



*EXPERIENCE THE WORLD*

# TCC HOMESTAY PROGRAM

HANDBOOK FOR SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL EXCHANGE

TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to participate in the Tacoma Community College (TCC) Homestay Program. Through the Homestay Program, international students experience life in an American household as they pursue their academic goals. For those who have seen the United States only through books and movies, the program offers a rare opportunity to glimpse the ways in which real Americans live. Daily contact with hosts helps students develop conversational English skills, and the living assistance provided allows them to concentrate on their studies. The bonds of friendship established between hosts and students can last a lifetime.



*A host family & TCC Students*

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## THE PROGRAM

The International Homestay Program at Tacoma Community College was founded in 1979 in response to the growing need of international students for alternative forms of housing. At that time, apartment living was the only option for those with no friends or family in the area. The Homestay Program has made it much easier for students to integrate into American life. The program was very successful and grew rapidly. Within two years, a full-time coordinator was hired and Homestay became an integral part of the services offered for international students.

The International Housing Staff works within the division of International Student Services and Programs (ISSP). They are responsible for processing housing applications, screening and training potential hosts, arranging airport pick-up, matching students and hosts, and providing general support to both the student and host.

The matching of students and hosts is central to the success of the program. The goal of this process is to pair hosts with students who have compatible interests and personalities. Because matches are made according to personalities rather than by a numbered list, the wait for a student varies. Hosts are not guaranteed a student placement every quarter or a certain number of students every quarter.

The homestay program is only available to current international students at Tacoma Community College. Hosts may be certified by other programs, but TCC prefers that hosts not simultaneously host those students and Tacoma Community College students. Differing program rules and expectations have caused conflicts in the past. It is important that the college is able to offer assurances that all participants have been screened and approved by Tacoma Community College. Cooperation with these suggestions enables the college to maintain a high standard of service. The Housing Staff has the discretion to dismiss any student or host from the program for non-compliance with requirements.

*“The coordinators role is not to make each student and host family perfectly happy and in love with each other, but to provide an experience, unlike any other, from which students and host families can learn to live together in peace and grow facing their problems” (Peace Corps).*



## THE HOSTS

Our hosts are a reflection of the people who live in the USA. There is no 'typical' American family. Our hosts can be single people, couples (married or not), with or without children, of all ages and from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.



Although each home is different, all hosts are kind, generous and curious about people from other countries. They are looking to host international students to gain cultural experiences rather than additional income. They are happy to have students share their lives and be active members of their households. English must be the primary language spoken in the home.



For hosts, living with an international student is a unique educational experience. It is a great chance to learn about other ways of life and to view the United States from the perspective of someone from another culture. Hosts must always be aware that they are acting as ambassadors and have great influence on opinions that international students form about our country.



To be considered for the program, hosts submit an application form. The Housing Staff does a background check on everybody who is 18 or older living in the home. The Housing Staff also does two reference checks and visits the home to view the environment where the student will live. Hosts sign a Homestay Agreement which can be found on-line at our TCC International Students website. After the screening process has been completed, hosts wait for an appropriate student to be found.

### Host Expectations

TCC prefers hosts to live within a 30 minute bus ride to TCC (with no transfers). Students request homes that are closer to TCC. Hosts who live outside of a 30 minute bus ride typically wait longer for students to host than hosts who live within the 30 minute bus ride to TCC. Hosts should be familiar with the bus route from their home to TCC. It is helpful for the student to have the host do a practice ride with them to TCC before they ride the bus on their own. If hosts want to host more than one student, they must host either all male or all female students. Single male hosts can only host male students.

Hosts have to understand that hosting a student is more than just feeding an extra person. In addition to abiding by program rules, hosts should expect to spend quality time with students as they become accustomed to their new environment. Hosts may be called upon to offer opinions on many issues related to daily life in the US. Most importantly, however, they provide a stable, friendly environment for students. Hosts strive to make students feel safe, comfortable and cared for. They are asked to treat students as members of the family, but are not meant to act as parents. They are not expected to monitor the student's academic progress or daily activities outside the home. Successful hosts treat students with respect and strive to communicate honestly and clearly.

Students should never be responsible for major chores such as cleaning the entire house, baby-sitting, or caring for pets. In the end, although students want to learn about daily life in an American household, school is their number one priority. Homestay, above all, should provide a quiet space with plenty of free time for studying. Whatever the case, it is a good idea to get to know one another before starting a pattern.

## THE STUDENTS

Students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. During the history of the program, nearly 40 countries have been represented with a heavier percentage coming from Asian countries with China leading the way. Reasons for joining vary. Some students want to improve their English speaking skills and learn about American culture, while others believe homestay offers safety and security. Homestay students range in age from 16 years old and up. Students who are 16 and 17 years old can participate in high school completion while they attend TCC.

International students come to TCC through either a short-term program (from 1 – 6 months), which has extra-curricular activities built in for the students, or the regular track where students come in for an undefined period of time. Most students intend to graduate with an Associate's degree and transfer to a university.

Students apply to TCC on-line and include their qualifying documents (transcripts and financial statements). If they are accepted, they receive an I-20 (acceptance document) from TCC. They take the I-20 to the American embassy in their country to receive an F-1 visa (student visa). Once they receive their F-1 visa and let the Housing Staff at TCC know they have it, the Housing staff looks for a homestay host for the student.

