

Glen Oaks Community College  
What You Need to Know Before You Arrive in the US  
International Student Handbook

**TRAVEL**

Make sure to carry your passport, visa, I-20, Admission Letter, Financial Documents, and I-901 receipt on your person when you travel. It is advisable to take photos of the documents with your phone or have copies in your luggage.

F-1 international students may arrive up to 30 days before the start date of their Semester, HOWEVER, student housing may not be available at that time. **Please confirm with housing on the earliest move-in date. You need to be on campus for an International Student Orientation before the start of the semester - the DSO will communicate the day & time of this orientation.**

The closest international airports are located more than an hour's drive away from the college campus:

- Gerald R. Ford International Airport (84 miles away in Grand Rapids, Michigan)
- Capital Region International Airport (102 miles away in Lansing, Michigan)
- Fort Wayne International Airport (102 miles away in Fort Wayne, Indiana)
- Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (130 miles away in Detroit, Michigan)
- Chicago Midway International Airport (147 miles away in Chicago, Illinois)
- Bishop International Airport (155 miles away in Flint, Michigan)

- Chicago O'Hare International Airport (157 miles away in Chicago Illinois)

**Once you arrive on campus, you must check in with the Designated School Official (DSO)/International Student Advisor within one week.** International students can consider the summer semester a vacation period and are eligible to travel at that time. You must talk to your DSO before you travel outside of the US.

### **COLLEGE ORIENTATION**

All new students are required to attend a New Student Orientation. International students will be contacted by the DSO after they have obtained their visa and information will be provided on the New Student Orientation. **There will be a specific International Student Orientation that you must attend - the DSO will let you know the time & date of this orientation. You are required to attend this session in person, so please plan accordingly when arranging your flights and transportation from the airport.** You will meet staff from the Student Services office, learn about F-1 visa requirements, and take a tour of the campus. Payment in full (or signing up for a payment plan) must be completed within 48 hours of registration (see more information below on acceptable forms of payment). This will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions about your time at Glen Oaks and what life is like in the US.

### **BANKING & PAYMENTS**

International students may choose to open a domestic US checking or bank account while attending Glen Oaks. Contact the bank directly to see what documents and amounts are required to open an account as an F-1 student.

It is recommended that international students have multiple methods of paying for things while they travel- credit card, cash, travelers checks, etc. Students are responsible for currency exchange and all other items related to their personal accounts.

All students are required to set up a payment plan or pay in full within 48 hours of registering for classes. Students will use the Nelnet service to set up the payment plan or to pay in full. **Students must use an accepted credit card or a domestic US bank account for Nelnet. Glen Oaks/Nelnet is not able to accept payments from foreign bank accounts.** If you have further questions regarding the requirements of using Nelnet, please contact our cashier at [cashier@glenoaks.edu](mailto:cashier@glenoaks.edu). Students are responsible for ensuring that their form of payment is accepted by Nelnet and informing their sponsor (if applicable) of these requirements.

## **CLIMATE**

Glen Oaks is located in a rural area in southwest Michigan, which experiences all four seasons. Summer temperatures, usually around the month of July, might be around 85° F/29.4° C, with some thunderstorms and many sunny days. Fall temperatures, usually around October, might be around 59° F/15° C, with some cloudy days and wind. Winter temperatures, which begin in late November and can last until March, might be around 29° F/-1.6° C with colder temperatures likely. Winter months in Michigan often have snow, sleet and ice with cold wind. Spring temperatures, usually around April, might be

around 50° F/10° C and may have rain.

**Students should expect to bring or purchase clothing and shoes/boots for all four seasons.**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Public transportation via bus is available through the local county transportation authority for a fee. Costs and dates/times of service vary and may be limited. Taxis and ride share services are not available in the area surrounding Glen Oaks. Students are responsible for their own transportation and any expenses associated with transportation. The St. Joseph County Transportation Authority (SJCTA) can be reached at [www.sjcta.info](http://www.sjcta.info) or (269)273-7808. Glen Oaks students who show their student ID receive the student discount through the SJCTA.

