



Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program – Pakistan

Frequently Asked Questions

K-L YES 2016 - 2017

PROGRAM APPLICATION:

1. What is the cost of the Program?

The program is fully sponsored and the scholarship covers all major costs like Airfare, US Visa Fee, boarding and lodging in USA, School Tuition and a \$125 a month pocket money.

2. Is there any flexibility in age?

No, the age criteria is not flexible. Students have to be minimum 15 years old and maximum 17 years on 1st August, 2016 (the year they are traveling to the USA) for the program.

3. Can I apply, compete and then if I get selected, I decide if I am really serious about actual participation in the program?

This is highly discouraged; you can apply only if you are genuinely and seriously interested in participating in the program from very beginning and has full family support and permission. Since we are not charging any fee for application, it adds to our cost of processing the applications and tests if an applicant is not serious in the program participation.

4. I have already traveled to USA, can I apply?

No, anyone who has already traveled to the U.S.A. is not eligible for the program.

5. Can I apply if my sibling has been on YES program?

No, you cannot.

6. I am not a Pakistani national, do I qualify to apply?

No, the program participation is only for Pakistani nationals bearing Pakistani 'B' Form and Pakistani Passport.

HOST FAMILIES:

7. Where will the students live in the USA?

All K-L YES exchange students are placed in host families for one academic year and given admission in a school for one academic session. These placements are done by a group of the US based students exchange organizations that are well reputed and are approved by the US Department of Education and Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

Pakistani students will be placed by ACES, AFS USA, American Councils, ASSE, FAYA/AIFS, AYUSA, CCI Greenheart, CIEE, FLAG, IRIS, PAX, STS Fdn, World Learning, World Link and YFU USA,

8. What are host families?

These families are very carefully chosen and take care of the exchange students like their own children, attending the parents meetings at schools, getting involved and taking interest in everything the students are doing. These families give special importance to the exchange students to make this one year memorable and exciting for them organizing activities and events for the students.

9. Where do host families come from?

The host families are as ethnically diverse as the population of the U.S. While English must be the first language spoken in the home, this does not preclude the fact that many families are from varied ethnic backgrounds, i.e. African-Americans, Asian-Americans, European-Americans and Hispanic- Americans. The percentage of white, Anglo-Saxon families grows smaller and smaller each year. Students should be prepared to be placed with host families from any type of ethnic and cultural background.

In addition, families of all religious backgrounds can be found in every American community. Most American families attend church and identify themselves with a particular religion. Host families are Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Protestant, Baptist and most other religions represented in the demographics of the U.S.

However, Community Representatives ensures that female Pakistani students are not placed in families where there are boys over 13 years. The girls will also be exempted from all activities, sports etc. that require them to wear clothes that are against Islamic and Pakistani values.

10. How are the hosts selected?

The staff from the placement organizations mentioned above selects the host families matching them with the interests of the students they are placing with the family. The potential host families are found through community service organizations, churches, athletic leagues, youth groups, foreign language classes, malls, county and state fairs, advertising, etc.

11. What will be my status at the host family?

Students will develop many relationships during the ten months on the K-L YES program. The relationship with the student's host family is at the heart of the cultural exchange and will likely to be the most important of the year. American Councils and other placement organizations staff makes every effort to place students with families that will compliment their students' personality and interests. All K-L YES students

need to possess a strong desire to be part of an American family and a willingness to accept responsibilities in their new family. These responsibilities will include (for both boys and girls) helping with household chores, keeping one's room clean, and abiding by all family rules, even if they differ from their natural family's rules.

Student must exhibit flexibility, tact, politeness and maturity of character. K-L YES students who expect to be treated like guests or given special consideration in their American families are unlikely to succeed on the program.

12. Can I live with my relatives?

No, students are not allowed to be hosted by their relatives in the USA or can demand to be placed with relatives. Any interference by the relatives in the USA will affect the adjustment process negatively.

13. Can you ensure I live with a Muslim or a Pakistani family?

This cannot be ensured or guaranteed or demanded from iEARN or from the placement organizations. The iEARN-PK office does not interfere in the placement part of the program and it is entirely up to the placement organizations in the U.S.

14. Are the students safe in the host families?

Yes, they are perfectly safe socially and physically, **provided students follow the K-L YES rules and abide by the family rules.** You can read the general program policies and rules at: <http://www.iearnpk.org/YES/rules.htm>

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES:

15. Can I pray and fast while on the exchange in the USA?

Yes, you can pray and practice your religion very easily. The U.S. families and schools cooperate a lot in this regard. However you will have to politely explain them and seek cooperation without putting a lot of burden on them, e.g. do not expect your hosts to get up and prepare *sehri* for you, you will have to do it yourself.

16. Can I wear head scarf (Hijab) while in the USA and in the U.S. School?

Yes, all female students can continue to wear their headscarves in schools, at the family and whenever or wherever they choose to wear. You can also wear traditional Pakistani clothes to school and neighborhood if you want.

17. Can I get the Halal food?

Halal meat can be purchased from the Halal meat shops in the community or ordered by mail. However no student can demand it from the host parents, if the hosts cannot afford or do not want to spend extra money on Halal food in addition to the regular grocery. Students can buy Halal meat from their own pocket money and should be willing to cook their meals from the Halal meat as well or vegetable dishes if they choose to be vegetarian.

In US homes most mothers are working. Expecting hosts to cook additional meals for you would be too much and impolite. You need to be prepared to cook yourself any additional meals that you want to eat.

SCHOOL AND ACADEMICS:

18. Can I graduate from High School in the USA?

The program does not include High school diploma. The students will be enrolled in grades 10/11/12 in a US school. They will be given a marks sheet / transcripts for the subjects they study and other achievement certificates and letters.

19. Do I miss a school year in Pakistan?

Depending on the school system a student come from, this will vary, students must discuss this with their own schools in Pakistan before applying for the program. If it is not possible to get admission in the next higher classes back in Pakistan, students must be prepared to loose one year of academic study of Pakistan. But they need to look for possibilities, for example grade 9 'O' level students can enroll in grade 10 in the USA, return back to Pakistan and join in grade 11 and appear the final of O Levels exams.

This program has more cultural value and the development of valuable skills that will be an asset later in the social and academic life of a K-L YES student.

20. Can I stay back in the U.S.A?

Staying back in the U.S.A. after the program end date is illegal and a crime. Students would be considered a criminal if he/she decides to do so. Such cases will be dealt by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in the USA and resulting in loosing all future opportunity for living legally or entering again in the USA.

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