Each student completes an application form which provides details about their personalities and interests. These profiles are used to match them with compatible hosts. Students agree to live within the selected home and abide by host guidelines and program rules. New students are required to sign a Homestay Agreement. Feel free to contact the Housing Staff if you want a copy of this.

### Student Expectations

Students have to understand that homestay is more than just renting a room. They will adjust to the daily routine and schedule of the host as a family member would. Students don't have special privileges. Remember: "Be a family member, not a renter."

In order to have the privilege of living with a host, students are obligated to treat the members of the household with respect. They are committed to follow the homestay program guidelines, as well as household guidelines. Lastly, they must understand that honesty and communication are essential to their success and happiness. Even though sometimes it takes courage to ask questions or to talk about a difficult subject, it is important for students and hosts to try. The Housing Staff is available to help. Caring for each other's belongings is very important and shows that you respect each other. Students should inform their hosts if they have broken or damaged something by accident. Students can be held responsible to pay the cost to repair or replace the item.



## PREPARATION FOR HOMESTAY

Once you are matched, both student and host are strongly encouraged to start to communicate with each other via e-mails, a video call etc. Learn about each other by asking questions before arriving in Tacoma.

When people from different backgrounds decide to live together, it is important that they first take time to learn about one another. Television and movies rarely portray real life, so a little research may be needed to discover what other countries are really like. Once there is basic knowledge and understanding upon which to build, successful relationships can be created and maintained through clear communication, flexibility, and respect for new perspectives.

Both students and hosts can experience culture shock. Participants initially feel excited, happy, and a little nervous. As time passes, they may begin to feel a bit anxious about some of the challenges they encounter. Gradually, things which had been sources of frustration become sources of humor as everyone becomes more relaxed. In the end, participants are better able to respect differences. Culture shock is addressed in this handbook as well as additional reading resources to help with understanding other cultures.

## ARRIVAL, AIRPORT PICK UP & ORIENTATION

International students are allowed to enter the US up to 30 days before school activities begin. Homestay students are asked to arrive during the scheduled arrival days before their new student orientation. If a student would like to enter a homestay before the scheduled arrival days, they are to request this with the Housing Staff. Students must inform the college of arrival dates as soon as they book their ticket so that hosts will have sufficient time to prepare.



Airport pick-ups are conducted during an assigned timeframe before orientation week. The Housing Staff will arrange for a college representative to greet the students at the Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (Airport Code - SEA). All students will be met at the baggage claim area between #7 & #8, unless otherwise communicated. If students arrive outside of the assigned arrival time, they will have to provide their own transportation.

Should a student fail to meet the Tacoma Community College representative at his/her baggage claim, the student should call the Housing Staff at #253-441-1896. Students should call immediately if they are unable to meet the representative or if they become lost. If a connecting flight is missed, the student should call to update his/her arrival information. It is very important to inform the Housing Staff of any changes.

From the airport, students are taken directly to their new homes. Typically, students are excited, but also tired and hungry. Some may feel apprehensive. Some may have difficulty speaking English due to exhaustion and stress. After students have a chance to rest, eat, and gain confidence, a normal routine can be established.

Once the student is settled, the host can go over the house rules and expectations. The host will show the student how to use appliances and other items in the house, how to care for things, how and what to clean up, explain light chores the student will have, how to use internet, etc.

## HOMESTAY STYLES & FEES

### Homestay Styles & Fees

TCC offers two different styles of homestay; **Complete Homestay** or **Shared Homestay**.

#### **Complete Homestay: \$675**

Complete Homestay includes three meals a day. Hosts do all the grocery shopping and prepare the evening meal. Hosts are expected to have a sit-down meal with their student at least 4 days/week. If hosts are not able to be there for dinner the other 3 days of the week, they should provide crockpot or leftover meals for their student. If a host decides to have dinner out rather than cooking at home, the host is responsible for paying for the meal. Students prepare their own breakfast and lunch with food supplied by the host. If the student decides to eat at the school cafeteria or at a restaurant for breakfast or lunch, the student must use their own money. The student can be expected to pay for items such as pop or snacks they may want.

#### **Shared Homestay: \$525**

The student is responsible for buying and preparing all meals, including breakfast, lunch and dinner. The student can use the appliances in the hosts' kitchen to prepare the meals and to store food. The host is not expected to provide food for the student or cook for the student. Shared homestay hosts are still expected to provide support with cultural adjustments.

### What is included?

TCC Homestay Program is a non-profit, educational program that TCC offers to our current students so that our students can focus on their study. Yet, this should not be a financial burden for community members and we ask students to pay monthly fees. Homestay fees are to cover costs for food and utilities that will be incurred with an additional person in the host home. The monthly homestay fees are based on a full month regardless of how many days there are in each month. The monthly fees are always due on the first day of the month. Students must pay the host family on time.

New students, please make sure to bring enough cash to be able to pay your host upon arrival for the first month as it may take some time for a new student to set up an account and wire money etc.

TCC hosts are not allowed to charge **any** extra fees besides the homestay fee. If you happen to have a damage case, for example, please make sure to talk to us first and our office will help.

