



INTERNSHIP INFORMATION PACKET

Rilke Schule German

Immersion School

Anchorage, Alaska, USA

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM



Welcome to the Rilke Schule German Immersion School Internship Program! In this internship program, participants spend one academic year or semester working as assistant teachers at Rilke Schule, a German immersion public charter school in Anchorage, Alaska. Rilke Schule has over 500 students, serving grades kindergarten- eighth grade.

As part of the program, interns obtain a J-1 visa issued by the United States government. The visa is sponsored by a secondary organization that you will work closely with. While this is an unpaid internship and participants do not receive a full salary, interns receive a monthly stipend and housing with a host family.

This internship offers a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in an American public school while learning more about immersion education and the U.S. educational system. Interns become part of a welcoming international community and have the chance to make meaningful connections with students, teachers, and families while sharing German language and culture abroad. Interns have been coming to Rilke Schule since 2009 and are a very important part of the school culture.

ABOUT ANCHORAGE

Population: 289,000



Anchorage is the largest city in the state of Alaska and is located in the south-central region of the state. Mountain ranges to the northeast help protect the city from harsh northern winds, and its location near the ocean contributes to a relatively mild climate.

Although Anchorage is a fairly large city, it offers easy access to beautiful natural surroundings. In the winter, it is possible to see the northern lights, providing a unique experience that cannot be found in many other places. Outdoor activities and sports can be enjoyed year-round, making Anchorage an ideal place for people who enjoy nature and staying active.

People in Alaska are known for being kind and friendly, and many interns quickly feel welcomed into the community.



Skiing, northern lights viewing and hiking are all available in Anchorage.





Is this internship right for you?

Are you interested in American public education or German immersion education?

Are you currently studying in Germany, Austria or Switzerland to become a teacher?

Are you excited about working with young children (between 5-7 years old) and supporting language learning?

Are you interested in living with a host family and becoming part of a local community?

Do you enjoy setting goals for yourself and taking on new challenges?

Are you open-minded, flexible, and excited for a cross-cultural experience?

Yes!

We are looking for candidates who enjoy working with younger students and are ready for an Alaskan adventure!

INTERNSHIP GOALS



Jennifer (2017) and a group of kindergartners show off their crafts.

1 EXPERIENCE

Meaningful hands-on experience working with skilled host teachers and language immersion education.

3 CULTURE

Share about your culture with students, staff and the community while also learning about Alaskan culture and American culture

2 PROFESSIONAL

Gain skills in teaching, collaboration and classroom support that can be brought back to Germany and used in the rest of your career.

4 GROWTH

Experience a new culture firsthand, develop cultural understanding, and learn to adapt to new classroom environments and a different climate.

WHAT TO EXPECT

SCHOOL

A German immersion school offering grades kindergarten- 8th grade. Students spend 50% of their day in a German classroom and the other 50% in their English classroom. You will mostly be with kindergarten and first graders.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The majority of the time is spent in younger German classrooms, helping provide crucial language support. We need the most support in kindergarten and first grade, but we provide the opportunity to visit other grades and classes as well. You might also help with lunch or recess supervision.

DRESS CODE

Although Alaska is relatively casual compared to Germany, we do ask our staff and teachers to dress somewhat more professional. Basics include jeans on Fridays and wearing solid or patterned shirts- not ones with large logos. We also ask you to dress appropriately for the weather in case you will be outside with students.

HOST FAMILY

You'll be provided housing with a local Rilke Schule family. You will have your own bedroom. Your host family will provide you with meals and will also drive you to and from school each day.

SUPPORT

We hope to offer you as much support as necessary to help you be successful. We will meet biweekly as an intern team to help with your English language skills, answer questions and provide lessons about the American school system and Alaska.

PAYMENT

You will receive a stipend of \$300 every month. As your room and board are completely covered by your host family, you should be able to use the stipend to help you explore Anchorage and other areas of Alaska.

Basic responsibilities will vary based on your class assignment and the various needs of the school.

AN EXAMPLE DAY AT RILKE

8:00 Arrive at Rilke Schule. Find your first class of the day and help your host teacher with any last minute preparations.

8:15 The school day officially begins. Morning work with students and calendar time.

