

EVALUATION SUMMARY



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE OF POLICY AND EVALUATION

USE OF ARRIVAL HOST FAMILIES

The purpose of the evaluation was to secure data on the use of arrival (temporary) host families and to assess the impact on the high school exchange participants relative to program quality, success and completion. The evaluation was initiated to study the long-standing issue of the use of arrival host families by Department of State designated high school exchange programs in lieu of permanent host families at the beginning of the academic year.

Key Findings

- **Use of Arrival Host Families**
 - 14 % of high school exchange students were initially placed in *arrival host families*
 - 86 % of high school exchange students were initially placed in *permanent host families*
- **Impact of the Use of Arrival Host Families on Exchange Students**
 - The study found no evidence that the use of *arrival host families*, in itself, jeopardizes the personal safety and welfare of high school exchange students, or generated more substantive formal complaints than the use of *permanent host families*
 - 92 % of students initially placed in *arrival host families* and 94 % of students initially placed in *permanent host families* completed their academic year program
 - 97 % of students initially placed in *arrival host families* and 98 % of students initially placed in *permanent host families* perceived their exchange programs as a good learning experience
- **Other Findings**
 - Other findings provided in the full report include: the most important program sponsor activities for ensuring a successful program and the welfare of the students; advantages and disadvantages of using *arrival host families*; and areas of program administration needing improvement.

Project Information: Carlyn Consulting conducted the evaluation from May 1998 to March 2000. Data collection took place in the United States in three waves during the 1998-1999 academic year.

- ◆ Over 10,000 survey questionnaires were completed by 3,035 randomly selected exchange students from around the world and their American host families, local program representatives and high schools, representing an overall average response rate of 68 percent. The 27 participating program sponsors submitted quarterly reports on their students participating in the study.
- ◆ Telephone interviews were also conducted with a subset of students, host families, high school representatives and local program representatives for more in-depth data collection.

Program Information: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' Exchange Visitor Program Office authorizes approximately 115 non-profit organizations to issue J-Visas to sponsor over 30,000 foreign high school students annually for a full academic year or semester programs in the United States. Sponsors of these private exchanges are responsible for the day-to-day administration of their programs, including adequate screening and selection of all host families and students, and ongoing supervision of the students during their programs in the United States.

Contact Information: For more information regarding this evaluation, or to request a copy of the 323-page report, please contact the Office of Policy and Evaluation at (202) 632-6325, email ecaevaluation@state.gov, or by mail at State Annex 5, 2200 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20522-0505. Additional program information may be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov>.