

InterExchange Joins National Summit to Strengthen International Exchange Programs and Community Support

Summer Work Travel Community Support Group summit in Myrtle Beach unites State Dept officials, local leaders to enhance exchange programs and housing plans.

MYRTLE BEACH, SC, UNITED STATES, December 17, 2024 /

[EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- InterExchange recently participated in the BridgeUSA Summer Work Travel Community Support Group (CSG) Summit, a significant national gathering that brought together key stakeholders in international exchange programming. The four-day summit, held November 12-15 in Myrtle Beach, convened representatives from the U.S.

Department of State, local government officials, law enforcement personnel, and community leaders to discuss and enhance the impact of cultural exchange programs across American communities.



Ethan Bursofsky, Branch Chief, Office of Private Sector Exchange; Scott Weinhold, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; Carrie Linch, Program Analyst, Office of Private Sector Exchange; Sidiki Savadogo, Junior Program Analyst.

Scott Weinhold, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary with the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, delivered a compelling address highlighting the Summer Work Travel program's multifaceted benefits to American communities. Weinhold emphasized how these exchanges not only provide essential support for seasonal workforce needs but also create lasting international connections that enhance cross-cultural understanding and foster global relationships.

The summit featured comprehensive discussions on exchange participant welfare and program enhancement, with Ethan Bursofsky, Branch Chief of the Office of Private Sector Exchange, presenting detailed insights on program effectiveness, incident reporting protocols, and strategic

monitoring initiatives. Mental health support emerged as a crucial focus area, with Mallory Colegrove, a Social Worker from the Myrtle Beach Police Department, addressing the most common psychological challenges faced by international participants and providing guidance on cultural adjustment support sponsors like InterExchange can provide.

A significant milestone of the event was the groundbreaking ceremony for International Residence Hall's innovative housing facility in Myrtle Beach. The state-of-the-art development, scheduled for completion by April 2025, will provide 650 seasonal beds for exchange visitors, demonstrating the community's strong commitment to supporting international exchange programs.



Mark Lazarus; Dan Bullock; Ethan Bursofsky, Department of State; Scott Weinhold, Department of State; Brock Ryan; Tommy Olson; Mike Lowder; Johnny Gardner.

The gathering drew community representatives from prominent exchange destination cities across the United States, including Port Clinton, Ohio; Old Orchard Beach, Maine; Branson, Missouri; Estes Park, Colorado; Gatlinburg, Tennessee; and Virginia Beach, Virginia. These leaders shared valuable insights and successful strategies for creating supportive environments for exchange participants.

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Kevin McGowan

The Myrtle Beach community, represented by City Liaison Kathy Winfree and Mike Winfree, showcased their exemplary model of participant support through coordinated volunteer efforts and engaging local events.

Lieutenant Allen Amick of the Myrtle Beach Police Department presented comprehensive safety protocols, while Christy Morris, Director of Outreach to International Students at IMPACT Ministries, discussed successful community engagement initiatives that have enhanced participant experiences.

The Community Support Summit addressed several critical areas of Summer Work Travel program operations and participant support:

- Comprehensive housing and transportation safety measures
- Mental health resources and cultural adjustment strategies

- Community engagement and support system development
- Enhanced program monitoring and incident response protocols
- Best practices for host employer relationships and participant integration

"This summit represents a significant step forward in strengthening the infrastructure of international exchange programs across the United States," said Director of Placements and Business Development at InterExchange, Kevin McGowan. "The collaborative spirit and shared commitment to excellence demonstrated by all participants will help ensure these vital cultural exchange programs continue to thrive and create meaningful impacts for both international visitors and American communities."

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