



We are excited to welcome you soon! Please read through the FAQ sheet carefully before arrival.

When and how do I get my host information?

After we receive your application and payment we will start your homestay placement. Students will receive their host information two weeks before arrival by email. Once you receive your host information, please contact your host via email or phone and introduce yourself. If you did not arrange for ISP pick up, please tell your hosts the day and time of your arrival.

This is very important!

What information does my host get about me?

ISP completes a student profile on each student, which includes your photo, interests, family info, etc. We try to include as much information as we can so your host can get to know you before you arrive.

How do I get to my host home from the airport?

If you signed up for an ISP driver, the ISP driver will pick you up from the airport and take you to your host home. You will get an email confirmation from the driver at least one week before arrival. Please contact ISP if you don't receive this. If you didn't sign up for a driver, please contact your host immediately to arrange the date and time they should expect you. Failure to contact your host about your arrival date may result in ISP cancelling your placement.

How do I pay my hosts?

Payment must be made on the day of your arrival and in one-month increments. Don't pay your host for your entire contract period. Your payment amount is written in the email that we send you with your host family's profile. You can pay by cash or check. DO NOT pay your hosts more than your rent each month unless notified by ISP. If you arrive in the middle of the month, you can either prorate your payment until the 1st of the month, or pay on the same day each month (if you arrived on the 15th of the month, you would pay on the 15th every month). Students will be asked to leave their host home if payment isn't made on time.

What is my deposit for?

ISP keeps a deposit in the amount of \$100 to be sure that the students don't damage their bedroom or bathroom. In order to receive your deposit back, you must clean your bedroom, return your key to your host family, and complete the ISP exit survey. Please email admin@isphomestays.com before you leave requesting your deposit back. You will need to provide ISP with a forwarding address in the United States to receive it. For detailed information regarding your deposit, please refer to the deposit information sent to you when you applied to ISP.

How long can I stay with my host?

Students **must** stay with their host for the contract length they signed up for on their application. Make sure you know how long your contract is (2 or 3 months). Students can stay with their host after the contract has ended with their host's permission. If your host family can't host you after your contract period, you may either reapply to ISP for another host family or live independently.

How do I commute to school from my host home?

All students are placed within a 60-minute commute to school by public transportation. Unfortunately, public transportation in the US is not very reliable or timely. Students must prepare for a long commute time even if they are traveling a short distance. Because of this, many students are now using Uber to commute.

What will my host provide?

Hosts will provide toilet paper, bed linens, towels, laundry detergent, sheets, towels, a pillow, blankets, laundry facilities and laundry soap. All students will have a private bedroom with a bed, desk (or writing surface), lamp, and storage for clothes. If you have special needs for your bedroom or bathroom, you will need to purchase these on your own with your host's permission. Most students share a bathroom with other members of the home.

What does the meal plan include?

With the meal plan, you will receive breakfast and dinner daily from your host family. Each host family prepares food according to the host family's food preferences. It's the student's responsibility to be flexible and assimilate to the host family's cooking style

Breakfast: You will prepare your own breakfast, which may include juice, toast, tea, yogurt, bagels, fruit, etc. American breakfasts are quick and convenient and not typically hot meals.

Lunch: You will either buy your lunch at school or purchase lunch food to prepare lunch at your host home. Your host will give you space to store food in their kitchen.

Dinner: Hosts **provide** dinner every day. Hosts are responsible for **preparing** dinner at least five nights per week. On the nights when your host isn't cooking, you can reheat leftovers (very popular in America), heat quick dinners, or eat take out food (purchased and brought home by your hosts).

Snacks: You will purchase snack foods, favorite foods, and/or special foods (for dietary restrictions) on your own.

What if I didn't sign up for meals?

Students who aren't on the meal plan will buy prepared food and bring it home. Students can only do light cooking in their host home, which includes microwaving and heating up food.

Can I change my mind about the meal plan after I arrive to my host home?

You may change your meals plan with your host's permission. Please note that most host families only accept students on the meal plan.

Can I have friends/family visit me and sleep at my host home?

Students may not have friends or family members sleep in their host home. Each host home has their own rules regarding daytime visitors. Please discuss this with your host when you arrive.

Do I pay my host when I go on vacation?

Yes. Students are responsible for paying their host even if they are away for vacation including Christmas and summer holidays.

Will my host have Internet?

All ISP hosts are required to have wireless high speed Internet. Please be sure not to Skype or stream video that can slow down the Internet speed to the host home.

