

2024

# International Student Handbook

Wisconsin Dells/Lake Delton



## Welcome to the Wisconsin Dells Area, BridgeUSA participants!

Thank you for choosing to come to the Wisconsin Dells area for your exchange experience. We hope you have an enjoyable time, make new friends, and learn more about yourself and others during your experience.

If you have any issues while you are here, please contact your U.S. Sponsor- their contact information is on your DS 2019 form. We have also put together a list of services that you may need during your stay here, please feel free to contact them as needed.

Your safety and well-being are important to us, and we want your cultural experience in the Wisconsin Dells area to exceed your expectations! Please enjoy your time here and while traveling in the United States.

Thank you,

**Stacie Tollaksen**

*Chairperson*

*Wisconsin Dells Area BridgeUSA Community Support Group*

## Wisconsin Dells Area Information

Wisconsin Dells is "The Waterpark Capital of the World!®" It's a beautiful resort town with waterparks, amusement parks, boat rides, movie theaters, bowling alleys, a casino, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, state parks, and nature trails.

Official visitor website For Wisconsin Dells ([wisdells.com](http://wisdells.com))

### History

In 1856, the town was incorporated as Kilbourn City, in honor of the railroad's president. In 1931, it was officially changed to Wisconsin Dells, the name the locals and tourists had always used, with "Wisconsin" derived from the Native American word meaning "dark rushing waters," and "Dells" mimicking the French word "dalles" that means "layers of flat rock" to describe the bluff rock formations. The striking sandstone formations along the banks of the Wisconsin River started attracting visitors to the area in the late 1800's.

- Ho-Chunk Nation:  
<https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/ho-chunk-nation>
- State History: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org>
- H.H. Bennett - The man who made the Dells famous:  
<https://hhbennettstudio.wisconsinhistory.org>





## Housing

Housing is inspected and licensed by the city. Be certain that you are renting from a landlord who has a license.

### Housing Tips:

- Check your job description and with your host employer and sponsor to see if housing is offered through your placement.
- Carefully read the terms of the housing agreements. After signing and paying your deposit, you are expected to honor your commitment to the agreement for the full term of the lease.
- Follow the housing rules.
- Pay your rent on time and get a receipt.
- Do not cause any damage to the apartment, grounds, furnishings, etc.
- Do not move out without informing your rental manager.
- Do not overcrowd your housing-this can put you in violation of building and fire codes.
- If you are having an issue with housing, please try to resolve the issue with your rental manager. If you cannot come to an agreement, contact your sponsor.



## Transportation

### Distance from airports to Wisconsin Dells area:

O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, IL	180 miles
General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, WI	127 miles
Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport in Minneapolis, MN	216 miles
Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, WI	50 miles

### Greyhound Bus Drop Off (no station, in front of McDonald's)

30 Commerce Street, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965  
Phone (800) 231-2222  
[www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)

### Amtrak train (unstaffed station)

100 La Crosse Street, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965  
Phone (800) 872-7245  
[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

## Taxis

The Wisconsin Dells area does NOT have public transportation. Check that the taxis are registered with the city and that you understand the rates.

**TIP:** If you are traveling with a group – you may choose to arrange a taxi from the airport to the Wisconsin Dells area. Taxis charge by group size and mileage so this doesn't usually work well for single travelers. Plan your trip all the way to the Wisconsin Dells area before you arrive!



## Social Security Cards

Check with your host employer, sponsor, or job description for details on how to apply for your social security card. The social security office prefers that host employers make appointments ahead of time, it's very difficult to just arrive at the office and get an appointment. You may also apply online through [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).

### Social Security Office

(20 miles away in Portage, WI)  
2875 Village Road, Suite 100  
Portage, WI 53901  
[www.ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov)  
Local Office Phone (888) 875-1681  
National Phone (800) 772-1213

### Document Information

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm>

When applying for your card, bring the following original documents and copies:

- I-94 Arrival/Departure Record with unexpired foreign passport or admission stamp in the unexpired foreign passport
- DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status)
- J1 visa
- Letter from sponsor

Link to application: <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

You may start your application online but you must go to the office to finish the process. Please check with your host employer for their preferred process: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/start.html>

## Safety Information



### Vehicle Safety

For information about driving in the U.S., visit [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov) and [www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov).

- You **MUST** have legal authority to drive in Wisconsin:
  - License from your country.
  - International driver's permit.
  - Vehicle must be registered with the WI Department of Transportation (DOT).
- Seatbelt use is required.
- Vehicle insurance is required.
- License plates - temporary plates must be used until permanent plates arrive.
- Always yield to people in crosswalks.
- Never drive while intoxicated.
- Do not use your cell phone while driving.
- Recognize motorcycle/bicycle hand signals.
- Do not charge for rides, you need to be licensed to charge people.

**TIP:** You cannot drive for your job, under any circumstances.

### Pedestrian Safety

- Walk **FACING** traffic.
- Always yield to traffic when crossing the road.
- Cross at marked crosswalks.
- Do not hitchhike and do not walk on interstate.
- Pedestrians are required to use sidewalk where it is available – do **NOT** walk in road.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing (**NOT** dark clothing).