Homestay fees include:

- Bed & bed linens
- Desk & chair
- Closet/or storage space
- Reliable internet connection
- Working smoke detector in or by the student's room
- Access to laundry (washing machine & dryer) and detergent
- Toilet paper and towels
- Utilities
- Keys/security code
- Meals [Complete Homestay]



## Payment Method & Due Date

Students are expected to have cash or check ready to pay to hosts within a few days after arrival. We encourage students to pay with cash or check. International wire transfer is not a recommended method as we have seen issues and miscommunication in the past. It is always due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. Electronic services such as PayPal or Venmo are also options.

## Partial Fees

Partial fees can be used in limited situations, for example when a student moves in or out during a month or when a student goes on vacation during vacation time.

**Daily fee = Monthly fee/number of days in the month**

## Vacation Fees

Students can get the vacation rate (\$5/day) if they go on vacation:

- For 10 days or more in a row
- Are enrolled for classes and will be in the homestay program for the following quarter
- Have given housing staff two weeks' notice AND
- The vacation is during scheduled Tacoma Community College vacation times such as Christmas break, spring break, and summer quarter. If a student chooses to go on vacation during fall, winter or spring quarter, when there is no scheduled vacation time, the student is responsible for paying the full homestay fee.



## Summer Quarter

Summer quarter policy is “Pack & Go” OR “Stay”:

If student is not staying with their host for a full quarter during the Summer Quarter, they will have to move out of their room. Students can no longer pay to hold the room for summer quarter. If hosts are willing to store your student's belongings, it would be an arrangement between the host and their student. Another option is that the student rents a public storage unit. TCC Homestay Program will not be responsible for student's belongings if s/he decides not to come back for Fall Quarter.

The student will meet with the Housing Staff at least 2 weeks before she or he goes on vacation to go over the homestay fees. The Housing Staff will create a contract regarding the prorated homestay fee and go over the expectations and consequences if the student does not return after a certain date. Both the student and the Housing Staff will sign the contract. The host will receive a copy of the contract. In the back of this handbook is an example of this contract.

Hosts should contact the Housing Staff if they find out their student plans to go on vacation for 10 or more days. If hosts have plans to go on vacation for a week or longer, they should contact the Housing Staff. In this case, an agreement needs to be made with the host, student and Housing Staff.

## THE STUDENT'S ROOM



Our #1 goal is our students will feel welcome and be able to focus on their studies through the Homestay Program. The student's room should be reflective of our goal.

Please refer to Page 7 to learn what is included in the homestay fees. Hosts will provide bed linens, blankets, pillows, access to laundry (laundry machine & dryer), detergent, bathroom items such as towels, soap and toilet paper, and keys or a security code. Utilities are included as well. We strongly suggest hosts to have Wi-Fi for the Internet (instead of using Ethernet cable) as students will bring various devices as their communication tools. A lock on the door is not required but will add to the feeling of security for some students. The room and closet cannot be used by the host for storage or other purposes. If a student wants to decorate the room, he or she must ask the host for permission before making major changes.

Some hosts have bedrooms in the basement or lower level of their homes. In accordance with city codes, these rooms must provide safe, direct access to the outside in case of fire or emergency. At first, the idea of a lower level room may not appeal to some international students. Some might mistakenly interpret the room's location as an indication that their status in the household is separate and lower. For young Americans, these rooms are highly desired because they offer the most privacy. Students should understand that the room's location is not an insult; hosts probably believe the student would prefer more privacy, just like an American college student.

## COMMITMENTS AND DEADLINES

Homestay placements are quarterly commitments for both the host and the student. Both host and student are required to sign a Homestay Agreement. All students have the opportunity to move to another homestay at the end of each quarter, no matter what their reason is. The hosts can also request for a student to move at the end of a quarter.

If a student wants to move at the end of the quarter (or if a host would like their student to move), they should inform the Housing Staff at least 4 weeks before the end of the quarter. Students will be asked to fill out an evaluation after they leave the homestay. If a student chooses to leave the homestay before the end of the quarter, without permission of the Housing Staff, the Housing Staff will make the final decision regarding what fees the student will pay.

If the host decides to terminate the arrangement, any fees paid in advance will be refunded and no fees will be owed for the remainder of the quarter. If the commitment ends because of a policy violation, emergency, or other special circumstance, the Housing Staff will determine the final fee.

Communication is vital. Both students and hosts must inform the Housing Staff, and each other, of their plans, and any changes to their plans, in a timely manner. Students and hosts may not make their own arrangements at any time. The Housing Staff must always be involved in this process.

- 4 weeks before the end of the quarter when a student wants to move or if a host cannot host a student the following quarter.
- 2 weeks before the student or host goes on vacation to determine the vacation fees and arrangements.

## HOUSEHOLD GUIDELINES

Different cultures have different standards for polite behavior. In the US, the following actions define polite behavior: cleaning up after yourself or guests, speaking politely, saying 'thank you', asking permission before using something belonging to another person, being honest, keeping promises, respecting the beliefs of others, and being punctual. Many homes have rules and guidelines based on these ideas in order to maintain order and good will.

Before a student's arrival, hosts should decide which household guidelines are the most important. The guidelines that the school has established are the basis for the program, but hosts can add their own guidelines, such as locking the front door, curfew, times for visitors, and shower schedules. Shared homestay hosts should have clear expectations on when the student can use the kitchen and how to use the stove, pots and pans.