What is expected of me at my host home?

Please make your bed every day and clean your bedroom and bathroom once a week (vacuum, dust, empty the trash). Students also help their host with chores like taking out the garbage, washing the dishes, walking the dog, etc. Students do their own laundry (once per week). Americans rarely hand-wash clothes, if you need to, please ask your host where to hang to dry. DO NOT hang wet clothes to dry in your bedroom. Failure to clean your bedroom may result in being charged extra to have it cleaned. Americans practice conservation. They conserve electricity and water and recycle everything possible.

Students may NOT be asked to babysit their host's children or trade domestic chores for rent by their host family.

Your host will have a short list of rules for you to follow. Examples of rules are:

- Turn off the lights/computer when you're not in your bedroom. Clean your bedroom and bathroom once per week.
- Wash your dishes and put them away in appropriate spaces. Do not keep dirty dishes, food, or trash in your bedroom.
- Take 5-7 minute showers once per day. California is experiencing a drought.

Can I smoke in or outside my host home?

ISP is a non-smoking program. Students are not allowed to smoke in or around the host home (even outside in the yard). A very small number of host families will allow student to smoke outside. Please be sure you were honest about smoking on your application. Please be aware that smoking under the age of 21 is illegal in California.

What do I need to do when I want to move out?

Please be aware of the length of your contact (2 or 3 months). If you break your contract, you are required to continue paying rent for the entire duration. If you finish your contact, but do not provide a 30 days notice to your host family, you are required to pay rent for that month.

Are there reasons to be terminated from the ISP program?

Yes. Theft, verbal abuse, conflicts with hosts and other students living at the home and physical violence will result in termination of the program. Alcohol consumption for students under 21 years old, smoking cigarettes or marijuana (even with a medical card) in or around the host home, drug use, being impolite to your host or ISP staff, not following the house rules, and defiance will cause immediate termination. Students who are not truthful on their application or have family or friends stay with their host home will also be terminated. Please note that ISP fees and paid rent are not refundable for students who are terminated.

Am I responsible if I break something at my host home?

If you or one of your guests damage or break your host's possessions, you are responsible for repairing or replacing the item. Please inform your host immediately if this happens. Students need to take good care of their bedroom and bathroom, making sure that there are no marks on the walls, stains on the carpet, or neglect of the bathroom with water damage, hair clogging the drains, toilet misuse, etc. Students will be expected to pay for any damages they incur.

Who should I contact in case of emergency or if I'm having an issue with my host?

Please contact your ISP Coordinator for emergencies. If your ISP Coordinator is not available, please call the ISP office at 650-947-8879 or the ISP emergency number at **650-450-7662**.

Are there any American customs & cultural differences I should be aware of?

Many American families keep their windows and doors open for ventilation, as air conditioning in homes is not common. In the summer months, expect bugs and insects (even ants) in the house due to open windows. Americans don't heat their homes very warm in the winter since electricity is very expensive. Please wear layers of clothes if you're cold and ask your host for extra bed blankets. Americans ask very direct questions and solve conflicts by verbally communicating.

Americans are very busy with work and home life. Sitting down for planned meals isn't common due to hectic schedules. Quiet time in host homes is between 10 pm and 7 am.

How do I resolve conflict?

More than any other culture, Americans love to discuss feelings and emotions and use talking and sharing feelings to resolve conflict. Americans meet conflict directly. This can be intimidating for some students who are not used to this approach. We encourage you to share your feelings with your host family and ISP staff, if necessary. If there is conflict that requires ISP to intervene, we expect you to be mature, fair, and have the ability to see both sides of conflict. We do not move students to new host homes unless there is a safety concern.

What will make my homestay experience successful?

ISP students are expected to be active members of the host home. America is a melting pot of different cultures and you will be exposed to many different customs and cuisines in your host home. Living with a host family can be challenging (just like living with your own family) so be patient, open minded, and flexible. Say thank you often, smile, don't stay in your bedroom all the time, ask many questions and treat your host family with respect and they will do the same for you.

What do I have to do before I leave my host family to go home?

- Clean your bedroom and leave it in the same state as you found it on the first day you moved in.
- Make sure the bathroom is clean and remove all of your items from the cabinets. The bathroom should also look like it did the day you moved in.
- Leave the house key for your host family.
- Email admin@isphomestays.com to request your deposit back.
- Complete the ISP exit survey.

Revised 11/16