



SAN MATEO  
COLLEGES  

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of Silicon Valley

# Handbook for Host Families

## HOMESTAY REFERRAL PROGRAM

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## Welcome Message from the Director

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Dear Host Families,

On behalf of San Mateo County Community College District, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for opening your homes and hearts to our international students. Your participation in our homestay referral program is truly appreciated, and we are thrilled to have you as part of our global community.

Since opening our doors in 2016, our homestay program has flourished, serving more than 500 students from over 35 countries and speaking more than 30 languages. This incredible journey wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of families like yours. We now proudly boast over 300 families participating, each contributing to the cultural tapestry of our community.

We understand that providing a safe and welcoming environment is paramount to attracting and supporting international students. Your role as host families is not only to open your homes but also to provide a nurturing space where our students can thrive and feel at home away from home. Moreover, homestay offers fantastic cultural immersion opportunities for both international students and their host families. Many of our students and host families have formed lifelong friendships that extend far beyond the student's graduation.

Thank you once again for offering to share your home with our international students and being part of their journey in the U.S. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to our housing team. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Warm regards,



Chikako Walker

Director of International Education

San Mateo County Community College District



## Meet the International Housing Staff

*Chikako Walker, Director of International Education: [walkerchikako@smccd.edu](mailto:walkerchikako@smccd.edu)*



Chikako Walker is the Acting Director of International Education for the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD). In this role, she works closely with the international education teams at all three colleges on key areas such as student recruitment, admissions, support services and program development. She is also responsible for overseeing the district's Homestay Referral Program. Originally from Japan, Chikako has more than 15 years of professional experience in the field of International Education. Prior to joining SMCCCD, she served in a variety of roles at higher education institutions in the U.S., Australia and Japan. Chikako holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Waseda University, Japan, and a Master of Arts degree in International Education from New York University, U.S.

*Julnar Msalam, Housing Program Coordinator: [housingcoordinator@smccd.edu](mailto:housingcoordinator@smccd.edu)*



As an International Student Housing Program Coordinator for the three colleges in the San Mateo Community College District, Julnar is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with host families throughout the community. She supervises the general housing inquiries, recruits new families, approves home visits, processes background checks, manages the homestay database, initiates' homestay referrals, and matches students with compatible host families. Julnar has worked in the Counseling and Transfer Department, as well as helping students in the Associate's to Bachelor program for eight years. Julnar has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature, from the University of Jerash in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

*Jia Chuan Lu, International Program Specialist: [housingcoordinator@smccd.edu](mailto:housingcoordinator@smccd.edu)*



Jia Chuan Lu is the International Education Program Specialist for the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD). He assists with the coordination and implementation of the District Homestay Referral Program. He is a highly motivated and experienced professional who is committed to helping international students succeed and thrive during their time at college. He has a deep understanding of unique challenges faced by international students, and he is dedicated to providing them with the guidance, support, and resources they need to succeed academically and personally. He earned a bachelor degree in Business Administration from UC Berkeley, Haas School of Business.

## Housing Options & Costs

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### **Option 1:** Private room with meals: \$1,775/month

This option is for students who desire a private room and 2 meals every day. The family will provide the student with a hot dinner and breakfast items, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their own lunch.

### **Option 2:** Private room without meals: \$1,275/month

This option is for students who desire a private room but choose to take care of all their own meals. The host family will provide the student access to the kitchen for cooking, with cabinet and refrigerator space to store food.

### **Option 3:** Shared Room with meals: \$1,375/month

This option is for students who desire a shared room with another international student of the same gender, and 2 meals every day. The family will provide the student with a hot dinner and breakfast items, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their own lunch. A second student to share the room is ***never guaranteed*** with this option.

### **Option 4:** Shared Room without meals: \$875/month

This option is for students who desire a shared room with another international student of the same gender, but choose to take care of all their own meals. The host family will provide the student access to the kitchen for cooking, with cabinet and refrigerator space to store food. A second student to share the room is ***never guaranteed*** with this option.

