Bellevue University Host Family Program

Information for Students

Below are some general guidelines and expectations for your stay with a host family; however, no two hosts are exactly the same, so being flexible and keeping an open mind is necessary.

LIVING WITH AMERICAN HOSTS

• To have a good relationship with your host, you will need to talk with them and ask them questions, share your culture, and learn from them. For example, you can try offering to cook a meal for them or show photos of your family/friends from home.

• Effort should be made by both you and your host family to communicate. Ask questions when you’re uncertain about their expectations and keep them informed of your whereabouts.

• You do not have to accept all invitations offered to you, but some family participation will be expected of you. Religious services or meetings are always optional.

• Always ask your host family before inviting other people into their home and respect their curfew.

• You should show respect to your host by discussing concerns first with your host or with Residence and Student Life staff, rather than speaking to other students (“gossiping”) about them.

• A homestay is not a hotel. Please do not expect your host to take care of everything for you. American hosts expect you to act like a family member by taking care of yourself and by being somewhat independent; they will expect you to pick up after yourself, do your own laundry, and help prepare food.

• You will be responsible for your own toiletries and hygiene products (i.e. shampoo, body wash, hair products).

• Your host family will provide supplies like toilet paper, tissue, laundry soap, and cleaning products.

RENT

• Rent is NOT negotiable. Host Families have been told to expect a certain amount of rent ($600) per month. In American culture, rent is not negotiated after it has been decided. Rent is normally due on the first day of the month and should be paid on time.
• You will need to pay your first month rent as soon as possible, within the first two to three days of your arrival.
• When traveling outside of Bellevue or away from your host family, you are still expected to pay rent.

LENGTH OF STAY

• You are expected to live with your new hosts for at least the first academic term (three months), if possible. If you change your mind or have concerns, please discuss this with Residence and Student Life staff.
• You must tell your hosts at least 14 days before the date you move out of their home. You will also need to pay all rent due for the last 14 days before moving out. Thirty days’ notice is preferred by some.

MEALS

• Hosts are asked to provide food for two meals per day during the weekdays and three meals per day available on weekends. Host families are not required to cook for you, but most will include you in their family meals. This means you will have to cook for yourself sometimes.
• Americans do not usually cook hot breakfast during the week, eating quickly prepared-or “grab and go”-cold food is most common.
• Weekday lunches may or may not be cooked by your hosts, you may want to pack your lunch at home to bring to school or eat in the campus cafeteria.
• Americans frequently dine out at restaurants, this will vary by family, but you may be expected to pay for your own meal. Always ask first who will pay, you can choose not to attend, if you don’t want to pay; however, you can feel comfortable accepting if the offer is given to pay for you.
• Communicate with your host family on your dietary needs and preferences up front.

If you have questions about the Host Family Program, please email internationalstudentservices@bellevue.edu