

Virginia Beach

2018 International Student Handbook



VIRGINIA BEACH

ISOP

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OUTREACH PROGRAM

www.vbisop.org



SUMMER 2018 EVENTS



Summer Kick off Party

June 13, 2018

7:00 p.m.

Virginia Beach Community Chapel



J1 Café and VBISOP “Sideline Sessions”

Tuesdays in June, July and August at VBCC, 7:00 p.m.

- June 19 & 26,
- July 3, 10 17, 24, & 31
- August 7 & 14



VBCC’s J1 Trips Schedule

- July 19 – Busch Gardens
- August 2 – Kings Dominion
- August 16 – Washington, DC



VBISOP J1 Tides Game (TBD)



National J-Day Event and After Party

August 3, 2018

Welcome to Virginia Beach!

On behalf of the Virginia Beach International Student Outreach Program (VBI-SOP), welcome to our city! As an International Work & Travel student, you have already begun to broaden your horizons. Each traveler seeks out his or her own unique experience, whether it involves making new friends, learning about a different culture, or enjoying a new work experience. We hope you find each of these in your Work & Travel Program here in Virginia Beach! You will probably have many questions throughout your experience, and in order to make you feel at home in Virginia Beach, we have developed this guide to help you find answers to some of those questions and also a web site with more information (www.vbi-sop.org). To get you started, here is some information we hope you find helpful.

Housing

If you have already arranged for housing, this part should be easy. In some cases, it may be necessary to first report to the Real Estate Office or Property Management Company to obtain keys and sign all necessary paperwork. If your employer has arranged your housing, contact them as soon as you arrive to see what you need to do to get there if you do not already have this information. If you have not secured housing prior to arrival, you should first look into arranging temporary accommodations at a hotel/motel where you can stay for a few days while you find permanent housing. You may also ask your employer for suggestions or to put you in touch with other employees who may need a roommate. If you are looking for housing on your own, start by looking in the local papers in the Classified Ads for rental opportunities. www.pilotonline.com, norfolk.craigslist.org (search in map view to see Virginia Beach listings), www.apartments.com and www.apartmentguide.com are also good resources. Resort-area housing tends to be expensive during the high season so talk to other International students to find reasonable options.

Communication

Being far from home is often a brand new experience for many Work & Travel students. We encourage you to get in touch with your family and/or loved ones as soon as you arrive. Also you should contact your employer or visit him or her at the job site as soon as possible. International calling cards can be bought in most convenience stores and supermarkets. Skype is another affordable means of calling home if you have access to a computer with internet connection and a headset. If you are staying in one of the hotels that provides international student housing, make sure you ask if there is a charge for outgoing phone calls, since this is usually the most expensive option. Pre-paid cell phones are a great idea to use for the summer, and international calling cards will usually work through these phones.

SEVIS & Social Security Information

The first step is to follow your visa sponsor's recommendation on how to register in SEVIS.

Be sure to register your United States address with Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) as soon as you arrive in the U.S. You should do this BEFORE applying for your Social Security Card. Registration in SEVIS must happen within ten (10) days of your arrival into the United States but the sooner that you register, the sooner you can go to the local Social Security office to apply for a Social Security number.

Apply for your Social Security Card ten (10) days after enrolling in SEVIS. Please note - if you do not follow this procedure, it can take longer than necessary to get your Social Security Card. You will need the following forms when applying:

- Valid passport (not expired or expiring during your stay)
- Form I-94 – Arrival/Departure Record, issued when you arrived in the U.S.
- Form DS-2019 – Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status
- Completed Social Security Application SS-5

You must request that your Social Security Card be mailed to your employer, OR to your local mailing address (NOT a P.O. Box).

