Dear Sponsors,

Thank you for your continued diligence in reporting to the Department how your exchange visitors are currently affected by the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). We understand your concerns regarding the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and very much appreciate your commitment to our exchange visitors and support of their health, safety and welfare. The response to exchange visitors affected by the coronavirus is a multi-agency effort. As your main point of contact for the Exchange Visitor Program, the Office of Private Sector Exchange is working to coordinate and centralize this information for sponsors. While the Department cannot guarantee the results of any application, the following guidance was provided by each agency/bureau specifically in response to exchange visitors affected by COVID-19. As such, depending on the circumstances of your individual exchange visitor, one or more federal agencies may be your point of contact for questions.

Please note that there are flights from the United States to China on foreign airlines and code-shares with U.S.-flagged airlines. The Department has received recent reports of exchange visitors successfully returning to China.

If the exchange visitor is concerned with returning to China at this time and is at the maximum duration of their respective category, they may want to consider the following guidance provided by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS):

When requested, USCIS may provide special support for individuals who may be affected by natural or extreme circumstances. For those in the United States and need an extension of their visa validity, USCIS may extend, depending on the circumstances. We also provide special consideration for work authorizations and student visa holders. Additionally, we may provide expedited processing for those who may need it. While it’s not blanket protection for people from one particular country, and is decided on a case by case basis, it can be a benefit afforded in special circumstances. For more information, visit: [https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations](https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations). For more information on how to request any of the above immigration services, individuals should visit the [USCIS Contact Center](https://www.uscis.gov/contact-center) webpage to speak with a representative.

Exchange visitors subject to the INA 212(e): Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement will need to secure a 212e waiver before applying for a change of status. Of note:

- Exchange visitors may request the No Objection Statement from their home country
government and submit it as an update to their application once they have a waiver case number. Additional instructions for this process can be found here: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange/waiver-of-the-exchange-visitor/how-to-apply-waiver.html.

- Exchange visitors may also request expedited 212e waiver processing for those cases with an urgent humanitarian need. Requests for expedited processing should be sent by email to 212ewaiver@state.gov outlining the individual exchange visitor’s circumstances and include any supporting documentation. Requests for expedited processing may be made by an applicant, their attorney, or a Member of Congress (or congressional staff acting on the Member’s behalf).

If you have further questions, please contact the following ECA email addresses that correlate with the exchange visitor’s EVP category:

- AGalert@state.gov (Government Visitor, International Visitor, Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Specialist, University Student, and Professor Categories)
- HighSchoolExchanges@state.gov (Secondary School Student Category)
- Teacher_Philician@state.gov (Teacher and Alien Physician Categories)
- AuPairProgram@state.gov (Au Pair Category)
- CCSpooons@state.gov (Camp Counselor Category)
- InternTraineeNotify@state.gov (Intern and Trainee Categories)
- SWTSponsors@state.gov (Summer Work Travel Category)

If you receive any COVID-19 related press inquiries, please let us know and then refer them to the following contacts:

- During regular business hours, journalists may contact the Office of Press Relations on (202) 647-2492 by email PAPressDuty@state.gov.
- After regular business hours, journalists can reach a GPA Duty Press Officer through the State Department Operations Center: (202) 647-1512; or by email PAPressDuty@state.gov.
- Routine questions about the exchange itself can be sent to: ECA-Press@state.gov

We are continuing to monitor this evolving situation and should more guidance become available, it will be shared as promptly as possible. Please know how much we appreciate your continued efforts to address the needs of our exchange visitors at this time.

Respectfully,

Office of Private Sector Exchange