

# Welcome to the United States!

**PRESIDENT: JOE BIDEN CAPITAL CITY: WASHINGTON, D.C.**



## Declaration of Independence

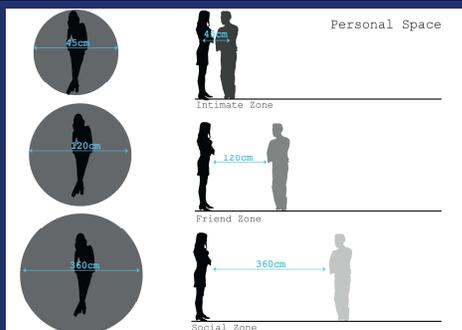
On July 4, 1776 the United States of America was established with the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson. This Declaration protected life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

## Population

America is a nation of immigrants! The population is culturally diverse and you will have the opportunity to live among 320+ million residents. Our country is divided into six regions: New England, Mid-Atlantic, South, Midwest, Southwest, and West.

## Principles of American Democracy

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It sets up and defines the government, and protects the basic rights of Americans. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the USA with 9 justices.



Meeting someone new: Offer a friendly handshake and a warm greeting such as "Hello, how are you?"

Personal Space: the physical space immediately surrounding someone. This is expected to be respected. It is not acceptable to maintain physical contact with someone during a face to face conversation. You should maintain a distance of about one arm's lengths.

## Customs and Values

“All men [and women!] are created equal...”

Respect your elders, and authority - should be addressed with “sir” or “ma’am” - Police Officers should be referred to as “Officer”

If you are not early, you are late!

18-20% tip expected at restaurants and for service: haircut, taxi ride, delivery, etc.

Wait in line, do not act pushy, or display intolerance for others

Practice good personal hygiene: shower daily with soap, use deodorant, wash your clothes regularly, brush your teeth



## Bike Safety – riding safe, saves lives!

Always wear a helmet! Ride your bike with traffic. Use arm signals at every stop and turn. You and your bike must have reflective gear or a blinking light on the front and back. Must obey all traffic signs and lights. Never ride on a highway or road with a speed limit greater than 30 mph.



**All American's have the right to freedom of speech! However, you must still be sensitive to certain topics that may offend the people around you.**

*You should avoid discussing: tense social issues, politics, and religion with people that you have not established a relationship with.*

## The law – obey them all!

**Participation in your Cultural Exchange Program is a privilege, not a right! Please, do not abuse this opportunity by breaking the law! American police will arrest and prosecute anyone who commits a crime or breaks the law. Even if you are not arrested, you can be issued a citation, fine, or summons to appear in court which may result in jail time. Ignorance of the law is not a viable excuse for any misconduct.**

### **Please keep in mind:**

- You may not engage in any inappropriate or sexual conduct with a minor (under age 18).
- The legal drinking age is 21. You may not consume or purchase alcohol under this age. You may not purchase or provide alcohol to anyone under this age. It is illegal to carry open alcohol containers or consume alcohol in public.
- You may not consume or possess illegal drugs. Marijuana is still illegal under Federal Law, even though it is legalized in some states.
- Shoplifting, sexual harassment, theft, destruction of property, and disorderly conduct are just a few of the many crimes that may result in arrest.