ALL copies must be originals or certified by the issuing agency. The regional Social Security Administration office address is:

2875 Sabre Street, Suite 100
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
888-377-5237
www.ssa.gov/pubs/10107.html

Social Security Office Hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9 am to 3pm, & on Wednesday 9 am to 12 noon, excluding Federal Holidays (May 30 Memorial Day, July 4 Independence Day, Sept 5 Labor Day). It is strongly suggested that you arrive at the Social Security Office as early in the day as possible, and Tuesdays and Thursdays are the least busy days. The line starts to form at 8:00am, and the doors open at 8:30.

Hampton Roads Transit is the local public transportation. You can catch the bus from Route 20 to First Colonial Road/Laskin Road and transfer to Route 29 to Lynnhaven Mall. Schedules can be found online at www.gohrt.com or call 757-222-6100.

Once you receive your Social Security Card or Card Application Acknowledgment Letter, you should give a copy of this to your employer. Depending on employer policy you may have already begun to receive your paycheck. You are required to have Federal Income Tax and Virginia State Tax withheld from your pay.

The taxes you should not pay are Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Please provide your employer with this information to ensure proper taxes are withheld. If you have any questions about this process, please contact your J-1 visa sponsor (found on your DS-2019 form).

Student Orientations and Hospitality Functions

Throughout Virginia Beach, there are several places where community organizations and churches offer places to meet people, have coffee, use internet free of charge. The following places offer some of these benefits to international students. These are great opportunities to learn about the community where you are living and to meet people who may be interested in helping you with issues and/or learning about your culture. Many of these organizations also organize volunteer activities, where you can help people in your local community by preparing meals, helping collect donations or many other projects. Volunteering is a great way to meet people in your area and get to know more about your local community.

- Star of the Sea Catholic Church Social Ministry, 1314 Arctic Circle. Phone number is 757-428-1244. International student workers are welcome to come in for a brown bag lunch and soup (when available). Our hours are from 9:30 am to 11:30 am Monday, Wednesday, & Friday. www.staroftheseeparish.com
- Virginia Beach Community Chapel, 1261 Laskin Road. Phone number is 757-428-1881. The chapel hosts a variety of activities for international students, such as dinner parties. Please call for details. www.vbcchapel.org.
- Virginia Beach United Methodist Church, 19th Street and Pacific Avenue. Phone number is 757-428-7727. Fresh food is available Wednesdays 6pm to 7:30 pm at Potters House in Church. Pancake breakfast the second Saturday of each month at 9am open to all international students www.vbumc.org.
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1489 Laskin Road. Phone number is 757-428-4052. Hours of operation are Mondays 10:30 am until Noon and Thursdays 11:30 am until 1:30 pm. www.goodshepherdvb.org

Local Transportation Information

If you need public transportation to get around the Virginia Beach resort area, other locations in Virginia Beach, or anywhere else around the Hampton Roads area, **Hampton Roads Transit** is the most affordable. For bus routes and schedules, please call 757- 222-6100, or for more detailed information visit their website at www.gohrt.com. **Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes early.**

Below are some local taxi companies and phone numbers. Keep in mind, however, that the cost for a taxi is going to be much higher than taking a bus.

A1 Cab	757-563-0202	
All-City Cab Company	757-428-8294	www.allcitycabco.com
Al's Taxi	757-467-1180	
Andy's	757-495-3300	www.andystaxigroup.com
Atlantic Coast Cab Company	757-368-0505	www.atlanticcoastcab.coc
Black & White Cabs	757-855-3334	www.vabeachblackandwvabeachb.com
Norfolk Checker Taxi	757-855-3333	www.norfolkcheckertaxi.com (Goes from Norfolk International Airport to the oceanfront)

Group transportation to/from Norfolk International Airport (ORF) to Virginia Beach oceanfront:

James River Transportation	757-963-0433	or 866-823-4626
Orange Peel Transportation	757-463-7500	www.orangepeeltransportation.com

Distant Transportation Information

If you are interested in checking out other locations beyond Hampton Roads, there's always Greyhound or Amtrak:

Greyhound bus system has a location about one mile from the Virginia Beach oceanfront, at Circle D Food Market, 971 Virginia Beach Blvd. For schedule and rates information visit their website at www.greyhound.com or call 800-231-2222.


