

This handout is full of important reminders to help you maintain your immigration status and have a successful stay in the United States. Page 1 focuses on information you need during your first weeks at NIH; Page 2 focuses on long-term reminders.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR YOUR FIRST WEEKS AT NIH

- 1 Obtain NIH ID Badge** – DIS confirms your work authorization in the badge system (NED) when you check in with our office. The rest of the badging process is overseen by the **Division of Personnel Security and Access Control (DPSAC)**. After checking-in with DIS, you will receive an email from DPSAC to schedule a badge enrollment appointment.
- 2 Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)** – The SSN is used as a personal identifier for many purposes, including tax reporting. In most cases, it is also required for your NIH badge process. If you are eligible for an SSN, wait to apply until **three (3) full days** after checking-in with DIS. For more details, see our **Social Security Number Information** handout.
- 3 Confirm your Health Insurance** – All visiting foreign national scientists conducting research at NIH are required to be covered by health insurance. It is important that you make health insurance arrangements as soon as possible. See Page 2 for more information.
- 4 Attend a DIS Nonresident Tax Orientation** – Tax Orientations provide an overview of U.S. tax procedures, terms, and forms. The schedule and additional information are available on the DIS website **Taxes** page. If you are receiving a stipend, you will be automatically registered for the Tax Orientation following Check-In. See Page 2 for more on taxes.

DEPENDENTS

If your dependent (spouse and/or unmarried children under age 21) is sponsored by DIS, certain events and changes will require additional action from DIS. **Update DIS** about the following:

Arriving to U.S. – When your dependent arrives in the U.S., either for the first time or after traveling outside the U.S., please send DIS copies of any updated documents such as Form I-94 or visa (if applicable).

Change of Immigration Status – If your dependent obtains another immigration status, such as F-1 status or H-1B status, notify DIS immediately. Please provide a copy of the new I-94 and visa (if applicable).

Dependent Move – Let DIS know if your dependent will no longer be living in the U.S. or if they are changing U.S. addresses and will no longer be living at your U.S. residential address

TRAVEL

International Travel – The **DIS website** has specific travel resource pages for **J-1 Exchange Visitors**, **H-1B Temporary Workers**, and **O-1 Aliens of Extraordinary Ability**. Remember to give DIS copies of your Form I-94 and any other new immigration documents after you return from traveling internationally.

Within the U.S. – There are no documents or travel signatures you need from DIS. However, it is a good idea to bring your original passport and immigration documents with you as identification.

YOUR NIH ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Your NIH Institute/Center (IC) has a specific Administrative Officer (AO) or Key Contact to assist you with administrative concerns. Contact your AO if you have questions about your stipend, permit parking/TranShare, vacation and leave policy, your NIH ID badge, health insurance, etc. **For immigration-related questions, always contact DIS.**

Visit the DIS website **Visiting Scientists** section for more immigration-related resources for your stay at NIH.
Contact DIS at (301) 496-6166 or **DIS@mail.nih.gov** if you have questions.

REPORT CHANGES TO DIS

Here are four situations to report to DIS to fulfill U.S. Government reporting requirements:

Address Changes – Complete a [Change of Address form](#) within 10 days of moving. Follow additional instructions on the form.

Work Location Change – **Notify DIS** if your work location changes or you add an additional work or telework site.

Extended Absences Abroad – For personal trips over five weeks and research activities abroad longer than a typical conference or meeting, complete an [Extended Absence Abroad request](#) at least two weeks before your planned departure.

Outside Activity – Activities beyond your NIH research in the U.S. often require advanced approval from DIS and from your IC. Submit a [Request for Outside Activity](#) form to DIS at least two weeks before the planned activity. If you are not sure if this form is needed, use the [Request for Outside Activity Wizard](#).

Emergencies or Incidents – **Notify DIS** of emergency situations, serious injuries, or other incidents so we can help navigate program or immigration issues.

NIH COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Take advantage of the programs and services available to you and your family! Here are just a few examples.

Recreation and Welfare Association (R&W) – Provides services and programs to enhance the health and well-being of the NIH community, including clubs and organizations at NIH, events, fitness centers, and more!

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Offers guidance in career transition issues, family transitions (birth, marriage, school, work), grief, relocation stress, and other topics.

Office of Intramural Training & Education (OITE) – Provides career and professional development services to help students and fellows make the most of their time at NIH and progress successfully to the next step in their careers.

Visiting Fellows Committee (VFC) – The VFC holds regular social events and seminars as well as opportunities to connect with many home country groups.

NON-RESIDENT U.S. FEDERAL AND STATE TAXES

The [Taxes](#) page on the DIS website has many important resources for NIH Visiting Program participants.

Visiting Fellows (Non-FTE) – Federal taxes are automatically withheld from stipend payments (unless DIS determined you were [treaty](#) eligible). State taxes are not automatically deducted, so you will need to pay estimated quarterly taxes.

Employees (FTE) – Estimated taxes are automatically withheld from wages (unless DIS determined you were [treaty](#) eligible).

Unpaid Designations – Even though you will not receive payment, you are required to file IRS [Form 8843](#) and report that you were in the U.S. as a non-immigrant.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All visiting foreign scientists at NIH are required to have health insurance for sickness and accident.

For ALL NIH-sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors – J-1 regulations have specific health insurance requirements for all J-1 Exchange Visitors and J-2 dependents, listed on the “Certification of Health Insurance Coverage” ([Form 829-6](#)) provided to you by DIS. You must report to the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES) with Form 829-6 to confirm compliance with the insurance requirements. The FAES is located in Building 10/1N241, 301-496-8064.

For Visiting Fellows – Your sponsoring IC will pay the basic premium for health insurance coverage with FAES.

For most NIH employee (FTE) designations – Depending on the duration of your appointment, you are likely eligible to enroll in [Federal Employees Health Benefits \(FEHB\)](#). Contact your Human Resources office for information. For NIH-sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors, FEHB plans do NOT include coverage of medical evacuation and repatriation of remains, required by J-1 regulations. These benefits can be purchased from FAES.

For all other designations – You may obtain health insurance from your home country or another U.S. private insurer. You should have a summary of your insurance benefits, in English, from your insurance provider. For NIH-sponsored J-1 Exchange Visitors, FAES can also refer you to providers that meet minimum insurance requirements for a J-1.

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