



Homestay Expectations & Questionnaire

The Summer Fellowship Program is designed to provide a holistic experience to students as they engage in 10-12 weeks of hands-on ministry. One of the primary ways that this holistic ministry experience plays out is through the student's engagement with a host family for the summer. Homestays are meant to provide a positive and safe housing experience for both the student and homestay family. Students have shared that the homestay is one of the most transformative parts of their fellowship experience! Ultimately, the goal with each homestay is for the student to see how Christian faith is embedded not only in the direct ministry setting, but in all of life.

"Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

"When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. 'If you consider me a believer in the Lord,' she said, 'come and stay at my house.' And she persuaded us." Acts 16:15



Immediately following Lydia's conversion to Christ, she is prompted toward hospitality. Lydia's encounter with Jesus' love prompts her to extend that through the hospitality of opening her home to others. From the sacred covenantal meals and the Near Eastern understanding of hospitality in the Old Testament, to the open homes and generosity seen in the New Testament, welcoming another into your home and to your table is a profoundly meaningful expression of the gospel. It is our hope that families who host Whitworth summer fellows understand their contribution to the program in this way. A roof over a fellow's head and a shared meal are more than simply a rendered service to support the program. This is a profound, gospel-centric expression of grace and hospitality. Our hope is that fellows gain a meaningful experience of these Christian virtues during their time with host families.

With this in mind, we encourage you to consider these expectations and best practices regarding homestays.

Procedures

Homestay families will be approved by the ministry site and OCE in advance of the experience. The ministry site is responsible for selecting homestays based on prior experience hosting students, knowledge of and familiarity with the homestay family, and their perception of how a student would "fit" well within that homestay context.

Once your ministry discerns a possible homestay family, the following steps must take place:

- The site supervisor is required to **conduct a homestay inspection** to confirm the suitability of the placement. Inspection document will be provided by the OCE, and an OCE staff member may ask to be present at the inspection, either in-person or through video.
- The site will, at their expense, conduct a background check on the homestay family and everyone who will be in the house and is 18+ years of age. A homestay is only suitable for a Fellow if they pass the background check and inspection.



- If the OCE and the site supervisor agree on the suitability of the placement, the homestay will **watch an assigned training video** preparing them for the homestay experience provided by the OCE.
- The site supervisor is then **required to facilitate an introductory conversation** between the homestay family and Fellow via Zoom using the questionnaire provided at the end of this document.

Expectations

Homestays should meet the following expectations:

- Supportive family involved with ministry site (we use the term “family” in a holistic sense that includes all ages, backgrounds and seasons of life).
- Consistent living environment (student should be able to expect one homestay location for the duration of their fellowship).
- Healthy household environment (i.e., no drug or alcohol problems, no history of abuse or legal offenses, clean and sanitary accommodations).
- Provide adequate, healthy food and whenever possible, be willing to accommodate to dietary restrictions and/or choices.
- Clear, communicated expectations for household environment within first few days of arriving (chores, house rules, etc. Be aware that fellows are not summer babysitters).
- Homestay with site or ministry supervisor by exception only (we are happy to chat more about our experience with this setup, for those who have questions).
- Homestay must be a supportive, healthy, nondiscriminatory environment that is welcoming to any fellow assigned to them.
- Homestay family will take efforts necessary to accommodate the particular needs of each student (communication with the OCE is required if accommodation appears too difficult for student’s needs).
- Provide students with their own room and private space to allow students the opportunity to rest and relax.
- If homestay is more than 10 miles away from the site, the site agrees to help Fellow with gas expenses.
- Spokane sites only: *if your site is unable to provide a homestay, you agree to pay an additional \$500 to help offset rent costs for each Fellow.*

Suggestions & Best Practices

- Fellow is invited to engage in family activities, outings, etc.
- Engagement with fellow in some sort of consistent routine (meals, afternoon activities, weekly grocery shopping, etc.).
- Homestay provides community/fellowship for the student to process their ministry experience throughout the summer (regular dialogue about the fellowship, intentional effort to help fellow process events during the summer, etc.).

"I really loved my homestay experience because it was an invitation to intentional community. I think homestays are a wonderful opportunity to get to live into and explore what it means to be in fellowship with the body of Christ outside of just peers (since that is what we tend to be used to as college students)."

-Elena De la Paz, '23



Homestay Questionnaire

One of the best ways to prepare is to talk with your fellow about logistics, expectations and hopes for the summer. We encourage you to use the following questions to guide you in a pre-summer conversation.

First, make sure both the homestay and fellow have record of:

- Each other's names and contact information
- Dates the Fellow or homestay family will be out of town (if the homestay family is out of town more than 3 consecutive days, the homestay should let the site supervisor know to arrange alternate accommodations should the fellow prefer)
- Names of all people living in the homestay (including children and their ages)

Homestay to Fellow

- Tell me about you and your background (what do you enjoy doing, what do you like learning about, what do you dislike, what makes you uncomfortable, what experiences have shaped you, etc.)
- What about your Summer Fellowship are you excited about? What are you anxious about?
- What boundaries do you have that I should respect? What would make you feel welcomed and comfortable?
- What rhythms or habits are important to you?
- What would you like to know about this area and community? Is there anything you'd like to do or explore during your time here?
- What are you hoping this homestay experience could be like?
- Do you have any allergies/food restrictions/anything else I should know?

Fellow to Homestay

- Tell me about your background. How are you connected to the host site/ministry I am placed in?
- Tell me more about you. What do you enjoy doing, what do you like learning about, what do you dislike, what makes you uncomfortable, what experiences have shaped you, etc.
- What does an average day in your home look like?
- What boundaries do you have that I should respect? (ie. preferences with visitors, curfew time, etc.)
- What rhythms or habits are important to you?
- What expectations do you have for me as someone sharing a space with you?
- Tell me about your communication style. How can I communicate effectively with you and others in your household?
- How do you envision me helping around the house over the summer? How can I support this household?
- What are some things you love about where you live?

If you encounter concerns during your homestay experience, contact the site supervisor and Allison Maus Fellowship Program Director (amaus@whitworth.edu or 509.777.4434).