Amtrak train service is available in Newport News, a neighboring city to Virginia Beach. For more information visit their website at www.amtrak.com or call 800-872-7245.

Please note, we do not recommend the Tiger Bus service, because the bus stop is 10 miles from most Virginia Beach employers, and you will have to pay for an expensive taxi ride.

Bicycle Safety

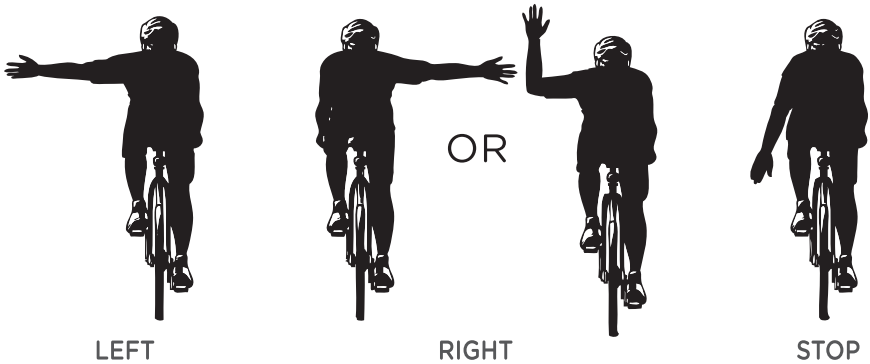
Many students find bicycles are the most convenient means of transportation around Virginia Beach. Bicycles may be purchased at Target, Kmart, Wal-Mart, Cherie's Bike & Blade Rentals, Beach Bike Rentals, North End Bikes, Conte's Bicycle, and Boardwalk Bikes.

Bicycles are considered vehicles and must obey the same rules as motorists. **Virginia Beach Department of Transportation** recommends the following:

- Before you enter any street or intersection, **check for traffic** by looking **left-right-left**. Over 70 percent of car-bicycle crashes occur at driveways or other intersections.
- **Always signal your moves** and be courteous to pedestrians and other vehicle operators.
- **Never wear headphones while riding** as they impair your ability to hear traffic.
- **Protect your head. Wear a helmet.** Never ride a bicycle without a helmet. Helmets can reduce head injuries by 85 percent.
- **Assure Bicycle Readiness.** Make sure your bicycle is adjusted properly and all parts are secure and working well.
- Always **check brakes** before riding.
- Wear clothes that make you more visible and equip your bicycle with a **bright light and reflective decals** on the bicycle when riding.
- **Avoid biking at night.** If you must, you should ride with reflectors, bright lights, and bright clothing in familiar areas with well-lit streets.
- **Stay alert** and look for obstacles in your path. Cross railroad tracks at a 90 degree angle and proceed slowly. Use special care on bridges.
- Always **ride on the right side** in a straight, predictable path. Go single file in the same direction as other vehicles.
- **Check your wheels** before every ride, after any fall, or after transporting your bicycle to make sure that your wheels are securely fastened.
-  **Buy a bike lock. Keep your bike locked up when not in use.**

BIKE SAFE – BIKE SMART

These signals are used by bicyclists to make other motorists aware of the bicyclist's intentions:



INFORMATION PROVIDED BY: The U.S Consumer Product Safety Commission, the U.S Department of Transportation, and www.VBgov.com.

Walking Virginia Beach Safely

Know the following pedestrian laws and tips to help protect you:

- It's illegal to cross or walk along the road under the influence of alcohol and or drugs
- It's illegal to hitchhike
- Pedestrians should cross at intersections when possible – and if they're crossing outside of an intersection, they must yield the right-of-way to motorists

Play it safe when crossing. Always stop at the edge of the curb, road or at a point where objects do not block your view of the roadway. Make sure it is clear before proceeding. Continue to watch for traffic while crossing until you have reached the other side safely.

