we're so glad to have you,

WELCOME!

ADDRESS:
Rochambeau, The French International School
Administrative Offices
9650 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.530.8260

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR
Teaching in a French school in the United States is very different from teaching in a public school in France. It will certainly require some adjustments on your part. We will talk to you about this during your two days of orientation before the school year begins (prérentrée).

The financial aspect is not negligible. We strongly advise you to prepare your estimated budget. Many people on a J1 visa are unpleasantly surprised by the high taxes that must be paid in the 3rd year if you have the exemption from federal taxes the first two years. Once again, preparation is the key to success. Everyone in the school administration, particularly our Human Resources team is ready to respond to all your questions and needs. Do not hesitate to contact them.

Congratulations on accepting our offer of employment at Rochambeau, The French International School of Washington, DC (Rochambeau). The purpose of this guide is to give you practical information for your stay in the United States. It covers many subjects and is based on the experiences of those who have been welcomed before you. We hope that the new teachers who come to our school benefit fully from their experience in America and are able to enrich our students with the wealth of their expertise. The success of your expatriation also depends on thorough preparation for your departure and your installation, and a good understanding of your new living and working conditions.

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We welcome you again and look forward to seeing you at New Employee Orientation. Until then, we wish you a good end of the school year and a wonderful summer.
Before you leave France, there are several things that must be completed.
MEDICAL COVERAGE
Since 2015, the U.S. Department of State requires each holder of a J1 visa to carry the following three mandatory insurances:
1. Health Insurance
2. Death and repatriation of remains insurance
3. Accident and evacuation insurance

Rochambeau pays for the last two (2) insurance policies. You are responsible for having health insurance that meets the criteria of the U.S. Department of State. This insurance does have to comply with the rules of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which allows you to use the CFE-MGEN or the health insurance proposed by the school. When you arrive, we will ask you to sign a document stating that you have these insurance policies as of the start of the school year.

If you opt for CFE/MGEN:
- Once you have signed your offer of employment, we advise you to contact your MGEN section and the CFE to set up your file as quickly as possible. It will take 1 to 2 months for everything to be finalized. Once we have received your cards or confirmation of coverage, we will also advise you to register with Travel Care Service (TCS), a service provider, local representative of the MGEN that negotiates rates with the physicians and hospitals. [http://www.travelcareservices.com](http://www.travelcareservices.com)
- The cost of this health insurance is not reimbursed by Rochambeau.

If you opt for the U.S. health coverage offered by the school:
- Health coverage in the U.S. is essentially private. Each employer has a group plan that it offers to each of its eligible employees. Within this plan, there are many options: exclusive access to physicians approved by the company that holds the plan, access to the doctor of your choice, coverage for one or more children, for the spouse only or for the entire family, etc.
- New staff who want to enroll with the health plan offered by Rochambeau should do so as soon as they arrive, the deadline being one month after they have started their position; if not they will have to wait until the Open Enrollment period. Rochambeau will cover 50% of these premiums. Open Enrollment is typically in the Fall with coverage effective January 1.

OBTAINING YOUR CLEARANCE FROM THE FRENCH TREASURY (IN THE CASE OF AN H-1B VISA)
This document states that you are in good standing with the French Treasury and that you are up to date with your payments. You may be asked for it during the interview at the U.S. Consulate for obtaining your visa.

INSURANCE
Check your insurance options. Notify them of any change in situation or address.
- MAIF and liability / overseas driver
  - [www.maif.fr](http://www.maif.fr)
- Mondial Assistance and insurance for expatriates
  - [www.mondial-assistance.fr](http://www.mondial-assistance.fr)
- Autonome de Solidarité Budget
  - [www.autonome-solidarite.fr](http://www.autonome-solidarite.fr)
For staff seconded from the Ministry of National Education, when you fill out your secondment request you will be able to choose to continue to contribute to your French pension. If you opt for this option, you will receive a contribution form twice a year (January and June). For those who want to contribute to an American retirement plan, Rochambeau offers employees the option of participating in its retirement plan. The employees that decide to participate may do so through a deduction in their pay. These payments are tax-exempt. Eligible faculty, after 2 years of employment and if the employee pays a minimum of 5% of their gross salary, Rochambeau will also contribute to his/her retirement plan at a rate of 5%. After 7 years completed employment, Rochambeau will raise its contribution to 7%.

**OPENING AN INTERNATIONAL BANK ACCOUNT**

Before your departure, we strongly advise you to open an international account in your country of origin at a bank that also has a presence in the U.S. or one that has partnerships with American banks such as HSBC, Bank of America (BNP), Capital One, Wells Fargo (Banque Transatlantique). For example, HSBC Bank has a service called Global Service that allows you to manage your accounts online in France or in the United States and to make transfers at no cost from your U.S. account to your French account or vice versa. See Addendum 1 for the contact information of several of the establishments mentioned above.

