Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)

Orientation for New J-1 Physicians and J-2 Dependents
WELCOME!
Orientation Learning Objectives

Program designed to provide new J-1 physicians with a better understanding of:

- Intent, purpose and regulatory requirements of J-1 program
- Required levels of health and accident insurance
- Maintenance of J-1 Visa Status
- Life and customs in the United States
- Importance of integrating cross-cultural activities into educational experience
- How and when to contact ECFMG and the Department of State
J-1 PROGRAM OVERVIEW
Purpose of J-1 Program

Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961

“...to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges. Educational and cultural exchanges assist the Department of State in furthering the foreign policy objectives of the United States.”

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program provides eligible foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States and then return home to share their experiences.
J-1 Physician Category

Regulatory Definitions

• **Alien physician** - A foreign national who is a graduate of a school of medicine who comes to the United States under a program in which he or she will receive graduate medical education or training conducted by accredited U.S. schools of medicine or scientific institutions.

• **Graduate medical education or training** - Participation in a program in which a foreign medical school graduate will receive graduate medical education or training, which generally consists of a residency or fellowship program involving health care services to patients, but does not include programs involving observation, consultation, teaching or research in which there is no or only incidental patient care. This program may consist of a medical specialty, a directly related medical subspecialty, or both.

• **Duration of stay** – limited to the “time typically required” to complete specialty/subspecialty training requirements as determined by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The duration of sponsorship is further limited to a maximum of seven years.
J-1 Physician Category

• J-1 visa
  o Temporary, non-immigrant visa
  o Full-time educational training / GME (not employment)

• Requires evidence of strong ties to the home country

• Imposes two-year home physical presence requirement

• Duration = 7 years maximum for progressive training

• Mandatory health insurance requirements for J-1s and J-2s

• Tracked in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System)
# J-1 Physician Category

| Temporary, Non-immigrant Visa | Requires full-time participation in a program of graduate medical education; not employment  
|                             | Strong ties to the home country and clear intent to return |
| Statement of Need            | Issued by country of last legal permanent residence (LPR)  
|                             | LPR cannot be changed once in J status; any/all subsequent Statements of Need must be from same source  
|                             | New letter required for any change in specialty or subspecialty or if date restricted |
| Imposes Two-year Home Residency Requirement | Statement of Need from country of last legal permanent residence (LPR) determines obligation  
|                             | J-1 physicians and accompanying J-2 dependents must return to country of LPR for two years before being eligible for certain changes or adjustments in U.S. visa status |
## J-1 Physician Category

### Specific Activity Authorized
- Form DS-2019 and associated J-1 status authorizes a specific training activity, location and financial compensation
- Work outside of the training program (i.e., “moonlighting”) is not permitted

### Defined Duration
- Sponsorship limited to the time “typically required to complete a program” as defined by the ACGME and/or an ABMS member-board
- Further limited to a maximum of seven years

### Requires Progression in Training
- Progressive levels of training required
- Repeat / remedial training limited to a maximum of 12 months with program director support
- Future sponsorship eligibility should not be presumed
J-1 Physician Category

Change in Specialty
- Permissible once within first two years of obtaining J-1 status
- Upon entrance to a third year of sponsorship, a change of specialty is no longer permitted

Insurance Requirements
- Health, accident, medical evacuation and repatriation of remains required for all J-1 / J-2 participants
- Must be maintained by J-1s / J-2s during entire U.S. stay
- See www.ecfmg.org/evsp/mandatory-medical-insurance.html

30-day Grace Period
- J-1s / J-2s must depart the United States within 30 days of program completion
- No employment / training authorization during this period
- Does not apply to early departure (i.e., resignation or termination)
Regulatory Insurance Requirements

Federal Regulations require that Exchange Visitors and dependents secure and maintain health, accident, medical evacuation, and repatriation of remains insurance throughout their stay in the United States in J-1 status. Insurances must provide the following coverage:

1. Medical benefits of at least $100,000 per accident or illness;
2. Deductible that does not exceed $500 per accident or illness;
3. Co-insurance paid by J-1 not to exceed 25% of covered benefits per accident or illness;
4. Minimum repatriation of remains in the amount of $25,000*;
5. Minimum medical evacuation expenses in the amount of $50,000.*

http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/mandatory-medical-insurance.html

*Repatriation of remains and medical evacuation insurance (#4 and #5 above) are provided by ECFMG to all J-1 physicians and dependents listed in OASIS. Each J-1 physician is responsible to ensure that he/she and all accompanying J-2 dependents obtain required levels of health and accident insurance as listed in #1, #2, #3 above.
Sponsorship Limitations / Eligibility

Waiver of Two-year Home Residency Requirement

- The J-1 program was designed to promote educational and cultural exchange; as such, J-1 participants are expected to return to the country of LPR upon program completion.
- Receipt of a favorable waiver recommendation from the U.S. Department of State negates any eligibility to extend or renew J-1 sponsorship through ECFMG.

