PHOENIX
IMMIGRATION CONSULTING SERVICES

J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa: Exchange Programs for Scholars, Physicians, Interns and Trainees

J-1

State Department-designated exchange programs for scholars, professors, physicians, interns, trainees and students, with J-2 status for your spouse and children.

$ 220	$ 185	2 years	4 years
SEVIS I-901 fee, most J-1 categories	Visa application (MRV) fee	Home-country presence rule, INA 212(e)	Maximum admission from 15 September 2026

Why the J-1

The J-1 visa supports State Department-designated exchange programs for research scholars, professors, physicians in graduate medical training, interns, trainees and students. Your sponsor issues Form DS-2019, which sets your category and dates. Many J-1 visitors are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement under INA 212(e). Phoenix reviews whether the rule applies, identifies the right waiver route and times any EB-2 NIW filing around the waiver.

Key benefits

Many program categories
Research scholar, professor, physician, intern, trainee and student programs.

Spouse can work
J-2 spouses can apply to USCIS for work authorization; children can join you in J-2 status.

Waiver routes
Several waiver routes for the two-year home-residency rule, including Conrad 30 and IGA for physicians.

Path to EB-2 NIW
U.S. experience can strengthen an EB-2 NIW case; an I-140 can be approved even while 212(e) applies.

At a glance

Visa type
Temporary exchange visitor visa

Key document
Form DS-2019 from a designated sponsor

Family
J-2 status; spouse can apply to work

Path to green card
Possible once 212(e) is met or waived

Program overview

- Your program sponsor issues Form DS-2019, which sets your category and program dates
- You then pay the SEVIS fee, complete Form DS-160 and attend a visa interview
- 212(e) does not prevent an immigrant petition but blocks a green card, H or L status until met or waived

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Program categories

Your DS-2019 sets your J-1 category, which affects SEVIS fees and whether 212(e) applies.

Option 1
Research scholar, professor

Academic

Research and teaching exchanges; U.S. research experience can strengthen a later EB-2 NIW case.

Option 2
Physician

Medical

Graduate medical training triggers 212(e); Conrad 30 and Interested Government Agency waivers are available.

Option 3
Intern and trainee

Training

Professional exchange programs run by a designated sponsor, which issues the DS-2019.

Option 4
Student

Study

Exchange study under a designated program; the SEVIS I-901 fee is **$220** for most J-1 categories.

Option 5
Au pair, camp, summer work

$ 35

Au pair, camp counselor and summer work travel categories pay a reduced **$35** SEVIS I-901 fee.

Eligibility requirements

- Acceptance into a designated exchange program and a Form DS-2019
- Payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee
- Sufficient funding and health insurance meeting J-1 requirements
- English proficiency adequate for the program
- Nonimmigrant intent

The DS-3035 waiver processing fee is **$120**.

Good to know

- 212(e) applies to government-funded programs, skills on your country's Skills List, or graduate medical training
- The Exchange Visitor Skills List was revised in December 2024, removing 37 countries
- Visa annotations can be wrong, so confirm whether 212(e) applies before planning
- From 15 September 2026, J-1 admissions are for a fixed period of up to four years, not duration of status

Your application journey

Visa

01 Status review: check DS-2019 and visa annotations for 212(e)

02 Complete the DS-160, pay the SEVIS fee and attend the interview

Waiver

03 Confirm 212(e), if needed via a State Department advisory opinion

04 Pick a route: no-objection, IGA, Conrad 30, hardship or persecution

05 File Form DS-3035 and supporting documents

Green card

06 **EB-2 NIW filing timed around the waiver**

Talk to a Phoenix advisor

We assess your eligibility, compare the routes open to you and manage your application from first consultation to approval.

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Program rules, government fees, processing times and visa-free access can change at any time. Figures are indicative as of November 2026; please confirm current terms with Phoenix Immigration Consulting Services before applying. This fact sheet is for general information and is not legal advice.