Each household is unique, so individual hosts decide what works best for them. Hosts do not, however, have the authority to change rules regarding program fees or responsibilities. We recommend writing down these household guidelines and putting them on the fridge or in the student's bedroom. It is the host's responsibility to explain these guidelines to the student after the student has arrived.

Household guidelines are to be verbally understood and accepted as a way of life. Ideally, the commitment between students and hosts should be more like a family than a business. Hosts who attempt to establish an independent, contractual relationship with a student will lose the opportunity to host for the Tacoma Community College program and students will be removed from their home. Likewise, if a student chooses not to cooperate with clear, reasonable guidelines, he or she may lose the privilege of living with a host. Please call the Housing Staff if there is confusion or conflict.

Communication is key to a successful host experience and a successful homestay for the student. If a student is not following a house rule, sit down with them and talk about it. Explain why the rule is important to you. Find out if they do the same thing in their country. Most issues that come up are due to cultural differences and are not intentional on the part of the student. Talking when the issue first comes up will help keep tensions from rising and will help to resolve the issue early on.



## ITEMS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR HOST/STUDENT

We are here to solve problems, conflicts, and miscommunication. We will be happy to assist in positive conversations with each other between our host and student. Many issues that we have observed in the past are related to these topics below. It is strongly recommended for a host and student to discuss these items at the beginning:

### Smoking



In a lot of countries, smoking in public areas and homes is allowed. On the other hand, in the U.S., especially in our homestay program, many host families do not smoke. In our homestay program, smoking is **NOT** allowed inside the house. Students, this rule applies to your friends if they happen to smoke and visit your host family's house.

### Showering



Many students, especially from Asian countries, are accustomed to long showers (30 minutes +) more than once/day while Americans typically take 10 minute showers. Also, it may be common for international students to take a bath at night right before going to bed. It is best to discuss with each other when to take a shower, how long would be considered appropriate, etc. during the first week. Some students are also used to fully "wet" shower rooms and may need an explanation on how to properly use a shower curtain and that floor air vents are not drains!

### Food



Food is a big part of our culture and often ends up being the biggest challenge in the homestay program. Regularly communicate with each other. We encourage hosts to ask their student what they would like to eat for breakfast or lunch. Students will also need to learn how to effectively and politely communicate with their host about their preferences.

### Cleaning



We recommend our host to explain and show your expectations regarding cleaning the bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc. This could be something new for the students and they might need help in the beginning. Our student should use her/his room with respect as, after all, it is the homestay family's property. In some countries, especially many in Asia, a student's only job is to be a student. They are often not even taught basic cleaning process or how to use many tools and household appliances we take for granted. Some students are actively discouraged from learning these things even if they want to.

### Laundry



Do the first few loads of laundry together. They might not know how to use the machines or how much laundry to gather. In some cultures, it may be common to do laundry daily in the morning and hang them out outside to dry under the sun instead of using a dryer. Depending on where the laundry machine is located, it may be recommended to do laundry at certain time of the day. Communicate with each other!

## Food Ideas

While we would like to encourage students to be ready for an adventure, we would appreciate hosts to accommodate for our students' cultures as well. Some students like to switch to a different cereal or other type of breakfast/lunch at some point. We encourage a host to ask your student and have conversations about what they normally eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner in their countries. And then offer to get these items and make some foods they are accustomed to. We hope you'll enjoy cultural exchange through cooking.

You can enjoy this article *"The World's Best Breakfast: Which Country's Morning Meal Is Tops?"* (<https://goo.gl/6tqF3E>).

The following are tips offered from experienced hosts:

- Make a list of available breakfast and lunch items and post it on your refrigerator to avoid confusion for the student.
- Many hosts prepare the weekly shopping list with the student's help. Some hosts post the shopping list on the refrigerator and ask the student to add to it during the week.
- Ask your student what they eat in their country for breakfast, lunch, etc. Many students will not feel comfortable telling you what they want to eat. Check with your student every few weeks if they are still okay with the food you provide for breakfast. For example, do they want a different kind of cereal for a change?
- Post a monthly calendar in the kitchen. Have students mark if they are going to be home for dinner or not.
- Try to plan dinner for a specific time every evening. If this is not possible, a weekly dinner schedule posted on the refrigerator or bulletin board helps prevent confusion.
- Hosts should make the students aware that they can take food from the cupboards and refrigerator. At the same time, be sure to show them what they should not eat, such as the ingredients needed for evening dinner or tomorrow's lunch.
- Take time to explain the use of kitchen appliances such as the stove and microwave. Things which may seem obvious – like turning off the burner when finished cooking or keeping metal out of the microwave – might not occur to a student.
- Communication is very important, because learning to eat American food is a difficult adjustment for most students. Even though it may take a little time to adapt to a new diet, students must understand they cannot expect hosts to prepare special meals to accommodate them. However, hosts and students should discuss basic likes and dislikes.
- Examples of American dinners: hamburgers, hot dogs, pizzas, pork, chicken, beef, fish, corn on the cob, salads (potato salads are very popular in the US), (mashed) potatoes, spaghetti, lasagna, burrito's, taco's, etc.