### **FOOD**

Glen Oaks offers the GO Café on campus during the semester (hours may vary) during the week. Typical food includes paninis, burgers, casseroles, salads, desserts, special meals, and various snack items. Students are responsible for purchasing, preparing and/or ordering their own food. Kitchens are available in the Student Housing suites and students are expected to provide their own cooking and dining supplies.

Groceries are available in Three Rivers (approximately 10 miles from campus) or Sturgis

(approximately 12 miles from campus). Larger cities such as Portage (approximately 27 miles from campus) or South Bend (approximately 53 miles from campus) offer more options in terms of groceries and restaurants. Students are responsible for obtaining their own transportation to purchase groceries.

The college has a food pantry called the Campus Cupboard for students in need.

Students who are in need of food and/or basic personal care items may fill out an [Etrieve](#) form to request assistance once on campus.

## **MEDICAL**

**If you experience a medical emergency while in the US, dial 911 from the nearest phone.** Dialing 911 will connect you to an emergency dispatcher who can assist you or send an ambulance to you if necessary.

### **Some nearby hospitals for medical emergencies:**

- Three Rivers Health Hospital (10 miles away in Three Rivers, MI)
- Sturgis Hospital (12 miles away in Sturgis, MI)
- Bronson Methodist Hospital (36 miles away in Kalamazoo, MI)
- Ascension Borgess Hospital (34 miles away in Kalamazoo, MI)
- Memorial Hospital (53 miles away in South Bend, IN)

Various primary care physicians and doctors are available in the nearby communities.

You will want to confirm with the doctor's office that your insurance is accepted and make sure to read your medical insurance documents carefully, as not all procedures or visits may be covered. Medical care in the US can be very expensive. Students are responsible for any costs incurred for medical care.

Covered Bridge Healthcare is located nearby in Centreville (approximately 3 miles from campus), but is not an emergency room.

All international students must supply a copy of their medical insurance (must include international coverage as well as a repatriation clause) to the DSO when applying.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

F-1 students are not permitted to work without prior approval from the DSO and are only allowed to work on campus in certain capacities and within federal regulations.

Please talk to the DSO if you have questions regarding employment. **Unauthorized employment is grounds for immediate termination of your F-1 status.**

### **ENTERTAINMENT**

Nearby communities are Three Rivers (10 miles away from campus) and Sturgis (12 miles away from campus), both located about a 20 minute drive away, with grocery stores, pharmacies, movie theaters, restaurants and some shopping. Larger cities like

Kalamazoo, MI or South Bend, IN are about an hour's drive away and have a larger selection of shopping, entertainment, restaurants, sporting events and more.

Lake Michigan is located about an hour and a half away and there are many towns along the lake that offer shopping, beaches, swimming, hiking and restaurants in the summer months. There are many rivers and lakes in southwest Michigan that are also available for swimming, fishing or boating. During the fall months, some people tour the fall colors, go apple picking or carve pumpkins. In the winter months, skiing, snowboarding, ice skating and sledding are some fun outdoor activities.

### **DRIVING IN THE US**

International students may be eligible to drive a motor vehicle while residing in the United States. However, those who wish to operate a vehicle must successfully apply for and receive a driver's license. **Driving a car without a driver's license is illegal.** To acquire a driver's license, you must apply for one at your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or Secretary of State office (SOS). Please talk to your DSO about the process and required documents, or read more on the [Study in the States website](#).

### **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

Social Security Numbers (SSN) are used to report your wages to the government. If your school has authorized you to work on-campus, and you meet Social Security's eligibility requirements, you can apply for a SSN. Please talk to your DSO about the process and required documents, or read more on the Study in the States website.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

If you have a cell phone, you will need to make arrangements with your carrier for an international plan or purchase a prepaid calling card. Some phones may not work in the US.

Students generally have a laptop or computer that they use for coursework. The college has a limited number of laptops available for students to check out for the semester, but these are on a first come-first serve basis. For more information on checking out a laptop, please contact the Learning Commons at [learningcommons@glenoaks.edu](mailto:learningcommons@glenoaks.edu).

