

FIUTS Homestay Program Information for Students

About the FIUTS Homestay Program

The FIUTS Homestay Program is an opportunity for new University of Washington international students and scholars to spend their first week in an American home, and is designed to be a cultural exchange experience. The purpose behind the program is to meet an American host and learn about life in Seattle. The homestay is not intended to be like a hotel or dormitory, and should not be treated as merely temporary housing. Each student is welcomed as a personal guest of each host, and FIUTS hosts are all volunteers who receive no compensation for their hospitality from FIUTS or from the student. The host's "payment" is the pleasure they receive from getting to know you and learning about you, your life and your country.

About FIUTS Hosts

FIUTS hosts come from a variety of backgrounds as diverse as the United States itself. Your host may be a single adult, have a roommate, be retired, or have a large family - all are interested in offering friendship to international students. Geographically, your host may be anywhere up to an hour's ride on the bus to and from campus. While this may make going to and from the University a little longer, we encourage you to remember that if you are a little further away, your homestay is only one week long.

Before your Homestay

- Email or write your host family to introduce yourself
- Arrange airport pickup details with your host family. Make sure that they have your flight information and that you each know how to recognize each other (either through photos, clothing, or signs).

During your Homestay

- Ask your host what their "house rules" are. Can you help yourself to food in the refrigerator? Can you do your laundry? Should you call them if you are late for dinner? What time should you return if you go out? These are good things to ask.
- Keep things clean. Keep your personal belongings together in your room or area.
- Reimburse your host for any long-distance phone calls you make.
- Ask for your host's suggestions! For example, they can tell you where to find permanent housing, where to get cheap furniture (if needed), or where to make a bank account.
- Ask if your host wants help, like washing the dishes or setting the table.
- Share your culture with your host. Perhaps you can cook a special meal from your home country, or share pictures and stories from home.
- Don't be afraid to ask for some private time. Sometimes it is necessary to retreat to the peace and quiet of your room or other area of the house.
- Learn to travel on your own. Most hosts have busy schedules and cannot drive you everywhere. For tips on riding the bus, ask your host family.

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After Your Homestay

- Thank your host. A small gift can be a nice way to do this, especially something from your home country. Let your hosts know how much you appreciated their hospitality and friendship.
- Keep in touch with your host during the school year through phone calls and visits.
- Invite your host to participate with you in FIUTS activities and other campus events, especially when they relate to your country/culture.
- Return items you have borrowed.
- Keep your hosts informed of your phone number and address if you move! Neither FIUTS nor the University of Washington can give out your contact information.
- Share your news from home.
- Keep in touch with your host after you leave Seattle.

The above suggestions are meant to make your homestay experience as easy and beneficial as possible for both you and the host. We are aware that not every match is successful - sometimes, even with the best of intentions, you and your host do not find much in common to share. Before abandoning the relationship, please come to FIUTS office and talk to the Homestay Coordinator. We need to hear about problems that arise in the hosting program to help keep the program working well for both hosts and students in the future.

The FIUTS Code of Ethics

FIUTS is a member of NAFSA, the Association of International Educators. We use their guidelines to manage our code of ethics for homestay programs. NAFSA guidelines are particularly focused on the concept of proselytizing; namely, that surreptitious, deceptive or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable in a homestay situation as the purpose of our homestay programs is strictly hospitality. In this situation, proselytizing means to induce or to attempt to induce someone to convert to one's own religious faith or political party. If you ever feel uncomfortable, or that your host is behaving in this manner, please contact the FIUTS Homestay Coordinator immediately.

About FIUTS

The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS) was founded at the University of Washington in 1948. FIUTS programs create a community of people, both on and off campus, who are committed to international understanding and cross-cultural friendship. As a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, FIUTS connects international students with the greater Puget Sound community through homestay, community service, and education outreach programs. The mission of FIUTS is to build lifelong engagement through experiences that build global understanding.