## Student Placement & Arrival Information

Some programs allow hosts to select students from a list of available students; however, our program coordinates the placement process between the host family and the student. Once a match has been made, our office will notify the host family first via email with the placement decision. This will provide the host with time to review the student profile information and either accept or decline the student placement. We want the host family to feel as engaged in the matching process as possible since the students will be living in their home. Once the host confirms, we will then send their profile to the student for review. **The placement is not finalized until the student also accepts the host family and signs the contract.** Once both parties have confirmed the placement, we recommend the host to complete the following steps:

Email, skype, or call student prior to the students' estimated arrival date.

1. Ask the student for flight arrival information and desired move-in date should it differ;
2. Determine student's transportation plans from the airport;
3. Make sure you have a contact cell phone number for the student;
4. Learn the student's on-campus orientation date;
5. And get to know the student as much as possible prior to arrival.

It is the students' responsibility to arrange transportation from the airport. Some hosts may choose to pick students up from the airport but it is not required. If the host decides to pick up the student, it is on a voluntary basis.

It is the host and student's responsibility to coordinate the move-in date amongst each other. Our office will provide the host with the student's estimated arrival and move-in date but if the student changes the dates, the host and student should coordinate the date that works best for both parties. If the student needs temporary housing while the host prepares for their arrival, they need to notify our office or visit our homestay website for a list of temporary housing options.

Unfortunately, not every host family will be matched with an international student each semester. Due to the specific requirements of each student, and after careful consideration of all the factors, the Homestay Program Coordinator will only contact you if we have found a suitable match for your family. However, even if you do not hear from the coordinator before the school semester starts, there's a chance you could still be matched with a student! Sometimes things do not work out with the initial placement and we will receive relocation requests during the school year. Please be sure to keep us updated with your room's availability.

## Homestay Program Policies

### Rent:

The Homestay Referral Program does not manage or negotiate rental payments; it is strictly between the host and the student. On the first day of moving in, students must pay the host two months' rent, according to their homestay option, plus a refundable security deposit of \$500. After the first two months, students can request to move out (with a 30-day written notice) or continue living with the same host, but paying rent on a monthly basis.

If the student moves out prior to the completion of two months, no refund of the prepaid two months' rent will be given, unless they are leaving due to any of the valid reasons stated below:

- a) There is a real or implied threat of harm towards the student.
- b) The room was not as pictured or described in the host's profile.
- c) The host alters the terms of this contract like increasing rent, charging utilities, etc.
- d) The host is unable to continue hosting the student due to personal reasons not caused by the student.

At any point during their participation in the Program, if the student is asked to move out due to disciplinary or behavioral problems (breaking house rules, theft of property, continuing conflicts or verbal abuse toward a family member, physical abuse to any persons or property, etc), the remainder of that month's rent will not be refunded.

However, if the host asks the student to move out, and the student has not broken any house rules, the host must refund the student any unused prepaid rent. The refund amount must be given to the student the day that they move out. In both cases, the security deposit will be calculated according to the policy outlined in the next section.

For Options 3 and 4, the Homestay Referral Program **cannot guarantee** that two students will be placed in the shared room. Host families should consider this before signing up for this option because they will still need to honor the shared rental rate with only one student. Also, if one of the students decide to move out, the remaining student will continue to pay the same rental rate while the Homestay Referral Program is working on finding another student to be matched with the host family. If the host is unable to accommodate this, they must give the student a 30-day eviction notice.

### Security Deposit:

If the student chooses to move out of their homestay early and does not provide the host family with a 30-day written notice, the student may risk losing some or all of their \$500 security deposit, if the funds are needed to pay any rent left owing.

The student is expected to leave their room in the same condition as when they moved in, except for normal wear and tear. The student may be held responsible for any damages caused by visitors (friends

and family) that they have invited into the home, and funds from the security deposit can be used to repair such damages.

After a student moves out, the host family has 30 days to either return the deposit, or give a written statement of why all or part of the money is being kept. If a student moves out early, the host family may keep part or all of the security deposit to pay rent that would be due. If any funds are used for cleaning or repairs the family will provide the student with receipts showing the cost of services or repairs performed.

### **Additional Fees:**

As long as the host is participating in the Program, even after the initial two months, they must honor the rental rate set by the Program. In addition, they may not charge the student additional fees for utilities and internet.

Students are responsible for purchasing their own snacks, no matter what their housing option is. For options 1 and 3, they should be provided food for breakfast and dinner every day, with full access to the kitchen to prepare their lunch.

