



# TRAINEE PROGRAM

THE SWEDISH-AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES

Information to Companies





## Introduction

SACC-USA's Trainee Program offers students and recent graduates from Sweden an excellent opportunity to gain professional experience with a SACC Member Company in the United States. The objective of the program is to give Swedish trainees in both specialty and non-specialty occupations the opportunity to enhance their skills in their chosen career through participation in structured training programs in the U.S.

SACC member companies and regional chambers have the great benefit of accessing qualified Swedish trainees for a period of between 3 months up to 18 months, at a low cost, for special projects within i.e. marketing, communications, business administration, engineering, public administration and law, media, sciences, and commerce and finance.

## Questions & Answers:

### What's an Exchange Visitor Program?

An Exchange Visitor Program aims to enhance understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchanges. It allows foreign students and professionals to train in an American business environment providing trainees firsthand experiences of life and business in the United States. The visa used for the exchange visitor program is called a J-1 Trainee Visa. Use of the exchange visitor program and the J-1 visa for ordinary employment or other work purposes is prohibited.

### What's a J-1 Visa and Who issues it?

A J-1 visa may be obtained by students and recent graduates in order to enter the U.S. for a trainee position. It is issued by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), not the sponsor organization.

### What's a J-1 Sponsor organization?

An exchange visitor program sponsor organization must be involved in order to obtain a J-1 visa. The sponsor organization issues the form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility) that is necessary when applying for the J-1

visa at the U.S. Consulate. Until SACC-USA receives this designation by the U.S. Department of State, we are relying on the services of the German-American Chamber of Commerce, Inc., who is a designated sponsor organization. This collaboration is working very well, and the GACC do their best in helping us getting our trainees over as soon as possible.

### How can my Company Benefit from the SACC-USA Trainee Program?

- Your company will receive well-educated, motivated, Swedish- and English speaking trainees, who are interested in doing training for a period of up to 18 months.
- SACC-USA helps you find the right candidate(s) for your trainee position(s). You will be presented with the candidates that best match your company's needs. SACC-USA can also help with the screening and selection of qualified candidates upon request.
- SACC-USA reviews candidate applications so that the host company is ensured that they meet the criteria established by the Department of State for the J-1 visa.
- SACC-USA guides your company through the entire application process and assists with the necessary documentation.
- Short visa lead times. With SACC-USA's help the visa processing only takes between 6 to 8 weeks.
- Low costs for your company. Participating in the Trainee Program is a very cost effective investment for your company. The only costs involved for the host company are a competitive fee for the visa application process, and a stipend of your choice to the trainee. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the trainee will normally pay for their own insurance, airplane ticket and other costs that may arise in connection with the traineeship.



## Host Company Criteria

The host company must be a SACC member, and have at least one fulltime employee working at the office where the trainee will do the training.

The host company must develop a specific training plan according to guidelines set by DOS (Department of State), and offer the trainee the opportunity to participate in activities at the local SACC Chamber up to two days/week, if the host company cannot offer the trainee fulltime training.

The host company should also provide cross-cultural activities such as company functions or cultural outings that will enhance the overall quality of the trainee's experience in the U.S.

SACC-USA recommends that the host company offers the trainee a stipend or maintenance allowance to cover living expenses during the training period. The stipend should at least be the equivalent amount of minimum wage. This amount will differ from state to state, as the costs of living are very different at various locations in the U.S.

## Finding Trainees

If the host company would like SACC-USA to present them with appropriate trainee candidates, they should provide SACC-USA with a description of the trainee position offered, specifying special requirements, time-frame, etc.

## Host Company Documents

The following documents will be sent out by SACC-USA to the participating host company:

1. J-1 Information, Regulations, Guidelines
2. Company Information Form
3. Training Agreement
4. Training Plan Example
5. Training Plan Writing Guidelines

The host company should complete the Company Infor-

mation Form and the Training Agreement and send this together with the Training Plan to SACC-USA.

## Categories and Fees

Currently the following three trainee categories and corresponding fees are being used:

- |                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1. Enrolled Student:   | \$510  |
| 2. Recent Graduate:    | \$710  |
| 3. Young Professional: | \$1510 |

Trainees in the two first categories are allowed to do training for a period of up to 12 months, but no longer. Young Professionals can do training for up to 18 months, and no longer. Please note that the fees might change in the future.

## Processing time

How long the application process for a J-1 visa will take depends a lot on the trainee and the host company. It is important that all the application papers meet the requirements set by DOS, and therefore the application will not be approved until all of the paperwork meet these standards. SACC-USA will do their best in assisting both the trainee and the host company with the application documents, and answer any questions that may arise.

Participants in the SACC-USA Trainee Program should calculate that the entire visa process can take between 1,5-3 months, depending on how fast the trainee and the host company can put together the necessary documents.

Note! The purpose of the Trainee Program is not to find temporary solutions for a person to remain in the U.S. and "work". If the U.S. Consulate suspects abuse of the Trainee Program, the trainee risks having his/her program immediately terminated, and will be asked to leave the country. If intentions to stay in the U.S. permanently are discovered, this will be a reason for not being accepted into the Trainee Program.



## SACC Membership Information

If you want to expand or establish your business in the U.S., the Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce offers the most efficient and cost-effective way for your company to penetrate the American market.

SACC-USA is a national organization serving over 2,500 members in the U.S. and Sweden. There are 19 regional Swedish-American Chambers of Commerce strategically located in the strongest U.S. business clusters, as well as companies and corporations in Sweden. SACC Chambers provide a broad range of services including: market research, partner and distribution searches, seminars, expert advice, and much more. Our members have extensive knowledge of the current business climate and can provide expert advice on how to do business successfully in both the U.S. and Sweden.

Join the SACC network today!

## Contact Information

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