These are some typical American breakfast and lunch items:

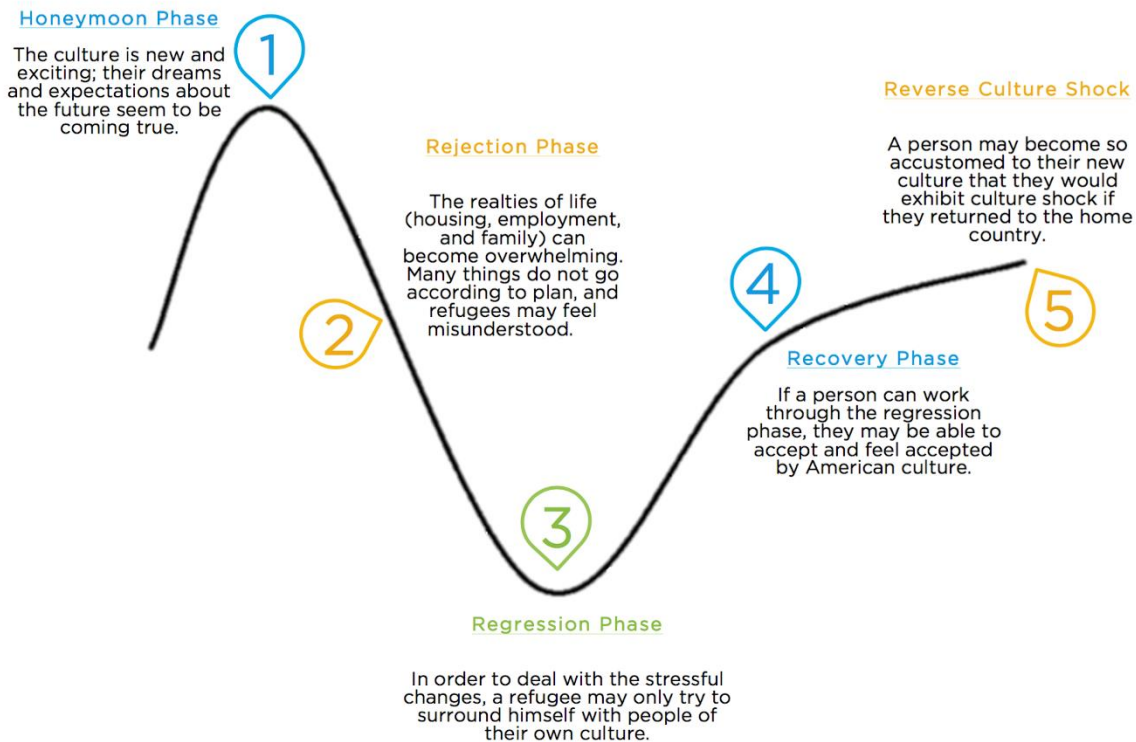
### Breakfast

- Toast
- Cereal
- Pancakes
- Muffins/Pastries
- Eggs
- Fruits
- Juice
- Milk
- Tea/Coffee
- Yogurt
- Peanut butter

### Lunch

- Sandwich
- Chips
- Crackers
- Corn Dogs
- Rice
- Carrots or other vegetables
- Fruits
- Cookies
- Frozen mini entrees
- Instant pasta or noodles

## CULTURAL SHOCK & ADJUSTMENT



Retrieved from: <https://worldreliefdurham.org/culture-shock>

Host families play a very important role when it comes to helping a student adjust to the US culture. It is important for a student to feel comfortable in his/her homestay, and that he/she is able to ask questions. If you notice that your student is experiencing a culture shock, there is a lot of helpful information on the internet.

It is very normal for students to run into difficulties when they have to adapt to a new culture that is very different from their own. Some, if not most students, will experience a culture shock without realizing it. Symptoms of a culture shock can be: frustration, sadness, loneliness, feeling misunderstood, lack of confidence, insomnia, homesickness, negative feelings about the new culture, and more. Some students will find it difficult to understand what is appropriate or not. Hosts are there to help students understand the US culture. Below are listed the four different stages of culture shock. The length of each stage varies per student.

### **Excitement [Honeymoon Phase]**

The individual experiences a holiday or 'honeymoon' period with their new surroundings. The students feel very positive about the culture; are overwhelmed with impressions; find the new culture exotic and are fascinated; are passive, meaning they have little experience of the culture

### **Withdrawal [Rejection Phase & Regression Phase]**

The individual now has some more face to face experience of the culture and starts to find things different, strange and frustrating. The students find the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable; begin to dislike the culture and react negatively to the behavior; feel anxious; start to withdraw; begin to criticize, mock or show animosity to the people

### **Adjustment [Recovery Phase]**

The individual now has a routine, feels more settled and is more confident in dealing with the new culture. The students understand and accept the behavior of the people; feel less isolated; regains their sense of humor

### **Enthusiasm**

The individual now feels “at home”. The students enjoy being in the culture; functions well in the culture; prefer certain cultural traits of the new culture rather than their own; adopt certain behaviors from the new culture.