Multiple, Successive Visa Classifications

- Physicians are advised that future ECFMG sponsorship may not be available to individuals with a recent history of holding different U.S. visa classifications.
- J-1/J-2 physician couples must carefully plan training and corresponding timelines.
- J-1 sponsorship eligibility should not be presumed.
Responsibilities of J-1 Physicians

• Understand and Adhere to all J-1 Requirements *(including, but not limited to)*:
  o Maintain an active email, phone number and U.S. residential address in OASIS
  o Full-time participation in the approved GME program
  o Timely renewal of ECFMG J-1 sponsorship
  o Timely response to ECFMG mandatory reporting
  o Notify ECFMG of any proposed change in the pre-approved training plan, any serious issue or incident

• Maintain Valid Immigration Documents
  o Current, unexpired passport
  o Form DS-2019 issued by ECFMG
  o Form I-94 marked “J-1; D/S”

Required Reporting to ECFMG

• Notification of visa delay / denial

• Any proposed amendment to contract
  o Training level (e.g., acceleration, remediation)
  o Start date (e.g., late arrival to program, licensure delay)

• Leaves of absence (e.g., medical, family)
  o Pre-approval, consultation with ECFMG

• Notification of resignation / termination
  o Program completion, early ending, grievance, appeal process, etc.

• Any change in residential address

• Any serious incident or allegation
Planning International Travel

• Be sure to discuss with program director and/or GME
  o Delayed return
  o Failure to return

• Request travel documents from ECFMG
  o Travel endorsement on Form DS-2019
  o Endorsement must be requested in initial year; subsequent renewal
    Forms DS-2019 endorsed at the time of issuance
  o Signed by ECFMG personnel only

See www.ecfmg.org/evsp/travel
J-2 Dependents

- Subject to two-year home physical presence requirement
- Must hold required levels of health and accident insurance
- May apply for work authorization (EAD) but cannot support J-1
- Sponsorship timeline depends entirely on J-1 principal
- Should consult with EVSP if considering seeking a change to J-1 status
- Must report permanent departure from the United States (if prior to J-1 program completion)
GENERAL U.S. LAWS
U.S. Laws

Substances

Smoking
• Many states have banned smoking in public places such as bars and restaurants
• Most employers have banned smoking on premises

Alcohol
• U.S. legal drinking age is 21
• Public locations prohibit alcohol (i.e., public beaches and parks, streets)
• Drinking inside a restaurant, a bar, at sports stadiums, at someone's home, etc. is permissible if done on the property of those locations

Drugs
• It is illegal to use and distribute drugs that are not prescribed to you
• Illegal possession and/or use of drugs or drug paraphernalia is a felony offense
• Generally, employers are allowed to drug test employees and terminate based on usage
U.S. Laws
Family/Relationships

Domestic Violence
• Strict laws govern domestic relationships and are designed to protect individuals from physical and mental harm and abuse
• Domestic offenses can include things such as spousal abuse or stalking
• In the U.S. domestic partners (husbands/wives, boyfriends/girlfriends, ex-husbands/ex-wives) are not allowed to engage in behavior that results in physical or mental harm to the partner

Child Abuse or Neglect
• If you have children, you are responsible for ensuring that they are appropriately cared for in a safe, healthy way that promotes their well being. The U.S. defines child abuse very broadly - much more broadly than in many other countries. If you have children, you must be careful when:
  o Disciplining children with physical force; the legal line between discipline and abuse is very thin.
  o Leaving a child unattended, even if only for a few minutes. It is illegal in this country to leave a child alone in a car while you "run a quick errand."

Adapted from the International Student and Scholar Services website of The Catholic University of America
U.S. Laws

Other

Taxes
• File annually with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by April 15
  • [http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-paying-taxes.html](http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-paying-taxes.html)
  • Recommended that you consult a professional tax preparer

Driving and Auto Safety
• Always wear your seatbelt – it’s the law
• Follow the rules and posted speed limits
• Do not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
• Do not use your cell phone while driving – it is against the law in many states

Serious Problem or Controversy (22CFR 62.13(d))
• Engaging in any “...activity or serious problem or controversy that could be expected to bring the Department of State, the Exchange Visitor Program, or the sponsor’s exchange visitor program into notoriety or disrepute, including any potential litigation related to a sponsor’s exchange visitor program, in which the sponsor or an exchange visitor may be a named party” may be deemed a violation of J status.
U.S. CULTURE & CUSTOMS
Life and Customs in the United States

• **Society and Culture**
  - Diverse
  - Oriented towards the individual, not the group
  - Informal and friendly
  - Direct style of communication

• **Family**
  - Family unit is generally considered the nuclear family
  - Extended family often live in their own homes, oftentimes far from the nuclear family

• **Religion and Spirituality**
  - Principle of “separation between church and state”
  - Diversity of religions; some individuals choose not to participate in any religion
  - Inappropriate to ask one’s religious affiliation