Some host families offer the following services for an additional fee. The fees are separate from the Homestay Fees and should be negotiated between the student and the host. The host can choose not to charge the student for any of the services listed. However, if the host requires compensation for these **optional** fees, the student may request to be matched with another host. In that case, the host must refund the \$500 deposit and any unused prepared rent.

1. **Cleaning Fee:** the host can hire a professional to occasionally clean the house, including the student's bedroom and bathroom. The host can split this expense with the student.
2. **Lunch Fee:** if the student does not want to prepare their own lunch, they can ask the host to provide them with lunch for a fee that will not exceed \$10/meal.
3. **Driving Fee:** most hosts will occasionally provide free rides to the grocery store, movie theater, school, etc. However, a payment plan can be developed if the student wants a ride to school every day, or to be driven to far destinations.

### **What is Provided:**

Per the SMCCCD homestay agreement, host families must provide a room that is furnished with a bed, linens, chest of drawers, desk, chair, closet and window. For shared rooms, two beds and desks must comfortably fit in the room and there is enough closet space for two students. Internet and utilities are included in the rental agreement and no additional bills should be charged to the student for payment.

It is expected that the student respects the facilities in the home and follow the host's rules for the space in the home. If a student uses the house phone for long distance calls, they will pay for them. San Mateo County Community College District does not recommend that the student be allowed to make long distance calls on the family phone bill.



In addition to the bathroom and kitchen access, students will have access to the laundry room to wash their clothes. The student should provide their own laundry soap and not use the hosts' detergent unless instructed by the host family. If the host family does not have a washer and dryer in unit, they must provide the student with money to wash their clothes at a laundromat. Students are also responsible for purchasing their own personal hygiene products like deodorant, shampoo, razor, etc.

### **Holiday and Semester Breaks:**

Students who plan to leave for an extended period of time during the holiday or semester breaks must inform the host family whether they plan to return to live in their homestay or not. If the student would like to continue living with the host family, the student will continue to pay the required rent during their absence to remain in the room.

If the student is not returning to the same homestay after the semester break and the remaining rent does not cover the days when they are away, they may not store their belongings there. Some host families may offer storage space for a fee, but this should be discussed and negotiated between the student and the host.

If the host is traveling for an extended period of time, they must ensure the student will still get two meals a day. If the student is under 18 years old, the host must inform the Housing Program Coordinator in advance and provide the contact information of an adult who will be checking in on the minor student. The host cannot leave the minor student unsupervised.

### **House Rules and Federal Law:**

During the first week of arrival, we encourage host families to go over house rules and expectations with the student. If the student breaks a rule and is warned by the host of the consequences of their behavior yet continues to break house rules, the host family can ask the student to leave their home. The host should provide the student with adequate time to move out since the student will no longer be eligible to participate in our homestay program and must find housing on their own.

Students must obey local, state and federal law. Drinking alcohol and smoking are prohibited until age 21. Smoking is not allowed in most homes. Illegal drugs are prohibited for persons of any age and students should not be associated with anyone involved with illegal drugs in any way.

Although California has legalized marijuana, it is still illegal to buy, smoke, or grow marijuana under federal law in the United States. The F1 Visa is a federal visa so international students must adhere to federal laws at all times. If a student is caught smoking marijuana (*even if they have a medical marijuana card*), their F1 visa status could be revoked and they could be expelled from their program of study.

### **Public Transportation:**

Our homestay referral program requires that each family lives within a 60-minute bus ride to the college (including transfers, and walk to bus stop). The host must teach the student how to buy a bus pass and show them where the closest bus stop is located. While we know that most students

are familiar with Uber and Lyft options for commuting to campus, it is expected that most students will commute throughout the bay area via public transportation.

The student is responsible for purchasing their own bus fare or “clipper card” for public transportation. It is the students’ responsibility to determine their own transportation schedule and plan accordingly when needing to commute to class, campus, or other locations. If a host decides to provide transportation to and from a location, that service is voluntary and not required by our program.

