Pre-Arrival Information - New ISU Postdoctoral Scholars

Welcome to Iowa State! The Postdoc Office, located in the Graduate College, has put together a snapshot of information and resources in anticipation of your arrival.

Basic Living Essentials in Ames

About Ames
Ames has a small town feel with bigger city conveniences, cultural events, and a great place to raise children. Ames is centrally located in the state, 30-minutes north of Des Moines; the state capital, and three-hours from Kansas City, Missouri, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Omaha, Nebraska. Life in Ames

Housing
City of Ames has a website for newcomers moving to the Ames Community. Through a collaborative effort between the City of Ames and Iowa State University communities, Rent Smart Ames incorporates information landlords and tenants need to know about renting which includes the free rental housing locater. Another free Ames rental resource: Ames Rent. Planning Ahead - Please note that most landlords and rental agencies require a security deposit and first and last month’s rent.

There is limited transitional housing available through the ISU Guest Housing in Schilletter Village (north of campus). All fully-furnished apartments are non-smoking and there is a minimum stay of seven days.

Hotels in the area: ISU Hotel Memorial Union and a listing from the Ames Chamber of Commerce.

Banking
There are numerous banks and credit unions in Ames. To open a bank account, you will need one of the following combinations: a U.S. driver’s license and social security card (not a copy) or a passport and ISU Card as an additional form of identification if you do not have a driver’s license. Money transfers are possible once you have set-up an account. You can find out more information about the policies and procedures of each bank by looking at their web sites. More information about Banking Basics.

Greater Iowa Credit Union: Begun in 1932 by employees of Iowa State College, Greater Iowa has had a long relationship with the university, and until 2002 was named the ISU Community Credit Union. The driving force of the credit union's philosophy is "Not for profit, not for charity, but for service-people helping people."

US Bank: Through the University's partnership with U.S. Bank, ISU students and faculty/staff have the option of checking accounts linked to the ISU Card. US Bank ATM’s are on campus.
Salary Information

Payroll Office
Please check the Payroll Office website for timelines, proper forms, and needed personal documents. All salaried employees receive their pay on a monthly basis. Pay for the current month’s earning is issued on the last working day of the current month. Planning Ahead - You will need enough funds to address your expenses until you receive compensation.

Welcome Resource Packet
The Postdoctoral Welcome Resource Packet is a reference point of valuable resources.

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
Please Note - International Postdoctoral Scholars are required to check-in with the ISSO upon arrival. Required Check-in and Contacts links.

International Postdoc Survival Guide
Informative Guide from the National Postdoctoral Association
- Postdocing in the U.S.
- Going in With Your Eyes Open
- Signposts to Living in the U.S.
- So, Nobody Will Give You a Credit Card?
- A Quick Guide to Visas
- Beginner’s Guide to Income Taxes
- Keeping in Touch
- Been There, Done That!

Transportation
Des Moines Airport Shuttle Service - A shuttle service operated by Executive Express is available for trips between Ames and the Des Moines Airport.

Jefferson Lines Bus Service – Has a bus service located in Ames. Scheduled bus service offers online ticket sales to destinations across the United States.

Directions to Ames/ISU and Parking on Campus
CyRide - Is the city bus system for Ames, Iowa. It is a collaboration between the City of Ames, Iowa State University (ISU), and ISU’s Government of the Student Body (GSB).

Climate and Weather
Iowa’s weather encompasses each of the four seasons. Iowa residents experience snow and cold in the winter, and heat and humidity in the summer in addition to the transitional milder seasons of spring and fall. National Weather Service