



# **WVCIP AGENCY HANDBOOK**

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## **Welcome!**

We are excited to welcome you as an integral part of the West Virginia Council of International Programs (WVCIP). The practicum or placement, constituting eleven weeks of the four-month program, is a significant portion of the total WVCIP experience. Without your organization's willingness to supervise the CIP professional, our participants would not be able to gain the necessary professional development needed to engage in our program.

WVCIP's mid-career professionals are **not** students. They are young professionals ranging in ages from 25 - 55, who come equipped with foundational knowledge and skills within their field. These professionals are flexible, conscientious, patient, and eager to share their expertise with others, while they learn and develop new methodologies for their careers. When WVCIP's participants are well-organized and thoughtfully supervised, the practicum or placement proves to be equally valuable to professional and host agency.

## **About West Virginia Council of International Programs**

West Virginia Council for International Programs grew out of a national exchange program created in the 1950s. This national program is now known as CIPUSA and has its headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. There are CIPUSA affiliates in Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Kalamazoo, Columbus, Denver, Scranton, San Francisco, and San Diego. For more information, see <http://CIPUSA.org>.

Our goals are the following:

- ✓ To provide practical fieldwork experiences, host family living, and orientation experiences that extend both personal and professional growth and understanding.
- ✓ To provide an opportunity for Americans working in their own agency or company to learn from an international professional working among them day-to-day.
- ✓ To contribute to international understanding as well as provide a realistic understanding of life in the U. S. A.
- ✓ To give mid-career professionals throughout the world the opportunity to exchange professional views, experiences, and skills.

WVCIP achieves these purposes through a combination of orientation seminars, professional practicum experience, university coursework, and weekly meetings of the professionals, and the host family living which is another integral part of our program. Each professional will live with four different households in succession, for about 3 1/2 to 4 weeks each. This is a volunteer service and without this contribution, CIP absolutely could not function in the way it does today. Since we need to recruit households every year, we welcome suggestions from your organization for our host family committee.

## **Expectations of CIP Professionals**

CIP Professionals will expect to:

- ✓ Have specific assignments with appropriate responsibility.
- ✓ Be involved in the functions of the organization.
- ✓ Be a participating member of the organization.
- ✓ Be considered as a professional peer.
- ✓ Be accountable to a supervisor for their actions, decisions, and expected results.
- ✓ Interact as often as possible with the staff and clientele
- ✓ Be active and participating members of the work community, and
- ✓ Contribute to the quality of life and work.
- ✓ Participate as much as possible in goal setting and planning.

## Agency Agreement

As the agency representative, you have signed the agency agreement which defines the responsibilities of the agency and of WVCIP in general terms. We also encourage a written agreement that would address and clarify for the professional the direct supervisor's responsibility (regular meetings, shared supervision, and training), the professional's responsibility (hours, tasks, professional attire, free time, notification in case of illness) and the major activities and associated timelines. Please prepare an agreement with the help of your professional which outlines responsibilities of each party. When this document is completed to the satisfaction of both parties, please send a copy for our information and records to WVCIP, P.O. Box 6313, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506-6214 or you may send it as an attachment to an email to the Coordinator: Deanna Epps (Deanna.Epps@mail.wvu.edu).

As part of the contract, we encourage supervisors and professionals to schedule weekly meetings. Regular meetings will be far more satisfactory than meetings held simply to solve problems.

## Orientation, Supervision and Communication

So many things that Americans take for granted as a part of the work environment and accepted ways of doing things are not at all familiar to people from other countries. WVCIP provides orientation seminars during the first two weeks, but the exact nature of your work environment will require thoughtful orientation on the part of the agency and the supervisor. Please consider the following suggestions:

- ✓ Assure that everyone on the staff is aware of the CIP professional and why he or she is there. Colleagues need to realize that he or she is an experienced professional, not a student. Provide your colleagues with some general information about the professional, where they are from, where they worked, their job responsibilities at their place of employment, etc.
- ✓ Give the professional information in writing about your organization: the mission and goals, agency structure, and policies and procedures. These documents can be referred to or studied later.
- ✓ Some practices will seem obvious or natural to you, but perhaps not so obvious to your professional. Explain details such as dress code, coffee breaks, the smoking policy, paying for beverages, how the computer works, telephones, and so on.
- ✓ Arrange a time, early in the placement, for the professional to make an informal presentation to your staff about his or her home country, job, workplace procedures, etc.
- ✓ Explain technical language and professional jargon used in your agency. Again, if you can present some of this information in writing, it will be easier for the professional to study and absorb at leisure.
- ✓ Help the professional understand how supervision takes place in the work environment, e.g. whether it is formal or informal, one-to-one or in a larger group, and so on. Discuss with the professionals what she or he hopes to take home from the experience, and what to contribute.
- ✓ Help the professional determine how he or she might best fit into the organizational structure.
- ✓ Encourage the professional to make use of his or her professional skills and ways of working in combination with approaches that are typically used in your agency/organization. Structure the placement experience so that the professional skills of both your staff and the professional are expanded and developed.
- ✓ Hold weekly meetings to review activities of the previous week, with observations about their success, and to review the detailed assignments and modify if needed.

**Site Visits and Evaluations**

We would like to arrange a brief site visit in the placement. The purpose of the site visit is to assure that both parties are content with the placement; to resolve, if needed, any issues concerning work assignments and schedules; to receive initial feedback from supervisor on the placement; to promote publicity about the work of WVCIP (and to take pictures if agency agrees); and finally to provide the professional with WVCIP support.

At the end of the placement, supervisors will be asked to complete an evaluation form by which you will be asked to comment on the entire placement experience and the role of the WVCIP staff in making the arrangements. We encourage you to share positive aspects of the experience, and to identify any areas where there might be a need for improvement. We welcome suggestions to help make such placements better in the future. Ideas to enhance the placement experience will also help future supervisors.

**Thank you.**

On behalf of WVCIP, I want to thank you for working with our program. We trust that your organization and employees will truly enjoy the experience of working with the international professional. WVCIP is a community of Morgantown residents as board of directors, the international professionals, and the WVU faculty who allow these professionals to sit in on classes. You are joining a circle that includes a very active community board of directors, approximately ten International Professionals who arrive every year, hundreds of alumni of WVCIP around the world, and other very special people like yourselves who agree to sponsor an international placement in your agency/organization.

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

*1) Do agencies pay the professional?*

No, agencies do not pay the professional.

*3) Who is responsible for medical insurance?*

Professionals are covered by medical insurance during their entire stay in Morgantown.

*4) Is the agency responsible to provide transportation to and from work?*

No. We encourage professionals to become familiar with Morgantown’s public transportation system. Host families frequently share rides to work with the professional. If transportation is a problem, contact the Coordinator to get assistance from the Transportation Committee.

*5) Is WVCIP a for-profit organization?*

Not at all. The organization is chartered in the state of West Virginia as a not-for-profit organization. Members conduct fund-raising activities each year to raise scholarship funds for qualified professionals who cannot afford the participation fees, transportation, and money for day-to-day expenses of living in the United States. As a 501(c)(3) organization, donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# WVCIP Emergency Contacts:

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