

STEP (Short Term Exchange Program) Guide for YEO/YECs

Following are tips to help District 6250 YEO and YECs as they support youth applying for the STEP program.

Program Coordinators:

- Janine O'Rourke | rotary6250.summertimeexchange@gmail.com | 608-577-6395
2036 Spring Road, Stoughton, WI 53589 (for sending application fee)
- Dr. Robert Dent | ryedent46@gmail.com | 715-281-6656
- John Marszal | jmarszal@gmail.com | 608-338-4011

Acceptance of Applicants: Once the following components are complete, the applicant is accepted in the program.

- Preliminary, full application and supplemental documents have been submitted by the student
- Host Family has been submitted by the parents, and confirmed as clean
- Local Rotary club has completed the in-home student interview and house check
- No medical issues (if medical issues exist, a physician has approved the student as "fit for exchange")
- \$250 application fee is received by the STEP committee

Application Deadline: Feb 1 for the upcoming summer. No exceptions.

Application Form: Starting in 2020, the online YEAH application process is in use.

1. Part 1: Complete the Preliminary Application form (accessible mid-fall through Jan 15 at <https://www.rotary6250.org/page/short-term-youth-exchange>) For students who meet the age (15-18) and GPA (≥ 2.5) requirement, instructions are provided by email within 3 days with links to complete Step 2 and 3 and the Part 4 pdf file attached.
2. Part 2: STEP application form
3. Part 3: Host Family application form
4. Part 4: Supplemental document pdf, including application checklist, Rules & Conditions of exchange 2-page form, country preference, medical survey & acknowledgement of STEP Program Process

Age Restrictions: Applicants must be enrolled in H.S. (not graduated) as of the Feb 1 application deadline; must be 15 by June 1 of their exchange summer and not be 19 by June 1.

Copies of application: YEO can access this in YEAH Hub under the Short Term tab.

Health Insurance: The largest component of the \$250 application fee goes to a comprehensive health and accident insurance policy for the applicant. Even if the applicant's parents have good insurance, this policy is purchased to ensure all outbound students are covered at the same level regardless of any coverage changes that could happen if the parents employment changed. The policy covers 30 days of the applicant being outside the USA. If the applicant books flights which have her/him outside the USA for >30 days, they will be required to pay for additional coverage.

Divorced/separated parents - issues to be aware of:

- Both parents are required to sign forms if they both are legal guardians of the applicant.
- A notary can be used if one of the parents is not able to sign the form in your presence.
- The family can coordinate the time for the inbound student's stay (host sister/brother) in whatever manner works best for the family. This may mean that the matched students spend all their time with one set of parents,

or split the time in some manner across two households. All adults in the households where the inbound student will stay must complete the Host Family Application form.

YEO/YEC Responsibilities:

1. Visit the student in his/her home with parents present.
 - a. Interview the applicant to ensure adequate maturity and correct intent of participation. Although this is much shorter than the long-term program, a high level of maturity is still required for success. When a student backs out of the program after they are matched with a family, it becomes a difficult situation for everyone involved and very unfortunate for their host sister/brother who can experience a bad impression of Americans or be unable to participate in the program for the summer. For a list of screening questions and ideal candidate criteria, contact the Program Coordinator. Send a copy of your interview notes to the STEP program coordinator to verify that the applicant has been screened.
 - b. Check home for safe and welcoming environment for inbound host student.
 - c. Witness the signing of the Rules & Conditions form by the applicant and parents, and sign the form as the sponsoring Rotary Club representative.
2. Secure club signatures for the Guarantee Forms once the student is matched and inbound student is identified.
3. If problems occur during the exchange, assist with mediation and problem solving. Inform Program Coordinator of the issues.
4. Club financial obligation: None!

Timeline:

December – Feb 1	Completed applications submitted. Applications are processed as soon as they arrive. Early submission encouraged
Feb – April	Matches are completed. Usually complete within 6-8 weeks of receiving all application details.
April	Mandatory ½ day orientation program. Conducted by Program Coordinators in Madison/Baraboo area. Held on a Sunday afternoon. Date is set by January 15 and posted on district web site https://www.rotary6250.org/page/short-term-youth-exchange
June – August	Exchanges completed. For some exchanges with South America, the inbound student may have to come the following January (during their summer holiday).