## **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS**

“Host Family Survival Kit: A Guide for American Host Families”

by Nancy King and Ken Huff

[Available on Amazon: <https://goo.gl/p3goIS>]

“Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot – And Cold – Climate Cultures” by Sarah A. Lanier

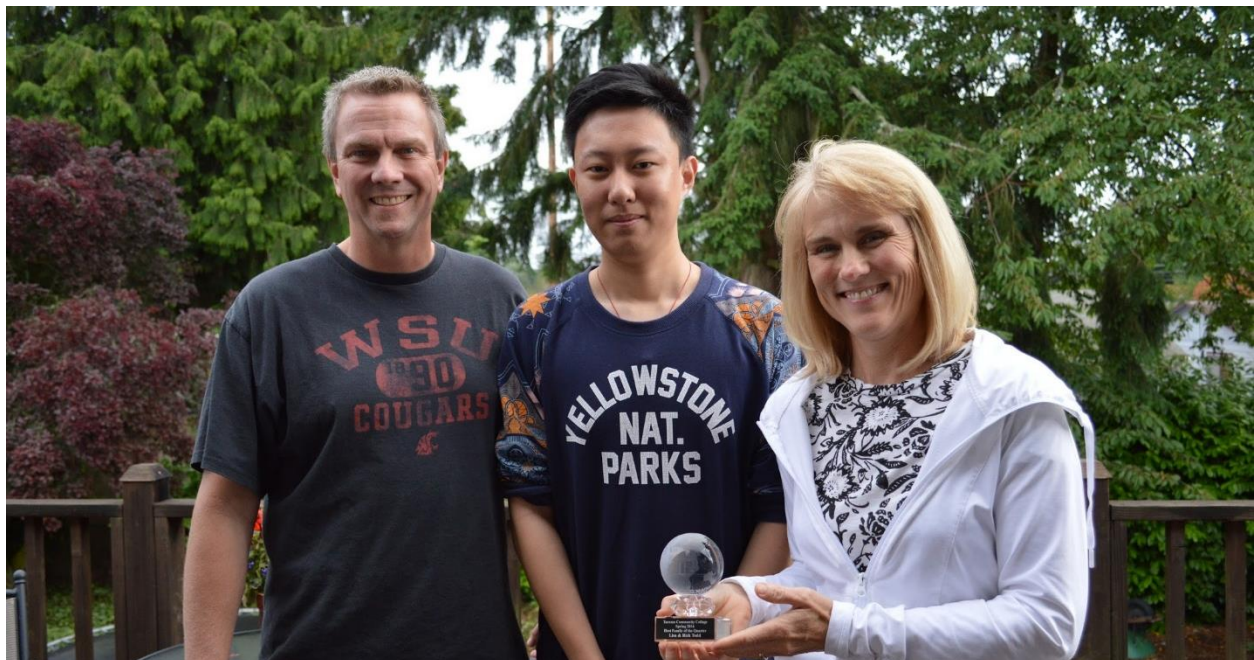
[Available on Amazon: <https://goo.gl/Yfo1g4>]

“Why Culture Shock is Good For You”

[<https://www.worktheworld.com/blog/why-culture-shock-is-good-for-you>]

“Studying abroad: culture shock” by INTO Study

[[https://youtu.be/z5EEz\\_R\\_RiE](https://youtu.be/z5EEz_R_RiE)]



## EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In homestay, you may notice the differences in life styles listed below:

- Leftovers and how we prepare food
- Short showers vs. long showers
- Showers once per day
- Showers in the morning or at night before going to bed
- Living space in basements
- Taking shoes off at the door
- Direct vs. indirect communication
- Saying thank you a lot
- Smiles and giggles when they are unsure what to say in English
- Locking the front door
- Boundaries
- How to use the kitchen space
- How to use washer and dryer
- How to greet people (vowing, shaking hands, hugs, kisses)

Both students and hosts will need to make efforts to understand each other and avoid miscommunication. When uncomfortable situations happen, they are most likely coming from cultural differences.

Here are helpful tips:

- Research the country and customs of your student before they arrive.
- Talk with your student about their life back home. What does their family look like? Do they live with other siblings? Parents? Grandparents? Do both parents work or just one? Who helps out at home? What does a normal week look like for them?
- Share what we do here in the U.S. regarding an issue that comes up. Ask what they do in their country about this issue.
- After a student settles in, sit down and talk about the expectations of homestay, theirs and yours.
- Have a regular check-in time to ask about how things are going.
- Be prepared to take the initiative when it comes to having these kinds of conversations.





## SCHEDULES

Thoughtful and clear communication regarding schedules is very important. Hosts cannot decide when and where students may go, but students should inform hosts of their plans in order to avoid worry and conflict. Hosts are not responsible for what students are doing outside of their home and where they stay. Because every situation is different, it will take practice to learn how to balance these concerns.

## VISITORS & OVERNIGHT GUESTS

Some hosts have additional space and may be able to accommodate overnight visitors. Students are allowed to have guests in their home, but must obtain permission from the host before inviting others to stay with them. If a host decides that someone may not be allowed in their home, it is important that they clearly explain the reason to the student. Students must respect the hosts' wishes with regard to this matter.

In addition to friends, students sometimes want to have significant others and romantic partners over to visit. They may ask if they can stay the night. Hosts are discouraged from allowing this with underage students but may feel comfortable allowing this with adult students. Hosts should clearly communicate with students what the house rules for this situation is.

## WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING

In order for students to stay in compliance with F1 Visa requirements, international students may work part-time on-campus but are not allowed to work for pay off-campus. Students are allowed and encouraged to volunteer anywhere in the community.

## ACTIVITIES

Students become independent very quickly. After hosts introduce them to the bus system and the neighborhood, they soon learn their way around Tacoma. Most students will spend the majority of their time outside the household with school activities, studying, or hanging out with friends.