9:00 German lesson using phonics, our German curriculum or something created by the teacher.

9:45 Pausenbrot

10:00 Science lesson, taught in German

10:55 Lunch time! You will have 40 minutes of lunch and then you might also help supervise the lunchroom or playground.

11:45 Kids return to their classrooms and switch into their English rooms, and a new group comes in from the English classroom. You might stay with the same teacher in the afternoon, or visit a new classroom.

2:00 Specials class- students might go to health, outdoor physical education, indoor physical education, art or music. Each class usually has one of these each day.

3:00 (1:45 on Fridays) Time for students to go home. Some students stay later for after school clubs. You are free to go home with your host family. On Fridays you will stay later for a staff meeting.

At the beginning of your internship, most of your day will be observing and supporting your host teachers. But after some time you can begin leading activities such as calendar time and teaching lessons that you have arranged with your host teacher. You might also spend time in English classrooms or one of our specials such as art or physical education.

We will also meet as an intern team a few times a month to review how things are going, ask questions, and learn more about the American education system.



Luca, Florian, Juana and Julia (Fall 2023)

HOST FAMILY



Livio (2024) and his host family at the Alaska State Fair

You will be living with a host family during your time at Rilke Schule. Occasionally you might have more than one host family, depending on how long a family can commit and how long you are staying. They will provide you with food and your own bedroom and help you to feel like part of the family. They will become a very important part of your life in Alaska!

To enjoy a positive and rewarding experience with your host family, we encourage you to keep the following in mind:

- Communicate regularly with your host family.
- If you are having difficulties with your host family, speak with the program coordinator. Don't keep concerns to yourself.
- Actively share stories about yourself, your experiences, and German culture.
- Remember that you are not a guest—you are a member of the family. Participate in household chores and family activities.
- Keep your host family informed about your schedule. If you have plans after school or on weekends, be sure to communicate them clearly in advance.
- Enjoy spending time with your host family!



Richard (2024) and his host brother after a day of fishing.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Internships can be in the fall semester (August- December), spring semester (January- May) or full year. We will work with you to find a timeline that works for you and for us.

UNIVERSITY

1

DISCUSS WITH YOUR UNIVERSITY

Your university should be able to help you decide if an internship at Rilke Schule is the right choice for you.

RILKE SCHULE

2

SEND APPLICATION TO RILKE

Please send your application, resume, a letter of recommendation and a cover letter to Rilke Schule. Within a few weeks we can meet via Zoom for an online interview.

AMITY INSTITUTE OR OTHER J1 VISA PROGRAM

3

BEGIN VISA PROCESS

Your application will be handed over to Amity international (or a similar program) to begin the visa process. Some steps might be a repeat of what you have previously completed. They will make sure you have everything needed to come to the United States on a J1 visa. There will be costs to Amity and costs for your Visa at this time. You will also need to arrange your health insurance.

\$200 to Amity, \$220 to the State Department, \$185 Visa Fee. These are all subject to change.

HOST FAMILY PLACEMENT

4

LEARN ABOUT YOUR HOST FAMILY

While you are getting your visa, we will be busy finding you a host family. As soon as we have found one for you, we will reach out with their contact information so you can begin communicating ahead of your arrival.

INTERNSHIP TIMELINE

Internships can be in the fall semester (August- December), spring semester (January- May), full year. We will work with you to find a timeline that works for you and for us.

AUGUST

1

ARRIVE AND SETTLE IN

You will spend a few days settling in with your host family before beginning at Rilke Schule. If you arrive early enough you will begin with the teachers and go to district trainings. If you arrive later you will be given an orientation to the school.

You are responsible for your own airfare.

SEPTEMBER

2

ACTIVELY OBSERVING

As you are observing in the classroom, you will also be assisting students and helping the teacher. You should be an active participant in the classroom, speaking German to students and encouraging them to use their German.

OCTOBER

3

BEGIN TEACHING LESSONS

After six weeks you can begin helping prepare lessons and teaching at least one lesson a week. You might also help lead calendar time or lead other small group instruction in the classroom. We also hope you will participate in Rilke community events.

DECEMBER

4

FAREWELL

Finish up your internship and say goodbye to your friends and host family. J-1 Visa holders are allowed to stay in the country for 30 days after the internship. Many interns take this time to travel to other areas.

