



Updates

Terra Dotta is getting a new look!

Terra Dotta Systems (TDS) will be transitioning to NextGen in Fall 2026. As the transition approaches, we will send out more information on navigating the new Terra Dotta portal.

SHIP Insurance Renewal

Is your [SHIP \(Student Health Insurance Plan\)](#) coverage expiring soon? The SHIP office will send you a renewal reminder email the month your coverage expires. Please review the instructions in the email to remain compliant with federal immigration law and its health insurance requirements if you are a J-1 scholar. If you have questions, contact shipmail@uhs.wisc.edu.

Cost of Living Increase

For any new J-1 applications or J-1 extension requests submitted to IFSS on or after August 1, 2026, the new cost of living amounts will apply. [Review the chart in Terra Dotta](#). This cost of living increase is needed to keep up with rising costs in Madison and the surrounding area.

Pause on Reviewing Applications Lifted

A federal judge has struck down the pause, which had been in effect since November 2025, for [nationals of several countries](#). With this ruling, USCIS is required to begin or resume processing affected applications effective immediately. IFSS has received approvals for some cases previously affected by the pause and will continue to keep impacted individuals updated.

\$100,000 H-1B Fee Struck down by Appeals Court

A federal court decided the \$100,000 fee for certain H-1B petitions was unlawful. IFSS continues to monitor the situation and will provide any relevant updates to those impacted. Future updates will be posted on our [H-1B Proclamation Page](#).

Duration of Status Rule

On Friday, July 17, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [published the final rule in the Federal Register](#) to end "duration of status" (D/S) for F and J nonimmigrants among other significant changes. There will be a 60-day implementation period before the rule takes effect on September 15.

The final rule changes the admission period for F and J nonimmigrants to a fixed period of time. F and J nonimmigrants who need additional time to complete their studies or exchange program will have to file a request to extend their status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in addition to working with their international advisor to obtain an extended I-20 or DS-2019.

IFSS invites you to learn more about the new rule through a [campus webinar](#) on Tuesday, August 4 at 1 p.m.

[NAFSA](#) and the [International Student Services](#) websites have more information about this significant change.

Travel Reminders



When you are traveling, both domestically and internationally, take copies of all your immigration documents (such as passport, I-94, DS-2019s, EAD, receipt and approval notices). If you have questions about travel or when your status expires, please contact ifss@wisc.edu before you travel.

We are aware of delays at some [U.S. consulates and embassies](#) with visa appointments. IFSS recommends you schedule your appointment as soon as you know you are traveling and before you leave the U.S. Click to review the [visa wait times](#).

Upcoming Holidays

Labor Day: September 7

Observed the first Monday in September, Labor Day is an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers. The holiday is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being. Most businesses, banks, and federal and state offices are closed on Labor Day.

Halloween: October 31

Halloween is a yearly holiday celebrated on October 31st that involves wearing costumes, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, and trick-or-treating. It began as an ancient Celtic harvest festival.

Upcoming Events

Looking for things to do? Explore these upcoming local events!

August

Dane County Farmers' Market

Every Saturday, August (6:15 a.m.–1:45 p.m.)
Capitol Square, Madison, WI

The nation's largest producer-only farmers' market features more than 150 Wisconsin vendors selling fresh produce, baked goods, flowers, cheese, and handmade goods. Families can enjoy breakfast on the Square, live music, and a lively downtown atmosphere.

Lakeside Kids! at Memorial Union Terrace

Select Wednesdays in August (4:30–6:00 p.m.)

Enjoy free family-friendly performances featuring music, dance, theater, and educational entertainment on the shores of Lake Mendota. Bring a blanket and enjoy an afternoon outdoors.

Concerts on the Square

Wednesday evenings through early August (7:00 p.m.)

Hosted by the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, these free outdoor concerts are a Madison summer tradition. Families are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy an evening of live music.



Henry Vilas Zoo

Daily (9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.)

Admission is free to this community zoo featuring lions, giraffes, red pandas, bears, and more. Families can also enjoy the zoo train, carousel, and nearby playgrounds.

The Madison Public Market

The Madison Public Market is a vibrant, inclusive gathering space, fostering equity through entrepreneurship and celebrating local culture by bringing together diverse foods, handcrafted arts, and traditions. It is a year-round destination for community connection and supporting the growth of new and established businesses.

It will feature produce from Wisconsin farms, culturally diverse prepared food, locally made food products and handcrafted arts/crafts. It is a cherished and inclusive community gathering space with art, music, and events that bring people together.

September

Taste of Madison

September 5–6
Capitol Square

One of Madison's largest festivals featuring food from dozens of local restaurants, live music on multiple stages, and family-friendly entertainment throughout the weekend. Admission is free.

Madison Night Market

September 17 (5:00–9:00 p.m.)
State Street

Explore local artists, food vendors, musicians, and small businesses during this vibrant downtown evening market. Each market features unique themes and activities for all ages.



Shifting Gears Bike Path Dance Festival

September 7 (Multiple locations throughout Madison)

Walk or bike between free outdoor dance performances, interactive art installations, and live music along Madison's bike paths. The festival is designed for audiences of all ages.

Schuster's Farm Fall Festival

Weekends beginning in September
1326 U.S. Hwy. 12 & 18, Deerfield, WI

Just 20 minutes from Madison, Schuster's Farm offers a corn maze, pumpkin patch, hayrides, farm animals, giant slides, and seasonal treats for the whole family.

October

Enchanted Valley Acres Fall Festival

Weekends throughout October (2975 Bailey Rd., Cross Plains, WI)

Enjoy pumpkin picking, hayrides, giant slides, corn mazes, farm animals, and dozens of outdoor attractions during this family-friendly fall festival located just west of Madison.



Fall Color Walk at the UW Arboretum

Throughout October

Take a self-guided or family nature walk through one of Madison's most beautiful natural areas as autumn colors reach their peak. The Arboretum offers free admission and miles of scenic trails.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Open Daily (3330 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI)

Explore 16 acres of outdoor gardens featuring colorful fall displays, walking paths, and the historic Thai Pavilion. Admission to the outdoor gardens is free.

Get Connected

Get to Know Me Mondays

We love to know what you, our international employees, are doing! If you would like to be featured on our Instagram, please [fill out this form](#).



IFSS Instagram

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