DS-2019, “Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status,” please see the [DMV Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

#### **4. Wait two-three days after your RO/ARO activates your record in SEVIS.**

After your RO/ARO activates your record in SEVIS, you should wait at least 2-3 federal business days before you apply for a driver’s license or SSN. This gives all the databases time to update with your new information.

#### **5. Bring all your paperwork.**

When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) – the common name for a state government office that issues driver’s licenses – or to the Social Security office, remember to bring all your paperwork. For most states, the paperwork includes these documents:

- Form DS-2019
- Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record”
- Passport (with visa, if applicable)
- Form DS-7002 (Training Plan)

These five tips should help you get your driver’s license or SSN without having any major problems. If you are interested in specific details about J-2 dependents, please see page 8 of the [DMV Fact Sheet](#).

Safe travels!

#### **Learn More**

Driving in the United States

<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/driving/>

Obtaining a Social Security Number (SSN)

<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/resources/social-security-number/>

DMV Fact Sheet

[http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv_factsheet.pdf)