Things to consider about U.S banks:
- Most banks operate during office hours 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday and might be open 9:00am – 1:00pm on Saturdays. For the most part, U.S banks are closed on Sunday.
- Documents needed to open a bank account:
  - Form D/S 2019 or I-797
  - Passport and I-94 record
  - Social Security Number Card
  - Proof of address such as a personal mail or utilities bill (varies by financial institution)

It is useful to maintain an open bank account in your country of origin. Some payments must be made in euros: C.F.E., M.G.E.N., your insurance policies, if applicable.

Testimony: "The most useful thing for us was to open, in France, a bank account at a bank in Washington. Personally, we went to HSBC. We went to HSBC branch in France and this branch did what was necessary to open an account in an HSBC branch in Washington, without any problem. So when we arrived, we already had an account number and the address of a branch where we could pick up our checks and debit cards. The steps took about one month."
Renting a house or an apartment even in the Bethesda, MD area is relatively easy but the rent can be high. You can expect to pay between $2,800 and $3,500 for a house with 3 bedrooms, living room, kitchen, bathroom, basement (sous-sol) and small garden, and between $1,800 and $2,700 for an apartment (1 or 2 bedrooms). You may also consider a townhouse (maison de ville) which is an excellent compromise between a house and an apartment. About 10 to 15 minutes away, you can find lower rents (Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville). By the end of August, there are not many rentals left therefore you should contact real estate agents before you arrive; houses and apartments become available at the end of each school year.

You can also consult the following websites:

- https://www.zillow.com/md/rentals/
- https://www.trulia.com/
- https://www.brightmlshomes.com/rentals/MD
- https://www.weichert.com/MD/Montgomery/for-rent/

If you arrive before the school year begins, you may also walk around the neighborhoods and contact the agents listed in the information box listed in front of the property. The agents have a listing of all the vacant rentals. The rental agents are paid by the owners, so you will not have to pay the person who shows you the houses, apartments or townhouses.

To rent housing, you will have to pay a security deposit (1 month’s rent, rarely more) and the rent for the current month. Therefore, plan to have the equivalent of two months’ rent at your disposal. You will be asked to provide your employment offer letter or proof of hire by the school, your ID papers (passport and certificate of entry in the United States) and your banking details. If you do not have a U.S. bank account at the time, tell them and explain that you have just arrived.

Below you will find the contact information for French-speaking real estate agents who are used to working with new staff members at the school. You may contact them by email before your arrival to pre-select housing options.

- **Dawn Chaikin**: dawn.chaikin@penfedrealty.com, 240-418-4914
- **Dana Scanlon**: dana4homes@yahoo.com, 240-383-1350
- **Sarah Dye**: sarah.dye@longandfoster.com, 703-380-7468
- **Andrea Zasowski**: andreaz@lnf.com, 301-366-8598
- **Veronique Sriqui**: vevesriqui@gmail.com
- **Gouta Carter**: gouta.carter@longandfoster.com

Regarding the rental agreement (lease), we advise you not to commit to more than one year for your first year. Read the contract carefully and ask for modifications if necessary. The law requires the paint and carpet of the premises to be good condition. In fact, rentals are often repainted between two renters. Consider buying insurance (insurance rates are much lower than in France) even if it is not required here. You will be responsible for maintaining green areas and ensuring access to the house is clear by removing leaves, snow, etc.
Several companies, such as AGS, Bagages du Monde and Fret Air France, give you the option of having your personal belongings sent from France. Take advantage of the competition and compare prices. You can find interesting rates from small transporters by booking further in advance.

For example, to send 4 large metal trunks (100 liters) from Paris to Washington by ship costs around 1250 euros ($1,800 US). By choosing to send them by plane, you reduce the time you will have to wait for your things to arrive, but the cost is higher.

Moving furniture by container is of course more expensive and can take several weeks. The containers transporting your trunks can be checked. In this case, you will be responsible for paying the customs duties ($150 minimum). You should make the payment via the website, before picking up your items.

**Wall Outlets:** The electrical outlets are different. You will need adaptors and transformers (110 volts instead of 220). Some French appliances do not work but electric and electronic devices are inexpensive in the United States so you should not burden yourself with them.

**Luggage:** The guidelines change quite often. Only bring manufactured products. For the United States, all unpasteurized products are prohibited. Many bags are checked and opened during trips to and from France. If your luggage has been opened, you will be informed by a sticker placed on it.

1. Provide a French address and a contact person. It is important to have an address in France or in another country. You will be asked for it for your visa and other forms, and by the school to notify your loved ones if necessary.
2. Notify the relevant agencies in France of your change of address. Before your departure, you must notify any agencies such as the tax authority, your bank, the CAF (deletion certificate), etc. of your change of address. It is important to do this before leaving because once you are in the United States and with the difference in time zones, everything will take longer and become more complicated.
3. Have your mail forwarded. If you want to have your mail forwarded, you must complete the form at the post office of your choice.

