

Questions & Answers

- **How much of my time will it take to be a sponsor?**
It's entirely up to you! The first few weeks are the most time consuming as some of the officers need assistance settling into the local area.
- **How long does sponsorship last?**
Sponsorship lasts for the entire duration of the student's course. The AWC and ACSC students are at Maxwell for a year, while the SOS students are here for 3 months.
- **What should I do with students and their family?**
Whatever you normally do! Typical activities include inviting them to your home, dinner, ball games, theater...the list is endless. Just be yourself, do things that interest you, and find out what interests your officer and their family.
- **How do I get on base?**
IOS adds you to our AGA list, 42d Security Forces runs a background check, then you are issued a year-long pass at the Visitor Control Center
- **Are there any volunteer opportunities other than sponsorship?**
Yes! IOS needs volunteers to run the IFOP and IDEC, recruiting initiatives, and even welcoming international families as they arrive at the airport.



International officers and their sponsors at the AGA Appreciation Night

 THE AIR UNIVERSITY



Partnerships Through Education

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CHIEF, DEPENDENT & SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

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Alabama Goodwill Ambassadors



INTERNATIONAL OFFICER SCHOOL

Alabama Goodwill Ambassadors

Alabama Goodwill Ambassadors (AGAs) are volunteers who assist international officer students and their families while they are attending school at Maxwell AFB. The officers first attend a seven week preparatory course at the International Officer School (IOS) and then move on to their respective follow-on course (Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, or Air War College).

Sponsors can be military or DoD employees, but the majority of our volunteers are civilians from the Montgomery area. Bi- or multilingualism is not a requirement to participate in the program; the students have at least a basic understanding of the English language before they arrive.

The goal of the AGA program is to help the student and their families feel welcome and more comfortable as they adjust to living in the U.S.

AGAs ease their transition into the local community and, throughout their friendship, help to foster international relations, help international officers and their families feel welcome, and create a lasting, positive impression of our nation and people.



International officer's spouses at IFOP graduation

Types of Volunteers

There are three “flavors” of AGAs:

- International Officer Student Sponsors
- International Family Orientation Program (IFOP)
- International Dependent’s English Course (IDEC)

Sponsors are usually the first person an international officer meets upon their arrival, and often times the very first friend they make here in the U.S. Sponsors not only meet the student and their family at the airport, but assist the family in a variety of ways. Typically this includes helping to find homes and cars, obtaining registration and insurance, enrolling children in school, and setting up bank accounts. The needs of every student will be different providing you with a unique experience every time. Most importantly, have fun and be yourself! We encourage you to provide the best “American experience” that you can through activities that you and your family normally do.

The IFOP equips family members with the necessary “survival skills” to help overcome the culture shock and anxiety they may experience when coming to the U.S. for the first time. Volunteers cover a variety of subject matter ranging from how to pay utility bills, dialing 911, to what their children will experience while attending American schools.

This year: weekdays 7:30am-noon, 20–28 Jun

While the international officer is required to know English prior to their arrival, their family is not. For non-English speaking dependents, IDEC helps teach English as a second language.

What it takes to be a Sponsor

The process is simple! Just fill out an application and return to the Chief of Sponsor and Dependent Programs at IOS. After review, IOS will provide you with a short training session and guides to assist in your sponsorship journey.

Once you’ve been accepted, you have the opportunity to make your sponsorship whatever you want it to be! How much time and effort you put into it is entirely up to you, but of course our most successful sponsors tend to be those who are more active and truly want to establish a friendship with the international family.

Typically, sponsors share our American culture through a variety of activities, including inviting the family to their home and outings to explore the local area.

Often times, the international family will reciprocate your efforts and share their cultures and interests with you. Just keep an open mind, it’s a win-win scenario!



International officers from the Air Command and Staff College