There are many opportunities on campus for international students to become involved in. Immediate friendships are usually formed with other international students when students are placed in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes. There are several clubs that students can participate in including The International Student Organization (ISO) and Student Life which organizes on and off campus activities during fall, winter and spring quarters.



## HOLIDAYS & OUTINGS

There are many occasions when families and friends travel or celebrate together. They might go on weekend trips to the city, beach, or mountains. Students are often invited to accompany hosts on these outings. Hosts should communicate clearly what the costs are and who will be paying. If students will not be accompanying the host, hosts should let Housing Staff know in advance so that we can help hosts make arrangements for their students.



If international students travel outside the US, they must have a DSO officer (in ISSP office) sign their I-20 before they leave. Students can bring their I-20 to the front desk at the International Students Programs and pick-up the signed copy three working days later. Some students will need a special visa to travel to Canada, Mexico or another country other than the US or their own.

Sometimes, in the excitement of including the student in their home, family members shower them with gifts. They want to show the student they are welcome and cared for. In some cases, students may not understand the family's intention and instead may feel embarrassed because they are unprepared or cannot afford to give gifts in return. It is wonderful to include students, but important to explain traditions carefully.

## RELIGIONS

Some hosts may wish to invite students to attend religious services with them. This is a kind gesture meant to teach the student about hosts' values and beliefs, but students are not required to attend.



Often, the religion of students will differ from that of their hosts. Discussions about these differences can be a good way for hosts and students to begin to understand one another. While discussions about religion are a natural and important part of the homestay relationship, it is vital that hosts and students understand the difference between sharing ideas and proselytizing. Homestay is not a forum for religious conversion and any host or student who pressures others in the home to conform to a particular belief system will be dismissed from the program.

## TRANSPORTATION

Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation, so it is important that hosts teach students about the transit system and neighborhood as quickly as possible. Each homestay is located either within walking distance of the college or on a bus line. Some hosts lend students bicycles at their own risk. If hosts choose to do this, they must inform students that they are required to wear a helmet when riding a bike in Tacoma. Students must have a sturdy lock and a helmet. Students can be held accountable if the bicycle is damaged or stolen.

ORCA Card (it is a contactless, stored-value smart card system for public transit in the Puget Sound region of Washington) is convenient to use the Pierce Transit bus system. TCC students may be able to purchase a card at a special discounted price during the orientation week once students register

for classes. Our suggestion is that students use cash to ride the bus during the first few weeks after arrival and wait to have instructions from the office about the specially discounted ORCA Card. If this special discount price is not available, students can purchase a card at a local transit agency or retailers: <https://orcacard.com/ERG-Seattle/getACard.do?m=2>

Some students choose to buy their own cars. It is a Washington state law that drivers must possess a valid driver's license and must purchase insurance for their vehicles. Students are often unclear on these issues and are encouraged to research before buying a car. The host or the staff at the International Student Office can help. Hosts are not required to teach their student how to drive.



## **APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR (Title IX)**

As a Host in the Homestay Program, you are responsible for looking out for the safety of your students. This includes making sure that they are protected from cases of sexual harassment and sexual assault. More specifically these topics include unwanted flirting, unwanted sexual attention, unwanted texting/pictures and any unwanted touching.

Your student should have the expectation of comfort in your home. We encourage a conversation with your students addressing what their comfort levels are. For example, what some people may see as a compliment, others may receive as an unwanted approach. Even though these topics may be hard, we ask that you keep these topics in mind in order to create a truly comfortable and accepting environment for your students. Please keep in mind that both your family and any guests you have are held to these standards.

If, as a Host, you find out about a negative situation that has taken place, either directly or indirectly, please contact the Homestay staff, so that they can address the situation immediately.

As a student at Tacoma Community College, you have the right to be protected from sexual harassment and sexual assault. If you experience anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, either in your home, with friends, at school, or in the community, please come in and discuss your experience with Homestay staff, or another staff member at Tacoma Community College with whom you feel comfortable. TCC Staff are here to make sure that you have the best experience possible and can help in these difficult situations.

Tacoma Community College's policy about Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault can be found on the webpage under the topic of "Title IX". During orientation, every student will receive information about Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault, and the importance of this topic.

## SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Smoking is not allowed inside host homes. Students who wish to smoke should ask which areas outside the house are to be used for smoking. Students who are 21 or older must respect host guidelines regarding alcohol in their home.

- The legal age for buying cigarettes is age 18 (A proposal to raise the smoking and vaping age to 21 in Washington has passed the Legislature. The law goes into effect January 1, 2020)
- The legal age for buying and consuming alcohol is age 21.



## MARIJUANA AND OTHER DRUGS

Students are not allowed to use recreational or illegal drugs or have drug paraphernalia in host homes. If hosts find any of these items on their property or find evidence of any use, the TCC Housing Staff has the right to immediately terminate the student's home stay with the host. The student will no longer be allowed to participate in the homestay program at Tacoma Community College.

## CHANGES IN HOMESTAY

Hosts are expected to keep the Housing Staff informed about changes in their homestay situation. They are to notify the Housing Staff if the host or student is planning to go on vacation (TCC Housing Staff makes a written agreement for all parties involved), if people are moving in or out of the house, if there is a change in availability of rooms, etc.

## HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

As in any family, accidents can happen. While students need to be responsible for any damage they cause by accident, hosts should check that their homeowners insurance covers additional non-family members living in their home.



## FIRE SAFETY

Hosts should have a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen, at least one (1) carbon monoxide (CO2) detector in the house, and working smoke detectors. There should be a smoke detector in or nearby the student's bedroom.

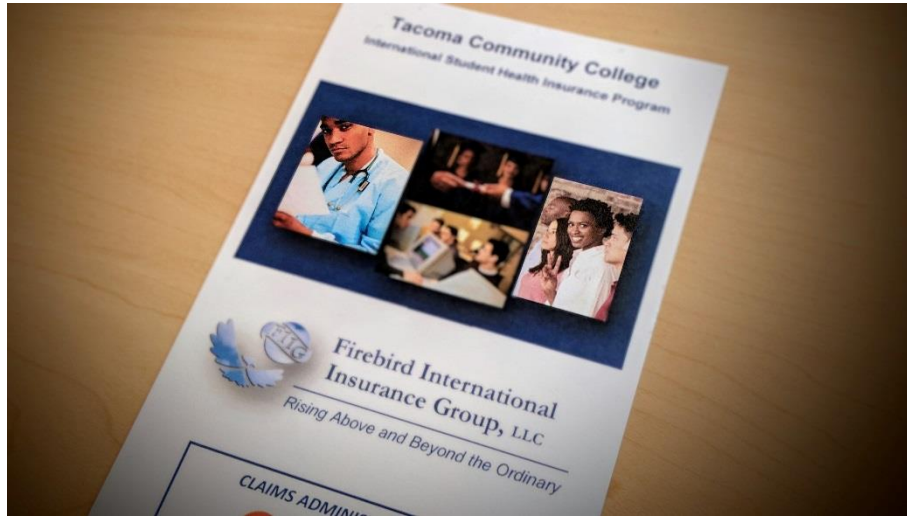
## MEDICAL INSURANCE

International students at Tacoma Community College are required to have medical insurance to attend. Tacoma Community College offers a comprehensive insurance plan, which will cover the students in case of an illness or accident. International students are required to purchase the health insurance provided by Tacoma Community College; Tacoma Community College works with Firebird Insurance. Hosts who have students under the age of 18 will have an Underage Form which has been signed by the students' parents allowing the student to be seen for treatment. **The**

**Firebird insurance is for health purposes only and does not cover vision or dental.** A full explanation of the TCC/Firebird plan is available at [www.fig-insurance.com](http://www.fig-insurance.com).

Exceptions will be made for some students. For more information or to seek an exemption, contact the International office.

Students will receive their insurance card during the new student orientation in the first week. They will need to take their insurance card, photo ID and money for the co-payment to the clinic or hospital.



## EMERGENCIES & LIST OF CLINICS & HOSPITALS

In case of an emergency and outside of work hours, please call our Campus Security Office at #253-566-5111. The Campus Security staff has our personal phone numbers and will be able to get a hold of a staff member of International Student Services and Programs. Please only do so in case of an emergency that cannot wait until the next workday or until after the weekend.

**The following clinics and hospitals will accept the Tacoma Community College insurance and most likely also many plans from other countries:**

### Urgent Care

#### MultiCare Indigo Urgent Care

**Located in:** James Center

**Address:** 1812 S Mildred St Suite H, Tacoma

**Hours:**

Monday	8AM-8PM
Tuesday	8AM-8PM
Wednesday	8AM-8PM
Thursday	8AM-8PM
Friday	8AM-8PM
Saturday	8AM-8PM
Sunday	8AM-8PM

**Phone:** (253) 301-6975

#### MultiCare West Tacoma Urgent Care

**Address:** 2209 N Pearl St #100, Tacoma

**Hours:**

Monday	8AM-7:30PM
Tuesday	8AM-7:30PM
Wednesday	8AM-7:30PM
Thursday	8AM-7:30PM
Friday	8AM-7:30PM
Saturday	8AM-3:30PM
Sunday	8AM-3:30PM

**Phone:** (253) 792-6900

#### MultiCare University Place Urgent Care

**Address:** 4310 Bridgeport Way W a Suite A,  
University Place

**Hours:**

Monday	8AM-7:30PM
Tuesday	8AM-7:30PM
Wednesday	8AM-7:30PM
Thursday	8AM-7:30PM
Friday	8AM-7:30PM
Saturday	8AM-3:30PM
Sunday	8AM-3:30PM

**Phone:** (253) 459-7177

### Hospitals/ER

#### MultiCare Allenmore Hospital

**Address:** 1901 S Union Ave, Tacoma, WA 98405

**Hours:** Open 24 hours

#### MultiCare Tacoma General Hospital

**Address:** 315 M.L.K. Jr Way, Tacoma, WA 98405

**Hours:** Open 24 hours

#### St. Joseph Medical Center

**Address:** 1717 South J Street, Tacoma, WA 98405

**Hours:** Open 24 hours

*\* Hospitals and ER are for only serious injury or illness*



## **THANK YOU**

Tacoma Community College appreciates the participation of students and hosts in the Homestay program. This exchange is the basis for true global education. Thank you for promoting academic excellence and cultural understanding!