### **Communication:**

All host families should be native English speakers (bi-lingual households are okay as long as English is clear and fluent) so that they can communicate with the student well. Hosts can be proactive and help bridge the cultural gap by learning about their student’s home country prior to arrival. The host can explore topics such as: the country’s location and size, the country’s form of government, the capital and other large cities, major religion, major holidays, popular pastimes, or perhaps a few words in the official language. This engagement in the student’s country and culture will assist with the student’s transition to feel safe and comfortable in the homestay.

Misunderstandings happen due to language barrier, cultural differences, or lack of communication. It is important for host families to directly communicate with the students if they are concerned or unhappy about something. If issues escalate and cannot be negotiated between the two parties, the Homestay Program Coordinator should be notified right away.

### **Privacy Laws and Liability Release Form:**

As an institution, we uphold the regulations by the U.S. Department of Education to implement the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for each student who applies to our homestay referral program. Under FERPA, a school may not generally disclose personal, identifiable information from an eligible student's education records to a third party unless the eligible student has provided written consent. In such case, should a host family request for our office to provide additional student information besides email, we recommend the host communicate with the student directly. For instance, a copy of passport page, personal contact information, parent contact information, and student schedule should all be requested directly from the student.

Our homestay application requires students under the age of 18 to complete a liability release form. The student and their parent(s) must sign a liability release form prior to the student being placed in a homestay. The release form specifically states that the parent(s) acknowledge that their child is under the age of eighteen (legal adult status in the United States), and that they - *not the host family, nor San Mateo County Community College District - San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley* – will be held responsible for their child’s actions while the student lives in the United States. The parent(s) agree to pay the full amount for any and all damages in the homestay for which their child is responsible, regardless of whether the damages were accidental. The parent(s) also agree to release all liabilities for any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay or expense resulting from participation in the homestay program.

## Opening a Bank Account

At the time of admission, all international (F-1 Visa) students are required by federal law to document adequate funding for study. We expect that all students will have sufficient funds for tuition, fees, books, health insurance, living expenses and other miscellaneous costs. We recommend that all students open a checking account at a local bank or financial institution. When opening a bank account, the student will need to bring:

- 2 forms of Identification:
  - Passport
  - U.S. driver's license or college campus identification card
- SEVIS Form I-20 and;
- Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record;
- Enrollment verification letter from the school or a letter from the homestay program

Once students have a U.S. bank account number, they will be able to send the information to their home bank in order to make transferring money easier and faster. It's also a good idea for students to inform their parents or relatives about the transfer options.

### Banks near CSM

#### CitiBank

61 W. Hillsdale Blvd.  
online.citi.com/US/login.do

#### San Mateo Credit Union

1515 South El Camino Real  
www.smcu.org

#### Bank of America

3150 Campus Drive  
www.bankofamerica.com

#### Wells Fargo Bank

100 DeAnza Blvd.  
www.wellsfargo.com

#### Chase

1730 South El Camino Real  
www.chase.com

### Banks near Skyline College

#### US Bank

2255 Gellert Blvd  
www.usbank.com/index.html

#### Chase

Westborough Blvd #601  
www.chase.com

### Banks near Cañada College

#### CitiBank

702 Marshall Street #100  
(650)569-4913  
online.citi.com/US/login.do

#### First Republic Bank

776 El Camino Real  
(650)216-8883  
www.firstrepublic.com

### Bank of America

700 Jefferson Avenue  
(650)562-0705  
www.bankofamerica.com

### Wells Fargo Bank

1070 El Camino Real  
(650)368-9940  
www.wellsfargo.com

### Chase

1615 Woodside Road  
(650)306-4080  
www.chase.com

## Transportation

SamTrans provides bus service along several routes to our college campus.

### 3 bus routes to College of San Mateo:

- Route 250 (San Mateo downtown and Caltrain)
- Route 260 (San Carlos Caltrain, Redwood Shores & Belmont)
- Route 294 (Half Moon Bay)



### 2 bus routes to Cañada College:

- Route 274
- Route 278

### 2 bus routes to Skyline College:

- Routes 121: starts at Lowell and Hanover streets, then serves the Daly City BART station, Seton Medical Center, Colma BART, Serramonte, Fairmont and Westview on its way to the College.
- Route 140: delivers students traveling from Pacifica and San Bruno BART.

*Weekend note:* The 140 is the only line that provides service to the College on weekends.