All the information is on the poste.fr website:

**Budget**

Outlining an estimated budget is important to anticipate the living conditions you will have once you arrive: what type of housing, car do you picture, the number of trips home to France that will be possible, anticipated health expenses, etc.

(Cost of Living in Bethesda, MD (NUMBEIO): https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Bethesda-MD-United-States
A staff member who lives and is recruited further than 600 miles from the school will be reimbursed for the staff member’s actual and reasonable one-time costs of travel to the United States, and actual and reasonable baggage and moving expenses, subject to the following limits and conditions:

- Travel expenses are paid for the employee, but not for transportation of the staff member’s spouse and children.
- The employee must travel at the lowest available fare. The School will reimburse for two pieces of luggage.
- All reimbursable expenses must be incurred no later than 90 days after the staff member’s arrival in the United States.
- Receipts for all reimbursable expenses must be presented to the HR department in order for the employee to be reimbursed for such expenses.
- The costs are reimbursed via payroll, net of tax.

**If requested, the school will provide the following services upon arrival:**

- Transportation from the airport to your place of stay.
- 3 nights’ hotel. You may stay longer at the discounted rate, on your personal credit card.
  - Rates are as follows: The Bethesdaan Hotel - $169.00 per night with free breakfast for one. Additional breakfast is $16.00 inclusive per person. Parking is $15.00 per day.
- 3 days’ auto rental. You may keep the car at the discounted rate, but must reimburse the school, for the extension.
- Please note: the school will pay for these services, however, they are a taxable benefit to you. The value of this services will be added to your taxable income on the annual Form W-2.

**Relocation allowance:** The employee will receive a maximum of $8,000.00 (less taxes) per individual with an added $1,000.00 for each immediate family member (Children and spouse, even when a spouse is also hired). The allowance will be paid on the next available payroll following the employee’s arrival.

The expense reimbursements and relocation allowance shall not be paid to staff members who are spouses of employees of (i) national or international organizations working in the Washington area or (ii) private companies working in the Washington area. These staff members are considered to have been recruited locally, even if their candidacy was considered by the School prior to their arrival in Washington.

Effective January 1st, 2018, moving expenses are no longer deductible tax expense on individual U.S. Tax Returns. Moving expenses reimbursed to you or paid on your behalf, by the school, will be included in box I of the annual form W-2 for the year that the payment was disbursed to you. This is considered taxable income and is subject to tax withholding in compliance with IRS and state regulations.

Before your departure, we advise you to:

- Monitor fluctuations in the exchange rate € / $ www.consulfrance-newyork.org
- Ask your bank to raise the payment and withdrawal limits of your payment methods.
- Cancel any unnecessary subscriptions and automatic withdrawals. Upon request, the School will provide confirmation of employment, allowing you to take these steps.
TRAVEL WITH ANIMALS

It is relatively easy to enter the United States with an animal. The formalities for going to the U.S.:
- A valid rabies vaccination certificate (more than 30 days and less than one year) §
- A good health certificate less than 10 days old prepared by your veterinarian. §
- An international passport issued by a veterinarian authorized by the competent authority (in France, a veterinarian holding an animal health accreditation mandate) attesting to the identification and rabies vaccination of the animal. §
- An identification certificate (tattoo or microchip implanted under the skin) §
- A statement by a veterinarian indicating that your animal has received an anti-flea treatment and deworming.

Not all airlines/companies agree to transport an animal. For bans related to the transport of animals, consult the following websites:
- http://www.scc.asso.fr/Conditions-generales

IMPORTANT!

When you reserve your hotel or before renting housing, you must check that domestic animals (pets) are allowed in your building or house.
These are the things that will be helpful to you in a professional setting at Rochambeau.
To the extent possible, have your documents translated into English. Our law firm that tracks your visa applications will have them translated if necessary. There is a large number of documents to be provided. Contact the Human Resources Department which will provide you the administrative assistance needed to complete the process. See ADDENDUM 2 for J1 visa.

Documents to be gathered:
- Curriculum Vitae (and its English version)
- Diplomas with their translations
- Photocopy of the passport
- Vital records/proof of civil status (family record book, birth certificate, marriage certificate, divorce decree)
- Offer of employment (American format)
- Employment contract (certification of commitment of the AEFE for expatriates)
- Arrêté de titularisation
- Arrêté d’affectation
- Letters of recommendation
- Confirmation of solvency or letter of recommendation from the bank (for the visa and the opening of a bank account in the U.S.)

You will not be left alone to go through this process: you will be contacted quickly by the School’s immigration law firm to begin the procedure.

