



## INITIAL ECFMG VISA SPONSORSHIP FORM DS-2019: PROCESSING INSTRUCTIONS TO OBTAIN J-1 VISA STATUS

Attached is Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa Status, which must be processed through the following steps before the physician is eligible to begin training.

1. Photocopy Form DS-2019 for host institution's files.
2. The physician must use Form DS-2019 to apply for J-1 visa status from DHS/USCIS. The physician may choose one of two processing options described below.
3. Please be aware that procedures may vary depending on citizenship, country of birth, and last legal permanent residence of the visa applicant.

### **Option A: APPLY FOR A J-1 VISA STAMP AT US EMBASSY OR CONSULATE OUTSIDE THE US**

Contact a US Embassy or Consulate to determine specific eligibility and documentation requirements to apply for a J-1 visa stamp. Processing procedures and required time frames vary by post. See <http://usembassy.state.gov/> for website links to US Embassies and Consulates. Individuals are expected to apply in their home country (i.e., country of last legal permanent residence). Some posts may consider applications from Third-Country Nationals on an individual basis. It is important to verify the current requirements with the Embassy or Consulate, gather all required documents, and allow adequate time for processing procedures.

Approved applications result in the Embassy or Consulate issuing a J-1 visa stamp in the physician's passport. Upon arrival to the US, the physician must present the J-1 visa stamp to the DHS/CBP Officer. If everything is in order, the DHS/CBP Officer will issue the physician Form I-94 confirming admittance for "J-1, Duration of Status – D/S." The officer will staple Form I-94, a small white card, into the passport. If the officer at the US Port-of-Entry does not issue a Form I-94 confirming "J-1, D/S," contact ECFMG immediately.

### **Option B: APPLY FOR A CHANGE TO J-1 VISA STATUS INSIDE THE US**

If the physician is already in the US on another non-immigrant status (e.g., B-2, F-1), the physician may be eligible to process Form DS-2019 by filing an "Application to Extend/Change Non-Immigrant Status–Form I-539" with the DHS/USCIS Regional Service Center. See the USCIS website (<http://www.uscis.gov>) or call 1-800-870-3676 to obtain Form I-539. It is important to verify USCIS's current filing requirements and processing times, which may be several weeks to months. *Physicians are not permitted to train until the change of status has been approved by DHS/USCIS.*

Approved applications result in DHS/USCIS issuing a "Notice of Action–Form I-797" which will include a new Form I-94 granting status change to "J-1, Duration of Status – D/S." If the DHS/USCIS Regional Service Center does not issue a Form I-94 confirming "J-1, D/S," contact ECFMG immediately.

### **PROCESSING FOR CITIZENS OF CANADA**

Citizens of Canada who are sponsored **based on a Statement of Need from Health Canada** must present Form DS-2019 and supporting documents at the US Port of Entry for admission to the US in J status. It is not necessary to process at the US Embassy or Consulate. **Note:** Landed Immigrants are *not* eligible to process at the border and must choose either Option A or B as outlined above to obtain J status.

### **Additional Reminders:**

#### Address Reporting:

1. SEVIS regulations require immediate notification of arrival and current US residential address. Please complete and fax the attached "Notification of Exchange Visitor Status" to ECFMG.
2. Separate from notification to ECFMG, federal regulations require *all foreign nationals* to notify USCIS of their current residential address. All J-1 and J-2 visa-holders must complete and submit Form AR-11 to USCIS. **Do not send Form AR-11 to ECFMG.** Willful failure to register with the DHS/USCIS or give written notice of a change of address is a criminal offense. Form AR-11 is available from the DHS/BCIS website (<http://www.uscis.gov>).
3. All subsequent address changes must be reported to ECFMG and DHS/USCIS immediately.

Passport: DHS requires all foreign nationals to maintain a valid, unexpired passport.

Future Travel and Re-entry from Abroad: Requirements of DHS and US Embassies and Consulates regarding the issuance of a visa and travel to and from the US are subject to change at any time. ECFMG urges you to review current requirements prior to making travel plans to assure that you have the appropriate documents and adequate vacation time to allow for processing procedures. See <http://travel.state.gov/> and <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/> for additional information. After the TPL confirms that the J-1 physician has reported to the program, the J-1 physician may submit a written request to ECFMG for a new form DS-2019 with travel endorsement. Travel documents should be obtained BEFORE making final travel arrangements.

4. Under Department of State regulations, sponsors such as ECFMG are required to provide exchange visitors with the mailing address and email address of the Exchange Visitor Program Services at the Department of State: U.S. Department of State, Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation, ECA/EC/PS-SA-44, Rm. 734, 301 4<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20547 JVISAS@STATE.GOV

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