Personal Safety – Five Basic Rules:

1. **DO Stay Alert.** Keep your mind on your surroundings, who is in front of you and who is behind you.
2. **DO Stand Tall.** Walk purposefully and make quick eye contact with people around you.
3. **DO Trust Your Instincts.** If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave.

4. **DO Tell Friends Where You're Going.** It's important that someone can find you if needed.
5. **DO Stay With the Group.** If you're going somewhere unfamiliar, being with a trusted friend will give you more security.

Use these basic rules at home, in your car, in public places, on the street, and while using public transportation to make for a safe summer in Virginia Beach!

For more information on this or any other safety topics, contact:

VIRGINIA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention Unit
Municipal Center
2441 Princess Anne Road, Building 15
Virginia Beach VA 23456
Phone: (757) 385-1006
Fax: (757) 385-1064
Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Web Site: www.VBgov.com/police

Second Precinct

820 Virginia Beach Blvd
Phone: (757) 385-2700

Summer Rentals & Accommodations

1. Be sure to pay your rent on time or you risk being evicted.
2. Properties will require a security deposit, which will be returned to the main leaseholder at the completion of the rental. If there are any damages to the property outside normal wear and tear, this may result in a deduction from the total deposit.
3. Please adhere to property occupancy limits and parking rules as set forth in the lease agreement.
4. The tenant is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the property for the duration of the lease.
5. In the unlikely event that the tenant violates community/city ordinances and/ or becomes objectionable to neighbors and/or creates damage to the leased property, the property manager at his or her sole discretion may evict the tenant(s) immediately.
6. Tenants may be responsible for utility expenses such as electric, phone and/ or cable. Please review your lease to see which utilities you are responsible to pay.

 **Bank Account Information**

To help safely manage your money while in the U.S, it is recommended you open a bank account with one of the local banks. There is a variety of services these banks can offer including checking and savings accounts. Many banks offer 'Free Student Accounts' which offer services with little or no fees. While opening the account, be sure to ask about any additional fees (minimum balance, opening fee or transfer fee for sending money home). Take time to discuss the different options available to you to ensure you're getting the account which best suits your needs.

DO NOT keep large sums of cash with you or at your home.

You will need the following information when opening the account:

- Unexpired passport with valid visa, DS-2019 and I-94
- Social Security card (may be initially required)
- Opening deposit (cash or check)
- Your U.S. housing address (please do not use your U.S. employment address)
- Email address
- Secondary forms of ID include: your Health Insurance Card, a card containing a Visa or MasterCard logo, or an International Driver's License.

On the following page is a list of oceanfront banks (one is in the Hilltop area) that offer free checking accounts.

BB&T is located at 3450 Pacific Avenue. Phone number is 757-437-3782. This bank has free checking, free on line banking and bill pay, check card with VISA extras, and no minimum balance (student banking through age 24).

Bank of America is located at 210 Laskin Road. Phone number is 757-491-6010. The checking account is free, but you must make an initial deposit of \$25 and direct deposit. They offer free online checking and a free check card for ATM.

Bank of Hampton Roads is located at 1580 Laskin Road. Phone number is 757-422-4055. This bank offers free checking with an initial deposit of \$100. They offer free online banking, an ATM debit card, and the initial order of checks is free.

PNC is located at 3012 Pacific Avenue. Phone number is 757-892-2260. This bank offers free checking with a minimum deposit of \$100 and no minimal balance. The account holder receives a free check card and free online banking. Passport and Social Security Card is required.

Sun Trust Bank is located at 3330 Pacific Avenue. Phone number is 757-425-6723. This bank offers free student checking account with \$100 initial deposit and must have direct deposit. They provide free check card, free online banking with bill pay, and free starter checks.

Wells Fargo is located at 1608 Laskin Road. Phone number is 757-437-5510. This bank offers free checking with a minimum deposit of \$100. The account holder receives free online banking with direct deposit enrollment. Also, he/she will receive an ATM card with Visa, which may be used as a credit or debit card.