J1 visas are issued for an initial period of 3 years. The U.S. Department of State insists that J1 visa beneficiaries:
- Remain until the end of the three years, which implies the visa holder has learned something about local living conditions, especially financially.
- Respect the nature of the J1 visa by developing cultural exchanges between your home country and the United States. Beginning this year, each J1 visa holder will have to provide documentation confirming this work in intercultural promotion each year of the visa to be eligible to maintain J1 status.
The completion of two (2) Cross-Cultural Activities annually is a new requirement, and it is mandatory for all teachers, without exception. Rochambeau requires that all J1 exchange teachers complete both cross-cultural activities, and provide proof of completion to Ike Relacion, Human Resources Manager, by March 1 of each academic year.

**What is the Goal of the Cross-Cultural Component?**
The Cross-Cultural Component of the exchange visitor program gives participants the opportunity to share their own culture, traditions, and views with Americans and foster opportunities for the greater community to see the world from another perspective, be more tolerant and respectful of differences, and appreciate similarities that bring people together.

**What Types of Activities are Appropriate?**
Cross-Cultural Activities can be built around any number of general themes that participants might find interesting: civic responsibility; civil rights; community service and volunteerism; history and exploration; youth leadership; science, technology, engineering and math in the local/global economy; personal or individual freedoms; entrepreneurial spirit; democracy and governance; individual responsibility; holidays and food; the media; government; film, culture and the arts; and ethnic, racial and religious diversity.

Each Teacher Must Complete at Least One Cross-Cultural Activity from Category 1 and at Least One Cross Cultural Activity from Category 2 EACH YEAR that they Participate in the J-1 Exchange Program.

**Category 1:**
An activity for the teacher’s classroom, larger host school or host school district population, or the community at large designed to give an overview of the history, traditions, heritage, culture, economy, educational system and/or other attributes of their home country. For international schools, such as Rochambeau, the activity must occur outside of the host school at a school or in a community where international opportunities are more limited.

**Category 2:**
An activity that involves U.S. student dialogue with schools or students in another country, preferably in the exchange teacher’s home school, through virtual exchange or other means, in order to supplement the goals of the in-person exchange.
To obtain your secondment, you will have to address a letter to the Inspecteur d’académie or to your IEN for the Lower School. For the Upper School, you will have to address your request to the Recteur d’Académie through the director of your school (see your head of school beforehand, going through the official channels). You should specify the nature of the duties you are going to perform, the expected duration, the amount of your annual compensation (salary, allowances and benefits included).

As a seconded employee, your years of experience continue to be counted and contribute to the advancement of your career. You may also choose to contribute to your retirement, and to join the MGEN/SEM for your complimentary insurance (extra-metropolitan section of the MGEN).

Your administrative situation if you are already in the U.S.:
- If you are already available, you will have to inform your school of origin that you are going to have a local contract and request a secondment through the official channels.
- If you are already seconded, our staff will assist you with the process of renewing your second via the Service des Etablissements Français in Washington.
- To obtain a renewal of your secondment, you should be up to date with your retirement contributions if you have selected that option.

Understanding your offer of employment, your gross or net compensation, the tax exemption for the J1 visa.

Teaching positions are subject to the work conditions described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which spells out the obligations of the teachers, their work conditions but also their rights and benefits. You will obtain access to the CBA upon signature of your offer of employment. It is important to read it carefully.
You are placed in a salary scale, based on your years of experience, your highest diploma and the discipline for which you are employed. The amounts in the scale are for full-time employment.

Category A: Doctorate, PhD, Agrégation
Category B: Certified teacher, professeur des écoles, Master with valid certification
Category C: DEA, DESS, Master without certification, Bachelor of arts with valid certification
Category D: Maîtrise, Licence, Bachelor of Arts

The salary scale for teachers at Rochambeau are updated periodically according to the CBA. «For example, a Professeur des écoles with ten years of teaching experience will earn a gross annual 13 salary (before taxes) of $58,344.62 and will be categorized in Category B10 of current salary grid».

All the years spent in Ecole Normale for Professeurs des écoles and the internship year at the IUFM for teachers are counted as years of experience. Any years of teaching full-time at the university level are also counted.

Additional compensation:
- Any activity or project that will be carried out outside of full time may be subject to additional compensation at the rate indicated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Teachers also have the option of leading clubs (athletic, artistic or others) or supervising tutoring.

The salary is paid in 12 payments at the end of each month. It is generally paid by direct deposit to your bank account.

### Work Hours and Instruction Periods

- **Primary school**
  - Teachers work 27 hours per week, 26 of which are spent providing instruction and 1 hour of meetings. These hours include supervising students during recess and breaks, with the exception of the students' lunch break.
  - English teachers provide 20 sessions of instruction per week, each lasting 50 minutes.
  - Physical Education teachers provide 22 sessions of instruction per week, each lasting 50 minutes. English, Spanish and Physical Education teachers (specialty instruction) must also ensure supervision of recess for 80 minutes each week.