RILKE SCHULE EVENTS



WANDERTAG

The entire school takes a day off in September and heads to nearby Kincaid Park. Each class goes on their own hike, ranging from a short hike for Kindergarten to 8 kilometers for older grades. We all join together for a picnic lunch before heading back to school.

SANKT MARTINSTAG

Children spend the weeks leading up to Sankt Martinstag making lanterns in their art class. In the evening of Sankt Martinstag kids and families return to the school for a nature walk with their lanterns, hot cocoa, and singing.

KINDERLAUF

Happening usually in the spring on nearby trails, our school community hosts a fun run for everyone to enjoy. Many wear costumes and participants can choose between a 5 kilometer or 2 kilometer run.

OKTOBERFEST

This is a big event for our community and is held at Hilltop Ski Area, our local ski hill. Its fun for both kids and adults. Dirndls and Lederhosen are encouraged!

NIKOLAUSTAG

Nikolaus and Krampus come and visit the children at the school during the day- many classes sing songs they have recently learned. Also happening around the same time is the Christkindlmarkt. This is open to the public and features lots of local Alaskan artists and vendors, as well as crafts made by students.

SPORTTAG

Possibly the children's favorite day of school, they spend half of their day outside on the playground and field doing all sorts of fun activities including relay races, obstacle courses and popsicles. This happens in late May.



[**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR**](#)

[**RILKE SCHULE CALENDAR**](#)

ANY QUESTIONS?

HOUSING

WHAT IF MY HOST FAMILY AND I DON'T GET ALONG?

We work hard to try and find a host family that will fit well with your interests and personality, but that isn't always perfect. If your host family is no longer a positive placement for you, we will find you a new one that better suits you!

TRANSPORTATION

HOW WILL I GET AROUND ANCHORAGE?

Your host family will provide you transportation to and from school everyday. They might also be able to help you get around on weekends/evenings. *Sometimes* interns are able to borrow their host families car or are able to bike to nearby activities. Anchorage does not have a large public transportation system but we do everything we can to help make Anchorage accessible for you!

J1 VISA PROGRAM

WHY IS AN EXTERNAL ORGANISATION USED FOR OUR VISA?

A J-1 visa requires an approved sponsor organization because the U.S. government does not issue the visa directly to schools or employers. The sponsor is responsible for issuing the required forms, making sure participants meet eligibility rules, arranging and verifying insurance, overseeing the training or internship plan, and monitoring compliance with U.S. Department of State regulations throughout the program. While Rilke Schule provides the actual placement experience, we must work through a designated sponsor organization (usually Amity) to legally host J-1 participants. This structure is why additional program fees exist, as they cover the administrative, legal, and support services required to manage and supervise the exchange program.

WORDS OF ADVICE

Dear Intern Candidate,

On behalf of the Anchorage School District and Rilke Schule German Immersion School, I would like to thank you for your interest in an internship with our program. As an intern, you will play an integral part in helping our students improve their fluency with the German language while also giving them insight into German culture. You will also have the opportunity to sharpen your English language skills while also practicing skills that will improve your ability to function as a language immersion teacher. Your experience with American host families will give you insight into our culture and lifestyle. It is an unforgettable experience during which you will form lasting bonds of friendship.



Sincerely
Christopher Barr, Principal



Richard Hellmuth

INTERN FALL 2024

What I find most difficult as an English teacher is the language setting in the classroom. Seeing that in an immersion school where a second language is such a big focus helped me get a good understanding of teaching language!



Sina Ramboe

INTERN FALL 2025

Do it! It was the best time of my studies, it helped me so much, the people are amazing! If I could, I would come back right now.

KEEP IN TOUCH



Rilke Schule participating in the annual Fur Rondy parade, held every year in February. Fur Rondy is Alaska's largest winter festival that celebrates when trappers and miners used to come into town to sell their harvests.

Please reach out to your outgoing internship department or to us directly with any questions or concerns. We are happy to help!



Hannah Dieckgraeff Dante Medema
Rilke Intern Co-Coordinators



Anchorage, Alaska



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RilkeSchule.Asdk12.org

SOCIALS



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