
AU PAIR EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS



Please be advised that the final rule governing au pair extensions has been published. Given this publication, the Department of State finds it appropriate to remind all sponsors of their obligations in facilitating the educational requirements of the au pair program. Section 62.31(k) states that sponsors must:

(1) Require that during their initial period of program participation, all EduCare au pair participants complete not less than 12 semester hours (or their equivalent) of academic credit in formal educational settings at accredited U.S. post-secondary institutions and that all other au pair participants complete not less than six semester hours (or their equivalent) of academic credit in formal educational settings at accredited U.S. post-secondary institutions. As a condition of program participation, host family participants must agree to facilitate the enrollment and attendance of au pairs in accredited U.S. post secondary institutions and to pay the cost of such academic course work in an amount not to exceed \$1,000 for EduCare au pair participants and in an amount not to exceed \$500 for all other au pair participants.

(2) Require that during any extension of program participation, all participants (i.e., Au Pair or EduCare) satisfy an additional educational requirement, as follows:

(i) For a nine or 12-month extension, all au pair participants and host families shall have the same obligation for coursework and payment therefore as is required during the initial period of program participation.

(ii) For a six-month extension, EduCare au pair participants must complete not less than six semester hours (or their equivalent) of academic credit in formal educational settings at accredited U.S. post-secondary institutions. As a condition of participation, host family participants must agree to facilitate the enrollment and attendance of au pairs at accredited U.S. post secondary institutions and to pay the cost of such academic coursework in an amount not to exceed \$500. All other au pair participants must complete not less than three semester hours (or their equivalent) of academic credit in formal educational settings at accredited U.S. post-

secondary institutions. As a condition of program participation, host family participants must agree to facilitate the enrollment and attendance of au pairs at accredited U.S. post secondary institutions and to pay the cost of such academic coursework in an amount not to exceed \$250.

The Department respectfully advises all au pair sponsors that full compliance with the educational component of our regulations is expected, and that au pairs must satisfy this requirement by enrolling in and attending classes in "accredited U.S. post-secondary institutions." Accordingly, participation in certain types of "educational substitutions" - including the following - does not satisfy the educational requirements of the program:

- Study tours
- Distance learning courses
- Volunteer work

The Department wishes to ensure that au pair exchange visitors and host families do not suffer financial hardship due to prior or anticipated participation in such educational substitutions. Thus, for transitional purposes, the Department offers the following guidance:

- Sponsors should immediately inform au pairs who recently arrived or will arrive in the United States of the Department's educational requirement, emphasizing that educational substitutions do not satisfy the requirement.
- Sponsors may continue to recognize educational substitutions as satisfying the educational requirement for au pairs only under the following circumstances:
 - The au pair has already completed an educational substitution; or
 - The au pair has already registered for an educational substitution scheduled to commence no later than August 30, 2006.

We believe this grace period will accommodate those au pairs who had planned to avail themselves of an educational substitution or who lack adequate time or opportunity to make alternative plans. To the extent that individual cases are not covered by the above exceptions, the Department anticipates that sponsors will work with the affected parties to mitigate potential hardships or financial losses.

In the spirit of cooperation and in an effort to achieve the public diplomacy purposes underlying the au pair exchange program, the Department requests that sponsors explain fully to all host families and au pair participants that regulations governing the educational component of au pair programs have been in effect since 1994, and that the information contained in this notice in no way represents a new regulatory requirement.