- **Secondary school**
  - Teachers provide 18 hours of instruction per week, including certified teachers & agreges teachers.
  - Physical Education teachers provide 20 hours of instruction per week
REduced Tuition Fees for Children of Staff

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) provides for reduced tuition and fees for children of employees of the School.

FULL-TIME Teachers
For staff teaching full-time (or at least 2/3 of full time), the reduction in tuition and fees is as follows:

- 75% of tuition and fees
- Fees for first registration are 100% covered
- The amount of the reduction given to each teacher is capped. This cap concerns families with 3 or more children. This amount is readjusted every year based on the increase in the tuition and fees of the following year.
- The reduction does not apply to the registration fees or additional expenses, such as school transportation or textbooks.
- This aid may be supplemented, if applicable, by a Bourse from the French Government (application reviewed by the Consulate of France) and by the School’s Financial Aid Committee if you are eligible.

PART-TIME Teachers
For staff teaching part-time (between 1/3 and 2/3 of work hours), a calculation is made based on the number of hours worked. Part-time teachers working less than 1/3 of service time will not benefit from these reductions.
arriving in the

UNITED STATES

Travel to the states, and arriving, what now?
On the airplane, you will be given declaration forms to complete (civil status, address upon arrival in Washington, D.C., customs, declaration of currency). It is important to complete these documents well (no overwritten text or erasures!) even if you have to ask the crew for assistance. Form I-94 for people with a visa must be completed online. Keep the number of your I-94 with you. You may be delayed at the checkpoint for a document that has been filled out poorly.

At Immigration, verify that the stamp indicates J-1 – D/S (Duration of Status) for J-1 or H-1B visas with the date of expiration of the visa. If this is not the case, return it and (politely) notify the immigration officer of the error. This will prevent a return to the airport. It is important to have Form DS2019 (for staff on a J1 visa) with you because you will be asked for it when you pass through immigration. This document should always be in your passport. For the H-1B visa, you should keep the stub of the I-797 in your passport. http://www.usimmigrationsupport.org

NEVER RESIST AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER. STAY CALM AND BE COURTEOUS.

To enter the United States with a visa (particularly a J1 visa), it is essential that you respect the law. What is true in all countries is even more so in the United States. The risks incurred for any infractions are significant and can result in expulsion from the country. Like all countries, the United States has legislation for foreign nationals. It is the responsibility of each non-immigrant to be familiar with the regulations that govern his legal status.

You are a non-immigrant, non-resident to the extent that you are only in the United States on a temporary basis (unlike those who have a green card). The non-immigrant who stays in the United States after their visa has expired (overstay) is penalized. This infraction is subject to a variety of sanctions, the most serious one being the interdiction to obtain a new entry visa for a period that may last up to 10 years. « Overstay » means staying in the United States beyond the expiration date of the immigration documents, and also staying in the United States after committing certain violations of status.

The following rules must be observed:

- Do not stay in the United States beyond the authorized stay. This cut-off date is always 30 days after the expiration date of your DS “Duration of Stay” associated with your visa.
- Make sure your passport is always valid. Notify the authorities of any change of address in the United States or any change in your contact in your country of origin.
- Keep a copy of your passport and your immigration documents (J1 visa and I-94 card – a white card that you will carefully fill out in the airplane) with you at all times. The best thing to do is to staple the I-94 into your passport if the immigration officer did not already do so when you arrived in the U.S.
- Make sure that your documents are in order before you travel (including to Canada). The J1 visa must still be valid and you must travel with your DS-2019 form. Anytime you are leaving the United States for more than three days, Immigration will take back your I-94, and you will have to fill the white card out again each time you re-enter the United States.
- In the J1 visa category, a teacher cannot be «transferred» to another school during the period for which he has a J1 teacher’s visa (1 to 3 years).
- Fill out Form 8233 before starting work.
To work in the United States, you will need to register with the Social Security Administration (SSA), and have a social security number. Contrary to how it works in France, Social Security has nothing to do with health insurance coverage. It is important to take the necessary steps to obtain your social security number as soon as possible after your J1 visa takes effect. Having a social security number will facilitate the administrative steps below. Please ask Human Resources when you may begin the process.

You must have a Social Security number to:

- receive a salary
- to pay or be exempt from taxes
- open a bank account
- obtain a driver's license
- purchase a car
- and for many other administrative or commercial steps

To apply for a U.S. Social Security number, you must:

- Fill out an application (Form SS-5) by going to www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf
- Gather the documents that prove your status and your work authorization (valid passport, Form DS2019, I94 card stapled to your passport for the U.S., work permit, student visa, employment contract, passport)
- Bring these original (or certified copies from the institution that issued them) documents and the duly completed Form SS-5 to the Social Security office closest to your residence. To find the address of this office, go to http://www.ssa.gov/
- Request a receipt for the documents submitted.
- Provide a copy to Human Resources of the receipt and the SSN card when received.