Before you attempt to open a checking account, call the bank to see if the information in this guide is still valid and to ask which documents are required; such as, passport, Social Security number, etc.

Cultural Adjustment

Moving from the familiar comforts of home to a different culture is an exciting adventure with challenges. The universal process of adjustment pushes you into a great learning experience through overcoming difficulties, altering your positions or your attitudes, and learning from others.

While preparing for the adventure one has hopes and expectations. When faced with the realities and practical tasks of searching for jobs, housing, and transportation, one can be overwhelmed, discouraged, and disappointed. One's confidence, sense of security, and personal status are challenged. One can greatly miss home and family. This normal stage of stress is natural, it is called Culture Shock. This psychological state can affect one's mood (irritability, sadness, worry, etc.), behaviors (withdrawal, risk-taking, poor decisions, misuse of alcohol or drugs, etc.), and even one's physical health (low energy, loss of appetite or ability to sleep, headaches, etc.). In this situation one can even become angry at their situation.

To counter this stress one needs to pay attention to basic needs for healthy diet and sleep. It is essential to communicate with others about your thoughts and emotions. Reaching out gives fresh thinking, new options and personal support; it actually builds friendships. In America, people often seek counsel from family or friends, bosses, people from church, or mental health professionals (psychologists, social workers). There are many people in our community eager to help. A primary resource is your sponsor whose vast experience over the years with so many students from so many places, as well as the local resources gives them great perspective on your journey. Would changes in residence, jobs, or companions, or lifestyle be helpful?

Keep the concept of adjustment in mind as you make preparations. Crossing cultures is enlightening; the gains in maturity and sophistication are worth the risks. Once your world view is reshaped, you will forever view yourself, your home, and the family of man differently.

—*Eric Kafka, Psychologist* eric.kafka@gmail.com

Make the most of your summer!

The best way to get acquainted with your new home for the summer is to participate in local activities and meet people in the community. Below is a list of some of the events in Virginia Beach during summer. More information can be found at www.visitvirginiabeach.com and www.beachstreetusa.com.

2018 EVENTS (May to September)

MAY	May 6	Atlantic Coast Kite Festival
	May 11-12	Virginia International PAN Fest
	May 11-13	Monsters on the Beach
	May 12-13	Tidewater Comicon
	May 18-20	Beach Music Cruise-In
	May 19-20	Pirate Party on the Beach
	May 25-27	Salute to Summer
	May 25-27	Pungo Strawberry Festival
JUNE	June 1-3	Patriotic Festival
	June 10-Aug. 29	Circus in the Park
	June 22-23	Latin Fest
	June 29-July 1	Sandstock – A Tribute to Rock & Roll
JULY	July 4	Stars & Stripes Explosion
	July 5-Aug. 29	Magic of Krendl & Company
	July 7	Chalk the Walk ARTsplosion
	July 19	Busch Gardens Day Trip (VBCC)
	July 23	Laser Show
	July 27	Family Great Adventure Series
AUGUST	Aug. 2, 9	Family Great Adventure Series
	Aug. 2	Kings Dominion Day Trip (VBCC)
	Aug. 3-5	PolyFest
	Aug. 7	Laser Show
	Aug. 16	Washington DC Trip (VBCC)
	Aug. 24-25	Virginia Beach FunkFest Beach Party
	Aug. 31-Sept. 2	American Music Festival
SEPT.	Sept. 1-2	Rock ‘n’ Roll Half Marathon
	Sept. 21-23	Oceana Air Show
	Sept. 28	Neptune Festival Boardwalk Weekend

As a Work & Travel USA participant, you must take care to respect state laws and U.S. laws while visiting. Make sure that you are aware of local rules and regulations and read any signs posted in public areas. Respect the local residents, authorities, and especially the Police and do not be afraid to ask for help. If you do get into trouble, please contact your sponsor immediately. Your sponsor will try to advise and help you; however, you are obliged to take responsibility for any crimes or violations which you commit. Your sponsor can verify that you are on the program, and can advise you on a course of action, but in some cases there are limits to the help the sponsor can offer.