**Routing information** is available at 1-800-660-4287, [www.samtrans.com](http://www.samtrans.com), and [511.org](http://511.org).

## Bay Area Rapid Transit Train (BART)

BART is a public transportation system serving the San Francisco Bay Area. The rapid transit elevated and subway system connects San Francisco with cities in the East Bay and the northern portion of San Mateo County. BART's rapid transit system operates 5 routes on 104 miles of track, with 44 stations in 4 counties, which are Alameda County, Contra Costa County, City and County of San Francisco, and San Mateo County. BART connects to Daly City, Colma, and San Bruno. For more information, visit [www.bart.gov](http://www.bart.gov).



**Daly City BART shuttle to Skyline College:** The Skyline College Express shuttle service (<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/maps/shuttle.php>) will run every hour from 7:25 AM to 6:44 PM, Mondays to Fridays. The 28-person shuttle service will be open to students, faculty and staff as well as community members who utilize the services available on campus such as SparkPoint, the Library and Veterans Resource Center. You can pick up the Daly City Bart shuttle downstairs from the platform. Turn right as you exit the ticket area, and cross the street to the shuttle stop.

## California Commuter Rail Line (CalTrain)

Caltrain provides commuter rail service along the San Francisco Peninsula, through the South Bay to San Jose and Gilroy. The San Francisco and San Jose Railroad Company began passenger rail service on the Peninsula in 1863. The system we know today as Caltrain had its start in 1992, when the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board took over the operation of the train. For more information, visit [www.caltrain.com](http://www.caltrain.com).



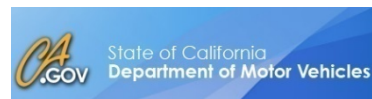
## Clipper

The all-in-one transit card that keeps track of any passes, discount tickets, ride books and cash value that you load onto it. Used for travel on SamTrans and Caltrain. Our office recommends that students learn about the benefits of using a clipper card for any of their public transportation needs. For more information on obtaining a card please visit [www.clippercard.com](http://www.clippercard.com).



## California Driver's License

Students must have a California Driver's License to drive in the State of California. New student will need to wait at least 10 days after entering the United States before applying for CA driver's license and the student's SEVIS record must be registered by the college administrator before applying as well. The 10-day waiting period allows time for all the government databases to be updated with student arrival information. If applying prior to 10 days, the application may be denied or delayed. The DMV will require proof of birth date and legal status when applying for a driver's license. Students should be prepared to show the following documents:



- Form I-20
- Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record –To access the electronic form students need to go to [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) and print a copy.
- Passport with visa (if applicable)
- Students do not need a social security number to apply for a California driver's license. However, if requested to show a social security card, students will need to get a letter from the Social Security office verifying that the student is not eligible for a social security number. For more information on obtaining a California Driver's License, please visit the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) website [www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv).

The international student centers on each college campus can also provide students with further detailed information.

## Cañada College

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### International Student Center

4200 Farm Hill Boulevard, Building 9, Room 163  
Redwood City, CA 94061

**Phone:** 650-381-3544

**Email:** [caninternational@smccd.edu](mailto:caninternational@smccd.edu)

**Fax:** 650-381-3518

**Web:** [www.canadacollege.edu/international](http://www.canadacollege.edu/international)

## College of San Mateo

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### Center for Global Engagement

1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd, Building 10, Room 381  
San Mateo, CA 94402

**Phone:** 650-574-6525

**Email:** [csminternational@smccd.edu](mailto:csminternational@smccd.edu)

**Fax:** 650-574-6166

**Web:** [www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/international](http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/international)

## Skyline College

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### International Student Program

3300 College Drive, Building 4, Room 252  
San Bruno, CA 94066

**Phone:** 650-738-4430

**Email:** [skyinternational@smccd.edu](mailto:skyinternational@smccd.edu)

**Fax:** 650-738-7140

**Web:** [www.skylinecollege.edu/international](http://www.skylinecollege.edu/international)



## International Education Homestay Referral Program

3401 CSM Drive  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
United States

**Phone:** (650) 358-6856

**Email:** [housingcoordinator@smccd.edu](mailto:housingcoordinator@smccd.edu)

**Website:** [smccd.edu/international/housing.php](http://smccd.edu/international/housing.php)