**NOTE:** You must wait until your J1 visa is valid before you can submit this application to the Social Security Administration. In fact, you must wait until the Social Security Administration has access to the information entered by Immigration (DHS: Department of Homeland Security). However, you can begin working before you have a social security number while your application is being processed. A teacher who has not yet received a number from the SSA on the first day of work must indicate « applied for » on the forms that ask for the social security number. Once received, the teacher will provide the social security number card to the school’s Human Resources Department in order to update records and inform the payroll department.
You are strongly advised to come to the United States with an international driver’s license. However, you will very quickly have to conform and have your license converted to an American driver’s license.

There are three main reasons for this:

- It is mandatory in most of the states (the amount of time you are given to obtain an American driver’s license can vary from 3 months to 1 year)
- The American driver’s license is the main form of ID used in the U.S. where there is no ID card. You will be asked very often to present this license (particularly in stores). Without an American driver’s license or state issued ID card, many everyday activities will be more complicated.
  - Note: typically home country licenses are not accepted as a form of ID in the United States.
- Obtaining an American driver’s license will allow you to have your car insurance premium lowered.

To find the DMV for your state, go to: www.dmv.org 17 For Maryland, you will find all the information at: http://www.mva.maryland.gov/Driver-Services/Apply/international.htm#exchanging_out_of_country

You must know:

- The regulations related to obtaining an American driver’s license in the state.
- The traffic and signaling rules (often online at the website of your state’s DMV). When you go in person to the local DMV, do not forget to bring as much personal information as possible: French driver’s license with photo, international driver’s license, passport, DS-2019, a letter from the School and several documents proving your address. If you have to take a driving test, you must bring your car.
- You should also provide a document attesting that you have taken a 3-hour class on the risks of alcohol and drugs while driving. This class can be taken at a driving school but also online. You just need to take the test (around ½ hour).

For more information: http://www.mva.maryland.gov/About-MVA/INFO/26200-678/26200-09T.html

In most DMVs the wait times are very long. Plan to spend around half a day there.

**Note: To get an American driver’s license, you must have your U.S. Social Security number card.**
Purchasing a Car

A car will quickly become a necessity. You may go to a car dealership, including:

- CarMax
- Jim Coleman
- Fitzgerald, Honda

For cars as well as other products, there are also websites with ads from private individuals:

- www.craigslist.org
- http://outes.cafr.ebay.ca/

Read the terms of sale thoroughly (especially if it is in small print in the contract) and ask for a full inspection of the car if possible. Make sure the seller gives you a receipt and, most importantly, the Certificate of Title which must be signed by the previous owner. If you purchase your car before your arrival, to register it this certificate must be less than 3 months old. If not, you will have to redo it (cost $75). With these documents, you will go immediately to the DMV (or MVA) in your state of residence to register your vehicle. There you will pay taxes and a registration fee. If it is a new car, the seller usually handles these steps. You may not drive the car without license plates. In general, cars are less expensive than abroad; however, the selection of small cars is limited. To insure a vehicle, whatever type, the insurance companies are going to act as if you are 16-years-old and you are driving for the first time... and the premium will reflect that. It is difficult to prove your driving experience, regardless of your age.
Unlike in other countries where the credit card is a deferred debit card; in the U.S., the credit card is associated with credit based on your credit history as being creditworthy. You can only borrow if you have already established a credit history in the U.S. The whole loan system is based on it. Your good credit history in abroad does not matter. Therefore, you must have enough money to get settled and wait for your first paycheck without having access to U.S. credit. However, you can pay with your international credit card. When the exchange rate is an advantage for Europeans that can be a good deal.

Credit History: How do you establish one?
By applying for a credit card at your bank. Once you have opened a checking or savings account, you just have a fill out an application and wait a short period of time. Sometimes your application is accepted. The bank then mails you the credit card. It is usually a simple Visa card with a credit limit (usually $1000 to begin with, this limit increases over time as the cardholder proves their reliability). It is recommended that you use the card from time to time for shopping and to pay the consolidated bills that you receive in the mail each 18 month, with a minimum payment, by the due date. It is recommended that you pay the balance all at once so that you do not accrue interest.

In this way, you will gradually establish a credit history, which then allows you to apply for other cards or obtain other loans. This is one of the reasons why Americans have several credit cards and generally have a very high level of debt.

Another situation, the most common: the credit card application is rejected because you do not yet have a credit history. In this case, it is necessary to open a checking account in a bank like Bank of America (more flexible than the others on this matter) and ask for a "secured credit card", that is, a credit card that you yourself have provisioned. This system is intended to verify your creditworthiness. If all goes well, you can then reapply for a credit card, with a greater chance of success.
just a few things to add

MISCELLANEOUS

FRENCH PRESENCE
We recommend that you consult the website: http://www.consulfrance-washington.org
You should also register with the registry of French citizens living abroad.