• **Social Equality**
  - All individuals are expected to be treated the same regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference
  - Laws are in place to protect these rights
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<th>U.S. Holidays</th>
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<td><strong>January</strong></td>
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<td>• New Year’s Day</td>
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<td>• Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
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<td><strong>February</strong></td>
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<td><strong>December</strong></td>
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<td>• Christmas Day</td>
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*Examples*
### Local Community Resources

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<th>WHAT</th>
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<td>Community resources / needs may include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td>• Contact your GME office or international office for available resources</td>
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</table>
| • Public transportation  
  [www.apta.com/resources/links/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.apta.com/resources/links/Pages/default.aspx) | • Google search by city/town and state; Chambers of Commerce (see [www.yellowbook.com](http://www.yellowbook.com)) |
| • Banks | • Consult colleagues and friends for suggestions/experiences |
| • Phones | • Call / email EVSP with questions |
| • Cars/driver’s License  
  [www.usa.gov/motor-vehicle-services](http://www.usa.gov/motor-vehicle-services) | |
| • Houses of worship | |
| • Parks / Recreation Centers | |
| • Libraries | |
| • Shopping | |

*Additional information is available at [http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-information.html](http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-information.html)*
Cross-cultural Activities

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is designed to facilitate educational and cultural exchange. Share your culture while learning about the United States!

How?

Hospital social activities
Local sporting events
Volunteer (may be one-time commitment or on-going)
Community organizations and clubs
Local visitor centers
EVSP emails/tweets/Facebook postings
Local websites (i.e., visitphilly.com, citysearch.com)
Local newspapers: community activities and events
Culture Shock

What is culture shock?
It’s the process of adjusting to a new culture and country. It is a real reaction to new surroundings and can happen to anyone.

• **Phase 1** — “The Honeymoon”
  o Feelings of excitement associated with learning about a new culture

• **Phase 2** — “The Rejection”
  o Homesickness
  o Sadness
  o Anger
  o Overwhelmed

• **Phase 3** — “The Recovery”
  o Improved attitude and feelings about the host country
  o Regain self-confidence

Adapted from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: *Adjusting to a New Culture* https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/adjusting-new-culture
Coping Strategies

• “Plunge” into your host culture and wrestle with the differences.
• Keep an open mind; it is natural to have preconceived ideas and beliefs that come into question while abroad.
• Athletic activities like team sports or taking walks may be helpful.
• Get to know others at your host hospital or community.
• Do not isolate yourself.
• Find a local person with whom you can discuss your frustrations and encounters.
• Learn as much as you can about your host culture.
• Maintain a support structure with others, particularly those going through the same experience. However, do not retreat into a clique" to avoid the discomfort of culture shock.
• Keep a journal. Record your impressions of new experiences and the transformations that are occurring within you.

Adapted from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: Adjusting to a New Culture https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/adjusting-new-culture
Seeking Emergency Assistance

911 Phone Calls
- Call 911 from any phone in cases of a life and death emergency such as fire, accident, or health related event in which immediate care is needed
- Be prepared to inform the 911 operator of the location and nature of event
- 911 operators will dispatch an emergency vehicle to the reported site
- Visits to emergency rooms for illnesses not resulting in hospitalization or clinics not covered by your insurance are expensive and your financial responsibility

Urgent Care Centers
- Walk in clinics for non-emergencies
  - Contact your insurance carrier before seeking treatment at a clinic or walk in center for minor injuries or illnesses

Public Safety Offices
- Hospitals/medical centers generally have offices that are charged with protecting and safeguarding the faculty, staff, students and property of the hospital community.
  - Check with your TPL or GME Office for information
# Important Links

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<th>EVSP Pre-arrival Information</th>
<th><a href="http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-information.html">http://www.ecfmg.org/evsp/pre-arrival-information.html</a></th>
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<td>Wilberforce Pamphlet</td>
<td><a href="https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/LegalRightsandProtections/Wilberforce/Wilberforce-ENG-100116.pdf">https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/LegalRightsandProtections/Wilberforce/Wilberforce-ENG-100116.pdf</a></td>
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U.S. Department of State
Contact Information / Resources

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
State Annex SA-5, Fifth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20522-0505

J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline
1(866) 283-9090

Email
jvisas@state.gov

Exchange Visitor Welcome Brochure
Available on the EVSP website under “Quick Links”
ECFMG Contact Information / Resources

Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)

Mailing Address: 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
General Inquiries Telephone: 215-823-2121
General Inquiries Email: EVSP-Support@ECFMG.org
Website: www.ecfmg.org/evsp/index.html

EVSP Management Staff

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(215) 823-2120

Irene Anthony
Operations Manager and Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)
ianthony@ecfmg.org
(215) 823-2132
Contact Us!

EVSP is here to assist you!
Let us know how we can help you with:

- J-1 visa sponsorship / basic immigration questions
- Training program issues
- Cultural adjustment
- Personal and/or family matters
- General questions, complaints and concerns
Questions?

ECFMG wants to be a resource for you. Do not hesitate to call (215) 823-2121 or send an email to:

EVSP-Support@ecfmg.org