Printing is available to students in the Learning Commons as well. If you need to download Microsoft Office 365, you can do so for free by using your Glen Oaks Viking email address on the [microsoft.com](https://microsoft.com) website.

The US uses type A and B plug for electrical outlets. Students are responsible for purchasing adapters or appropriate cords if needed.

## **FEDERAL HOLIDAYS IN THE US**

The following holidays are generally observed with no classes, and some businesses may be closed. Additional religious holidays, like Easter, are also commonly observed by some in the US. A copy of the college calendar is available in Student Services each semester.

- January 1 – New Year’s Day

- Third Monday of January – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Third Monday in February – President’s Day
- Last Monday in May – Memorial Day
- June 19 – Juneteenth National Independence Day
- July 4 – Independence Day (also called Fourth of July)
- First Monday of September – Labor Day
- Second Monday of October – Columbus Day or Indigenous Peoples’ Day
- November 11 – Veterans Day
- Fourth Thursday in November – Thanksgiving Day
- December 25 – Christmas Day

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Glen Oaks Community College

62249 Shimmel Rd

Centreville, MI 49032

USA

(269)294-4300

- **Designated School Official (DSO)** – The DSO is the main point of contact at the college for international students. The DSO will be able to assist you with F-1 visa questions, maintaining your status, and will help you register for classes:

Rachel Templin, DSO

Office Phone: (269)294-4328

Email: [rtemplin@glenoaks.edu](mailto:rtemplin@glenoaks.edu)

*Personal Cell Phone: (269)303-5705 - for emergency use only*

- **Principal Designated School Official (PDSO)** – The PDSO oversees the DSO and can assist you if the DSO is unavailable:

Ben Fries, PDSO

Office Phone: (269)294-4271

Email: [bfries@glenoaks.edu](mailto:bfries@glenoaks.edu)

- **Admissions** – The Admissions Department will host New Student Orientations, which all new students are required to attend. They also offer campus tours if requested.

Office Phone: (269)294-4246

Email: [admissions@glenoaks.edu](mailto:admissions@glenoaks.edu)

- **Registration** – The Registration Department helps students who need additional help registering for classes, requesting transcripts and with graduation.

Office Phone: (269)294-4259

Email: [registration@glenoaks.edu](mailto:registration@glenoaks.edu)

- **Financial Aid** – The Financial Aid Department assists students who receive grants, loans or scholarships. They are also in charge of on-campus work study positions.

International students MUST seek approval from the DSO before any employment begins.

Office Phone: (269)294-4326

Email: [financialaid@glenoaks.edu](mailto:financialaid@glenoaks.edu)

- **Cashier/Business Office** – The cashier is the main point of contact for the business office and handles students payments, the payment plan, and questions on your account.

Office Phone: (269)294-4235

Email: [cashier@glenoaks.edu](mailto:cashier@glenoaks.edu)

- **Student Housing** – The Student Housing staff are available to assist students who reside on campus. Resident Assistants (RA's) are students who assist the Student Housing staff and reside in housing as well. An RA or Student Housing Staff is always available to help you.

Office Phone: (269)294-4252

Email: [housing@glenoaks.edu](mailto:housing@glenoaks.edu)

- **Athletic Department** – If you are a student athlete, your coach or the Athletic Director will be able to assist you in your eligibility and any other questions regarding athletics.

Office Phone: (269)294-4224

Email: [athletics@glenoaks.edu](mailto:athletics@glenoaks.edu)