CULTURAL EVENTS/STAY INFORMED
- Maison Française
- Alliance française
- Washington Accueil

THE FRENCH NETWORK
www.FrenchNetwork.org
The first gateway for the French community with worldwide coverage (classified ads, job openings, internships, discussion forum).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES
First year teachers seeking to take English language classes, please visit the "English Now" website at: http://english-now.com. You may register for a group class or private lessons.
If you have any questions about any available English Now! classes, please contact Paul Boesen at (301) 718-3575.
Teachers are reimbursed up to $400 upon completion of one (1) English language classes. A certificate of completion is required for reimbursement purposes through Sage Intaact, the school’s reimbursement system. If you have any questions, please contact Diana Concepcion, Accounts Payable (concepciond@rochambeau.org).
At Rochambeau, we value diversity, celebrate multiculturalism, and empower students to understand and improve the world around them.
The school year is punctuated by events that bring together the community, parents, students, staff of the school:

- **Welcoming of families** in September
- **The Winter Fair:** This Christmas market takes place the first weekend of December, on the Forest Road campus.
- **The Talent Show:** A tradition in American schools, this evening event takes place during January and gives middle school and high school students the opportunity to demonstrate their talents.
- **The School's Gala:** This evening is a flagship event of the fundraising actions organized by the Communications and Events Department. It typically takes place after the spring break.
- **The School's Spring Fair:** organized in May or June is another opportunity to get together on the Maplewood Campus.

**MAJOR SCHOOL EVENTS**

**ROCHAMBEAU IS...**

- French: regulated by the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE) and accredited by the Ministry of National Education. The instruction given complies with the programs defined by this Ministry and provided in all the academic institutions in the network of French schools in the world.
- The students take the Diplôme National du Brevet and Baccalauréat examinations, some with the international option (OIB).
- Many optional subjects are offered, such as cinema, the arts and theater, as well as numerous athletic and cultural activities in Rochambeau clubs.
- International: students of more than 60 nationalities attend school together from preschool to 12th grade. Rochambeau welcomes many students of diplomats and Embassy staff, employees of international organizations and research professors. Integration is a priority.
- American: immersed in an American environment, the school also attracts many American families. The English instruction from preschool to 12th grade reinforced like that of American history which allows students to obtain the High School Diploma at the end of 9th grade.
The school year consists of 170 days of instruction, or about 36 weeks between the first day of school and the last day of school.

Exams take place earlier than abroad. The teachers teaching in 9th grade (première) and 12th grade (terminale) must plan their lessons over 32 weeks (33 weeks for classes in the 11th grade).

Vacations are not as long as abroad: 1 week in October, 2 weeks at Christmas, 10 days in February if no snow day is taken, 2 weeks in spring.

Snow days: The school year includes 5 snow days (make-up day in the event of weather-related closures: snow, hurricane, ice, etc.). Three are placed in February and two in March.

Five (5) professional days are scheduled in the calendar for primary and secondary teachers.
Primary School Campus

MAPLEWOOD

This new campus, opened in the fall of 2022, is home to our Preschool, Elementary students, and administrative offices. Facilities include: a 12-acre campus, a library, science room, music room, learning kitchen, and the athletic facilities (2 gymnasiums, 3 playgrounds, one outdoor field for soccer).

The Foundation of the school is the owner of the Forest and Maplewood campuses; shuttles make trips between our two different campuses every day for the students.

Please see the school’s website (www.rochambeau.org) for additional information on accessing the campus, including rules and regulations.

HOURS
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM
Auxiliary Activities Follow

ADDRESS
9650 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.530.8260
Main Campus - Secondary School

FOREST ROAD

It holds the middle and high schools. Facilities include: an auditorium, a library, and the athletic facilities (2 gymnasiums, one track, one outdoor field for soccer).

The Foundation of the school is the owner of the Forest and Maplewood campuses; shuttles make trips between the two different campuses every day for the students.

HOURS
8:30 AM - 5:30 PM

ADDRESS
9600 Forest Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
301.530.8260

Please see the school’s website (www.rochambeau.org) for additional information on accessing the campus, including rules and regulations.
ABSENCE REQUESTS AND MAKEUP CLASSES

Teacher absence requests for scheduled absences are submitted to the administrative assistants of the campus’ school directors and are signed by them. In the event of an unforeseen absence, it should be resolved following the same procedure.

When an absence at the secondary level is known in advance and will be longer than 24 hours, the absent teacher’s hours are offered to the other teachers of the class, who can then take the students to move ahead in their classes.

These hours are paid as overtime hours if the replacing teacher is full time once they have been approved by the campus’ school director.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND AMERICAN CULTURE

The relationship between a teacher and parents is close. The ability to express oneself in English as well as communication skills (diplomacy, empathy, collaboration, politeness, patience, listening, self-control, etc.) are essential. Open-mindedness is vital to understanding American culture and adjusting to it.