### Bike Safety – Rules of the Road

Some of the best means of transportation are on a pedal bicycle, e-bike, or scooter. Whatever you're riding, be mindful and follow basic safety rules.

- Inspect your gear and always wear a helmet.
- Ride during the day.
- Do not listen to music or use your phone.
- Always ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Register your bike at the police department.



## Water Safety

There's water everywhere you look in Wisconsin Dells-but not all of it is safe for swimming or recreation. Make sure you know what you're getting into before you test the waters.

- Read all the signs, warnings, and rules before entering the water.
- Don't swim in the Wisconsin River. It has a strong undercurrent that can overpower swimmers.
- Do not swim during a storm.
- Know your limitations. Use floating devices or life jackets if needed.
- Never swim alone.
- Don't forget sunscreen.

## Document Safety

- It is illegal for anyone to keep your documents (passport, etc.)
- Make copies of your passport and keep your documents and copies safe.
- Keep a second set of copies safe in your home country as back up.

## Safety Tips

- If you like it, lock it! Lock up your bike, passport, and valuables.
- Drinking age is 21 years old. Do NOT drink or buy alcohol for people underage. No open intoxicants in public or vehicles.
- Be aware that harassment and assault laws in the U.S. are very strict.
- Carry your insurance information and photo ID with you.
- Don't walk alone-use the buddy system!
- Shoplifting is a serious offense.
- Disorderly conduct is prohibited which includes fighting, nudity in public, urinating in public, etc.



### Additional Safety Information

Visit <http://wisdells.com/safety-videos> to watch videos focused on ensuring your safety while experiencing the wonders of Wisconsin Dells. From water safety to road safety and handling culture shock, our goal is to equip you with vital information for a secure and enjoyable time here.

## Banking

- Do not keep large amounts of money on your person or at housing.
- If you do not have a company pay card, you should open a bank account.
- Do not share your PIN number with anyone.
- Protect your identity- keep your banking information private.
- Always keep your bank card in a safe place or with you.

Bank	Address	Phone
Bank of Mauston - Dells Branch	402 County Road A, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-253-7030
Bank of Wisconsin Dells	716 Superior St, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-253-1111
BMO Harris Bank	501 Broadway, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-254-2514
Lake Delton State Bank	41 W. Munroe St, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-254-6200
WCCU Credit Union	70 Commerce St, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-678-4000

## Medical Care

- Keep your medical insurance information with you.
- Health insurance policies can usually be found online, but check with your sponsor.
- Contact your sponsor before and after you seek medical attention.
- Some insurance plans will not cover the full amount, so know the terms of your policy and what you are responsible for paying.
- Ambulance service charges are separate from medical facility service charges.
- Do not go to the emergency room for minor illness and injury (colds, insect bites, etc.). Visit urgent care or make a doctor's appointment instead.
- If you have a serious illness or life-threatening injury, you may need emergency care. Call 911 for emergencies and emergency services will send an ambulance to transport you to the hospital.
- Take your passport and health insurance information to the clinic. If you do not have this information with you, at least give them your sponsor information.
- If you are injured while at work, be sure to report it to your supervisor immediately so they are aware and can document the injury. Employers have workers' compensation insurance to cover employees that are hurt while at work. This is a separate process from your health insurance, and you will need to follow your employer's process for reporting injuries.

Clinic	Address	Phone
SSM Health Urgent Care	530 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy S, Lake Delton, WI 53940	1-608-254-5959
Delton Family Medical Center	28 Commerce St, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965	1-608-254-5888
St. Clare Emergency Room	707 14 <sup>th</sup> St, Baraboo, WI 53913	1-608-356-1400



## Services & Contact Information

### Employment

#### **Wisconsin Dells Job Board**

<https://jobs.wisdells.com/>

### Groceries

#### **Walmart Supercenter**

130 Commerce Street  
Lake Delton, WI 53940

#### **Maurer's Market**

216 Washington Avenue  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

### Library

#### **Kilbourn Public Library**

620 Elm Street  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

### Newspaper

#### **Wisconsin Dells Events**

<https://wiscnews.com/wisconsinidellsevents/>

### Post Offices

#### **Wisconsin Dells USPS**

310 Minnesota Avenue  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

#### **Lake Delton USPS**

49 E Adams Street  
Lake Delton, WI 53940

### Police Departments

#### **Wisconsin Dells Police**

712 Oak Street  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965  
Non-emergency number: 1-608-253-1611

#### **Lake Delton Police**

35 Miller Drive  
Lake Delton, WI 53940  
Non-emergency number: 1-608-254-7571  
  
Emergency: 911

### Recreation

#### **Wisconsin Dells Public Parks**

<https://www.citywd.org/departments/parks-recreation/>

#### **Lake Delton Public Parks**

<https://www.lakedeltonwi.gov/273/>

#### **Parks State Parks**

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Parks>

### Taxes

Please contact your sponsor with any questions about payroll taxes or filing taxes.

<https://www.irs.gov/>