**We look forward to welcoming you to our campus and helping you reach**

**your educational goals!**

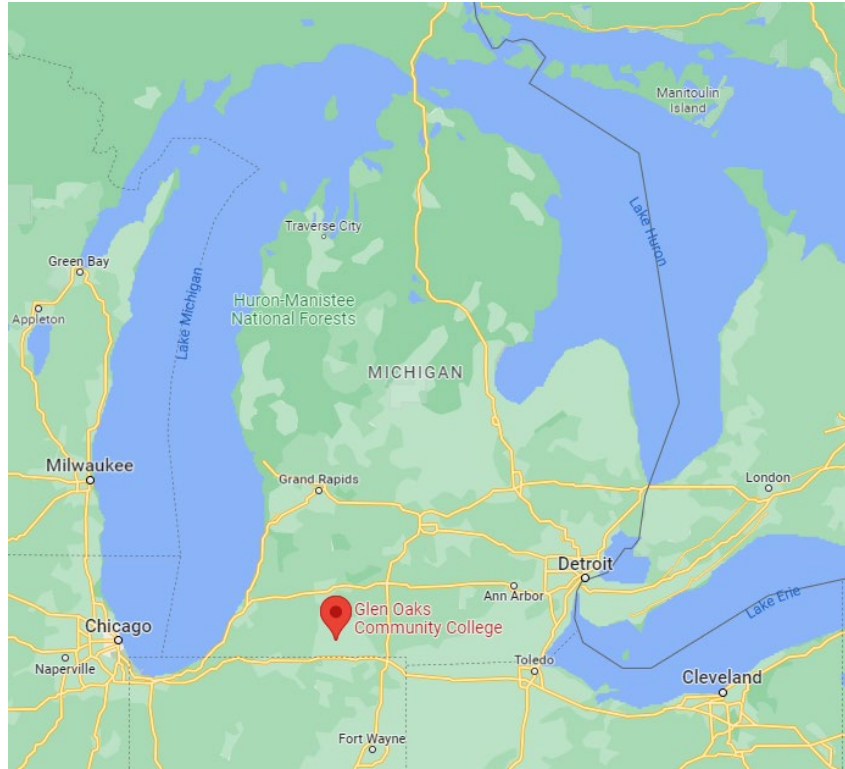


**Glen Oaks**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

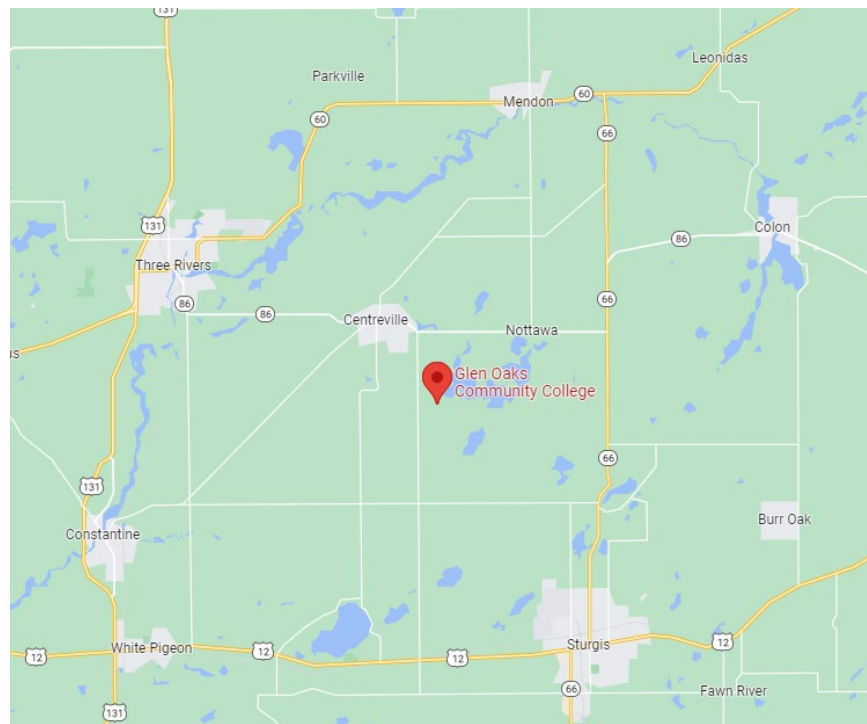
**Please contact the DSO if you have further questions:**

**Rachel Templin, DSO**

[international@glenoaks.edu](mailto:international@glenoaks.edu)



State of Michigan



St. Joseph County, Michigan