The management of the day-to-day communication with the parents is conducted by email, and potentially through the class website. The teachers in the primary school generally communicate class activities and programs via the class website. In the secondary school, the homework, lessons and notes are put online via the Pronote software. The parents and students find it very practical to be able to check and see what the homework is on the class website, as well as tracking their child’s progression and grades.

Note: the use of Pronote does not replace the students’ transferring the homework into their homework journals.

FUNDRAISING

Rochambeau is a non-profit private school that depends on the continuous support of donors in terms of time and money. Each year, thanks to the participation of the community as a whole, a large number of projects and events are realized. Rochambeau depends mainly on tuition and philanthropic contributions, fundraising helps finance educational programs, scholarships and investments in equipment beyond what is provided in the budget.

Fundraising events cannot be made possible without the volunteer help of parents, students and staff. Volunteer participation, no matter how small, by ALL parents and staff, is appreciated.
The Regional Training Program (plan de formation régional, PRF) is established each year by the AEFE and managed by Lycee Claudel in Ottawa, through proposals and suggestions made by the heads of school in the North America zone during the AEFE conference which is held in November.

The PRF is known from the beginning of the school year. Teachers can submit their requests in September. A committee meets with the department heads at the end of September to determine which teachers are eligible or which requests have been granted for continuing education. The training sessions last 3 days on average; they take place between the month of October and the month of April; they are held in schools in the zone (United States and Canada).

**French and American Exams**

As an accredited school, Rochambeau prepares students for French exams: Brevet des collèges, the baccalauréat (with or without the international option of the bac: OIB).

As a school established in the United States, the School also prepares students for American exams:

- The high school diploma which confirms completion of a high school education and allows entry into universities. Students in the high school obtain this diploma at the end of their Junior (11th) year.
- Standardized tests (PSAT, SAT, ACT): these tests, which are part multiple choice, are essential for university applications. Students begin preparing for these tests beginning in their sophomore year of high school (seconde). They often take courses in the evenings after school or even Saturday mornings.

**Guidance**

The school is geared toward preparing students for universities or French grandes écoles, whether they be British, Canadian or of course American universities.

The calendars are very different: for students applying to schools in France, the application process begins in January; for Anglo-Saxon universities, everything happens between October and January.

**School Messenger**

School Messenger is an application used by the school to send emergency messages; for example, if the campuses must close due to weather. You must provide a valid mobile phone number to the school’s IT department as soon as possible in order to be able to receive school related text messages.
Rochambeau is located just 17 miles away from the National Mall, in Washington, D.C. Make sure to take advantage of all the DC Metropolitan area has to offer.
SPORTS TEAMS
- Basketball: Wizards – Capital One Arena, Downtown
- Baseball: Nationals – Washington Nationals Park - Downtown
- Football: Commanders – FedEx Field – Landover
- Hockey: Capitals – Capital One Arena, Downtown
- Soccer: DC United – Audi Field, Downtown

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
When in DC it is much easier to get around VIA the Metro system, or by renting a bike share in the area. http://dc.about.com/od/transportation/a/DCPublicTrans.htm

BALTIMORE
Baltimore is 40 minutes away from the school. The Inner Harbor is a good place to visit when the weather is nice. Water taxis take you from one neighborhood to another.
- The National Aquarium
- Fort McHenry
- American Visionary Art Museum

LOCAL THINGS TO DO
SIGHT-SEEING & ATTRACTIONS

The most important museums in Washington, DC are grouped together on or around the Mall. It is easy to walk from one museum to another. The museums managed by the Smithsonian Institution (www.si.edu) are free (except for temporary exhibits)

- African-American History Museum
- Air and Space Museum
  - You should also visit its extension, Air and Space Udvar Hazy Center, near Dulles Airport, that is where the Discovery shuttle is located.
- Hirshhorn Museum (contemporary art) and the Sculpture Garden
- National Gallery of Art
- National Gallery of Portrait
- National Postal Museum
- Sackler Gallery
- National Museum of the American Indian
- Museum of American History
- National Museum of African Art
- Building Museum
- Freer Gallery of Art
- National Archives
- Holocaust Museum
- National Zoo

For Events, Arts & Entertainment, Calendar, dining, and shopping in Bethesda, MD, please visit https://www.bethesda.org
please enjoy the area!

WELCOME TO ROCHAMBEAU!

We welcome you again and look forward to seeing you at New Employee Orientation. Until then, we wish you a good end of the school year and a wonderful summer.

IKE RELACION
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
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Phone: (301) 798-4802
Note: Does NOT speak French

CEILLA LABAN
HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST
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Note: Speaks French & English

NILOFAAR "LULU" MOLAVI
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Note: Does NOT Speak French