Alcohol

1. It is unlawful for any person under the age of 21 to have any alcoholic beverage in their possession or consume or to be found to have consumed alcoholic beverages.
2. It is unlawful to be drunk in public. No person shall be drunk or under the influence of alcoholic beverages and or disorderly in a public place within the city.
3. Open containers of alcohol are not permitted. No person shall drink or possess open containers of alcohol in any public place, public street, boardwalk, and beach or in a vehicle on a public street.

Beaches and Boardwalk

1. It is unlawful to sleep in public between 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. including parks, boardwalk and beaches.
2. Alcohol and glass containers are not permitted on the beach.
3. Fires are not permitted on the beach.

Noise

Loud, disturbing and unnecessary noise is unlawful including the following:

1. No one shall play any television, radio, MP3/CD/tape player, phonograph or musical instrument in such a manner or with such a volume as to annoy or disturb the quiet or comfort of others.
2. No person shall sound a vehicular horn or other audible signal device except as an emergency warning.
3. No one should make excessive noise including shouting or crying, which disturbs the peace and quiet of others.

Trespassing and Destruction of Property

1. Trespassing is not permitted in any way upon the lands, buildings or premises of another without legal authority or justification.
2. No person shall mischievously or maliciously destroy, deface, injure or cause to be destroyed, defaced or injured any real or personal property belonging to another person.

Other useful websites

- Virginia Beach International Student Outreach Program
www.vbisop.org
- Virginia Beach Hotel Motel Association
www.vbhma.com
- Hostelling International
www.hiusa.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I need housing; what can I do?

- A. If you have not arranged for housing prior to arrival, you can refer to housing on page 3 of this guide.

Q. What is the breakdown for U.S. Currency?

- A. The basic unit of U.S. currency is U.S. Dollar. Coins are:
- 1 cent = penny
 - 5 cents = nickel
 - 10 cents = dime
 - 25 cents = quarter
 - 50 cents = half dollar
- Dollars are printed in the values of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100

Q. Am I permitted to work without a Social Security Card?

- A. When you apply for a card, you will be given a receipt to show your employer saying you are allowed to work until your Social Security card arrives. Be aware that some employers will not give you your paycheck unless you provide a Social Security number. Apply for your Social Security Card immediately after your arrival since it usually takes up to three to four weeks for your card and number to arrive.

Q. How can I find a second job?

- A. The best way to locate second jobs is through newspapers and attendance at community events. You will also see job listings (if available) on business signage as well as at Supermarket bulletin boards. Several businesses in Virginia Beach hire international students, but make sure that you have the necessary skills before applying for a position. **NOTE:** You MUST have your second job approved by your sponsor BEFORE you start working there.

Q. Where can I find clothes for work?

- A. Many students find inexpensive work clothing at Target, Wal-Mart, Kmart and thrift stores.

Q. Where will I find internet access?

A. At the Visitors Center or Public Library during regular business hour of operation.

Virginia Beach Visitors Center

2100 Parks Avenue, Virginia Beach VA

Phone: 757-437-4919

Oceanfront Area Library

700 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach VA

Phone: 757-385-2640

Thank you for choosing to visit Virginia Beach as your Work and Travel destination for this summer. We hope you'll have a wonderful time and we are committed to making this a memorable and rewarding experience for you. For additional assistance, please stop by the Virginia Beach Visitor & Information Center on 2100 Parks Avenue where you'll find friendly staff and lots of re-sources to help with any questions.

Cover photography courtesy of: (top) Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau; (middle) Lina Smith via Flickr; (bottom) Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Best wishes and safe travels!

The Information in this guide is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of March 2018. We cannot be held responsible for any incorrect information.

Please Contact Your Sponsor for any support you may need. Visit this website to find your sponsor's contact information:

<http://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/sponsor-search>

For more information, please visit www.vbisop.org

