

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.summerexchange@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 | jrmarszal@gmail.com | 608-338-4011

Acceptance of Applicants: Once the application is received by the program coordinators and verified to have been properly screened, have no medical issues or academic deficiencies, then the "Host Family Application Form" section of the form is submitted to MorganData for background completion of all adults living in the applicant's household. Once the background checks are cleared, the applicant is accepted into the program and the match process is started. The background check process takes 1-2 weeks.

Application Deadline: Feb 1 for the upcoming summer. No exceptions. Completed application (1 paper copy only) and application fee must be in Program Coordinator's hands by this date.

Application Form: This editable pdf form can be downloaded from the district website www.rotary6250.org/STEP.

The form is updated each year. As of Jan 2019 the form is comprised of 2 parts with a total of 12 pages.

1. Part 1: STEP application form, including Rules & Conditions of Exchange Form, Application Checklist, Country preference & Acknowledgement of STEP Program Process
2. Part 2: Host Family Application Form

Application Form Tips / Common errors:

- Completing the editable pdf form is easiest with Adobe Acrobat Standard or Pro. I've been told it is not always compatible with Mac.
- Sending Program Coordinator an electronic copy to review for completeness or quicken the submission process is fine. Ensure the document is not > 5MB before you send it by email. You can reduce the size of a pdf file by using the Adobe Acrobat menu: Document/Reduce File Size...
- Applications must be typed to the extent possible. (Signatures and dates are acceptable handwritten.)
- YOU must provide the sponsoring club's information and collect all signatures.
- Signatures from the student and parents must be collected in person.
- Host Family Application Form, p 13: A common question on this form is if the adults must provide their SS#, which is needed to complete the background check. They can leave this blank and we will have Morgan Data call them for the SS number(s).

Age Restrictions: Must be 15 by June 1 deadline to participate; must be enrolled in H.S. (not graduated) on the Feb 1 deadline, and not older than 19. Note: Some countries will not accept students after age 18, so selection will be limited for anyone still in H.S. and age 19.

Background Check: The host Family Application form is submitted to Morgan Data, the administrative office for District 6250. Background checks are run for all adults (age 18 and older) who will be in the host family's house during the time of the exchange. If college age students will be home for the summer their information must be included on this form. The social security number, driver's license, full legal name (including middle name), and date of birth is required to

complete the background check. No one besides the Program Coordinator and the Morgan Data administrators views the completed form, and only these individuals and the District Youth Protection Officer has access to the background check results. If a background check reveals some issue, the District Youth Protection Officer reviews the situation, (often involves speaking directly with the individual) and makes a determination if the family is approved to host.

Copies of application: Only send 1 paper copy! All program planning and communication is done electronically by email. So there is no need for multiple paper copies.

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 as it ensures all of our 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 31-60 days, they will be required to purchase an additional month of coverage (2018 rate was \$100/mo).

Divorced/separated parents - issues to be aware of:

- Both parents are required to sign the application 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 (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. Verify completeness of the application before it is signed and sent to Program Coordinator
2. 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. Take 4-6 photos of the home and include in the background check form submitted to Program Coordinator.
 - c. Witness the signing of the application by the applicant and parents, and sign the form as the sponsoring Rotary Club representative.
3. Call the two listed references and make notes on the Host Family application form. Forward this page to Program Coordinator along with the photos
4. If problems occur during the exchange, assist with mediation and problem solving. Inform Program Coordinator of the issues.
5. Club financial obligation: None!

Timeline:

December – Feb 1	Completed applications submitted to Program Coordinator. Applications are processed as soon as they arrive. Early submission encouraged
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Feb – April	Matches are completed. Usually complete within 4-8 weeks of completed background check.
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 www.rotary6250.org/STEP
June – August	Exchanges completed. For some exchanges with South America, the inbound student may have to come the following January (during their summer holiday).