

U.S. Department of State

The health, safety and welfare of the 30,000 high school students who participate each year in high school exchange programs, regulated by the Department of State, are among the Department's highest priorities. These exchanges are important opportunities for young people from other countries to learn about and experience the United States, and we do our utmost to make them positive and rewarding experiences.

- We are deeply troubled by any reports of incidents or allegations. They are investigated completely and transparently by the appropriate officials.
- There are regulations in place to govern these programs. They can be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov/jexchanges>, under resources 22 CFR 62.25. The Department expects all private sector sponsors to adhere to these regulations, especially ensuring that participants are safely situated and host families are properly vetted.
- When we learn about a specific situation, we immediately contact the sponsoring organization involved and ask them to investigate. We gather full information, and act swiftly and appropriately.
- The sponsor must provide a report to the Department on the situation along with copies of documentation available to them on the participant's program, including copies of the student application, the host family application form, local coordinator notes, and copies of the criminal background check. The Department then determines whether all regulatory requirements have been followed, including whether an incident was reported to local law enforcement.
- The Department has completed its review of two recent cases – one in Scranton, PA and one in Fort Lewis, WA – and has determined that regulatory violations took place and is taking appropriate action to hold the private sector sponsoring organization accountable.