



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

SEVP Field Representatives in Action

The first class of SEVP field representatives deployed to their respective territories in April 2014. During the first six months of their deployment, the field representatives helped U.S. schools navigate U.S. regulations and fostered proactive compliance with those regulations. Below are examples of the field representatives' work.

Norfolk, Virginia:

The Norfolk-based field representative helped a Washington-D.C.-based language school that had difficulties navigating important government policy guidance. The field representative worked directly with school officials to ensure they properly understood the guidance. The field representative also explained in greater detail how SEVP issues policy guidance on a variety of issues ranging from annual vacation to pathways programs. The schools officials explained, "This is perfectly clear and equally helpful ... but your clarification below is already a credit to you appointment ... Many thanks for clearing this up!"

Portland, Oregon:

SEVIS records must be accurate and up-to-date. This information is essential to protecting national security. A public school district in Oregon with four high schools issued Form I-20 from the school district's main office, instead of the individual schools. The field representative addressed the need to have accurate and up-to-date SEVIS records with the primary designated school official, and the official subsequently transferred student records from the district office to the actual school of attendance.

St. Paul, Minnesota:

A small, private high school in Minnesota issued an I-20 to their sole international student, but failed to register that student in SEVIS in the necessary timeframe. As a result, the student's SEVIS record auto-terminated. When the field representative visited school officials, they touted the school's one international student was transferring to a well-regarded U.S. university. Unfortunately, since the student's record had auto-terminated, she was not able to transfer schools according to SEVP guidelines. As a result, the field representative suggested the designated school official contact the SEVP Help Desk to correct the error and document that the school official had unintentionally failed to register the student. The situation was rectified, and student successfully transferred to the U.S. university.

New York, New York:

A primary designated school official can defer enrollment of an international student in initial status, until the following semester. The New York City-based field representative visited a rabbinical college scheduled to host its first international student for the fall 2014 semester. Due to unforeseen issues, the international student had to defer enrollment until the spring 2015 semester. The student's initial status record was set to automatically terminate in SEVIS the next day – which would have placed the student out of status. The field representative explained to the school's primary

designated official how to defer an international student so the SEVIS record remained ready for the student to arrive in the spring. Doing so prevented the student from needing a new SEVIS ID number and having to pay an additional \$200 SEVIS fee.

Atlanta, Georgia:

The field representative assisted a private K-12 school in Georgia to better understand reporting requirements. The school was not in compliance because the designated school officially failed to register the records in SEVIS of several of its new and returning students. As a result, 12 students had terminated or canceled SEVIS records, though they were actively enrolled at the school. The Atlanta-based SEVP field representative helped the designated school official navigate through the process of requesting correction of the students' records back to valid status so they would be in compliance with federal regulations governing studying in the United States.

Seattle, Washington:

Students must take a full course of study to remain compliant with U.S. regulations for studying in the United States. A student at a Washington school needed to retake a course to move forward in her program, but that course was not offered until the following semester. The student inquired about the options available to her. Could she work full-time instead of taking classes? Take annual vacation rather than enrolling in classes? Take a reduced course load? The SEVP field representative provided regulatory guidance to assist the school's designated school official to determine the correct course of action and available options. The student ultimately enrolled in a full course of study to maintain her status and will retake the failed prerequisite course when it is offered during the next school term.

Dallas, Texas:

A newly SEVP-certified private high school in Dallas issued its first Form I-20, a form that schools must issue to its international students before they can study in the States. Shortly thereafter, the SEVP field representative visited the school to inquire how things were going. After an overview of several basic processes regarding the maintenance of SEVIS records, the field representative discovered the primary designated school official had not yet registered the SEVIS record for its international student as required, even though classes had begun almost one month prior. Since this review took place one day before the registration deadline outlined in the SEVP regulations, the primary designated school official was able to register the record, maintain school compliance and keep the student in status.

San Francisco, California:

School officials must enter the physical addresses where international students reside while studying in the United States into SEVIS. Nearly 30 international students enrolled at a private high school in northern California, lived in school-owned dormitories. Instead of using the physical address of the dormitories, the school entered the physical address of the school into SEVIS, which does not comply with the regulations. The field representative advised the school to enter the physical address of the dormitories into the students' SEVIS records, instead of using the school's physical address.

Nashville, Tennessee:

SEVP works with a variety of government agencies on matters concerning international students. The Nashville-based field representative scheduled a visit to a private K-12 institution in Tennessee. Shortly before her visit, the field representative learned of a pending Congressional

inquiry regarding this institution. During her visit, she was able to identify that the institution was improperly issuing Form I-20s to international students. She provided step-by-step instructions on how the school should issue the forms and enter the information into SEVIS. She also provided the school's designated school official with further training in order to avoid similar problems in the future.

Baltimore, Maryland:

The field representative helped a Maryland private school that had 10 active international students, but zero active student records in SEVIS. When the SEVP field representative met with the school, she explained to the primary designated school official that international students must be registered in SEVIS each new school session or their records would terminate, making them out of status. The field representative explained to the designated school official how to correct the SEVIS records. Now, all students have active, up-to-date SEVIS records. This is a prime example of a field representative helping schools understand the importance of recordkeeping in SEVIS.

Miami, Florida:

The field representative prepared to visit a vocational school that specialized in multiple types of medical care, including first responder and CPR training. She learned the school had been SEVP-certified for about two years, but had never enrolled an international student. At the visit, school officials explained they were intimidated about making mistakes related to the international student process, and had turned down dozens of prospective students. The field representative calmed the school officials' fears and walked them through the process of issuing a Form I-20 to international students. About two weeks later, a school official contacted the field representative to share that the school had issued its first Form I-20 to a prospective international student.

Denver, Colorado:

Schools must submit an application for recertification to SEVP on a rolling basis to continue to enroll international students. A school official from a small university in Colorado with less than 20 international students contacted the field representative. She was frantic and was under the impression she only had six weeks to meet SEVP's recertification deadline. The field representative explained to the school official that she actually had six months to submit the recertification application to SEVP. The two discussed the process, and the school official successfully submitted the recertification application in the appropriate time frame. SEVP approved the application.

Chicago, Illinois:

Before students enter the United States, they must pay an I-901 SEVIS fee. A K-12 school contacted the Chicago field representative stating that one of their students had been stopped by U.S. Customs and Border Protection upon entering the country and was told he needed to pay the fee. The student claimed he already had. As a result, CBP officers issued the student a Form I-515, which states a student has 30 days to pay the fee to remain compliant with regulations. The field representative researched the incident and determined the student had paid the fee to the initial school where he planned to enroll, but had not paid the SEVIS fee for the new school where he was currently enrolled. He had to pay the fee to both institutions.

Los Angeles, California:

Students who wish to participate in optional practical training must meet certain guidelines. A research institute had several questions regarding how their graduate-level students could participate

in this training. The field representative provided the school answers to commonly asked questions regarding optional practical training to minimize any compliance issues.

Columbus, Ohio:

The field representative visited a higher education school with approximately 80 international students. The school had a new primary designated school official who had less than 30 days to submit the school's recertification application to SEVP. But before the official could do that, the school had an outstanding issue in SEVIS it needed to address. The school had to update its licensing and accreditation information. All schools were required to do so in July 2014, but this school missed the deadline. In SEVIS, it appeared to be unlicensed and unaccredited. The field representative walked the school official through the process of updating the school's accreditation and licensing information in SEVIS, as well the school's recertification application. As a result, the school official was able to get the school's recertification application to SEVP in time and avoid withdrawal from the program.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities. For more information, visit: www.ICE.gov. To report suspicious activity, call 1-866-347-2423.