

US Forest Service

International Visitor - J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

US Forest Service – International Programs

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/global>

Information, Forms and the Program Handbook are available on the IVP website:

http://www.fs.fed.us/global/visitor_program/

Duty Officer /Emergency Phone (24 hours/day): (202) 821-9154

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The US Forest Service invites international visitors to participate in a broad variety of educational and cultural exchange programs in the United States. International government officials, researchers, specialists, trainees and students interact with US Forest Service staff and their hosting communities while participating in short study tours, meetings, conferences, workshops, ongoing research projects, technical consultations and training programs. These exchange programs are intended to foster greater understanding and promote cooperation among peoples of many cultures and countries. Exchange visitors not only benefit personally from international exchange experiences, they contribute greatly to the education and development of their American counterparts during their stay and share their experiences with their colleagues and friends after returning home.

To facilitate these exchanges, the US Forest Service has received authorization from the US Department of State to serve as an official sponsor of International Exchange Visitor (J-1) Programs. The objective of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.” [Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (Fulbright-Hayes Act of 1961)]. The Exchange Visitor program is often referred to as a “J-1 Program” because the “J-1” class of visa is issued to program participants.

Units hosting international visitors should consult with International Visitor Program staff to ensure that the visitor’s proposed visa classification will be appropriate for the given activity and allow any related payments or reimbursements. The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is unique and has many regulations for participation. Hosting units and international visitors should thoroughly review and understand the Program Regulations. In some cases, it may be appropriate for international visitors to enter the USA on a B-1 visa, which might be the case for meeting attendees.

Our Services

International Programs (IP) provides a number of services to hosting units and international visitors:

🌿 Program Design

International Programs can assist with understanding the numerous regulations affecting international participation in programs.

🌿 J-1 Visas

International Programs screens program applications and invitations, facilitates required security name checks and issues Form DS-2019, the document necessary to apply for a J-1 visa. We also provide pre-arrival guidance and assistance on navigating the visa application process.

🌿 Health Insurance

Health insurance is required for all J-1 visa holders. IP facilitates the payment of premiums for International Visitors which cover medical expenses, emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains in case of death. Insurance meets all US Department of State minimum coverage requirements for J-1 Exchange Visitors.

🌿 Maintenance Allowance - Reimbursements

International Programs can provide debit cards to international visitors for lump sum payments, monthly installments or reimbursements and which allow immediate access to funds. The debit card system eliminates the need for US bank accounts to cash or deposit funds.

🌿 Exchange Visitor Program Orientations

IP provides in-depth program orientations covering J-1 program regulations, cultural adaptation and an introduction to US customs and culture. We also provide ongoing support and assistance with immigration, personal adjustment and administrative issues.

🌿 Required J-1 Program Monitoring and Reporting

International Programs is responsible for monitoring changes of address, program activities, arrival dates and completion dates. As an official J-1 Exchange Visitor Program sponsor, we maintain records and data in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and communicate as necessary with the US Departments of State and Homeland Security.

How to Apply

STEP ONE:

The **Visitor** completes and provides:

- 1) Visitor Application Form
- 2) ARS-230 Form
- 3) Copy of Passport Picture Page
- 4) Resume
- 5) Proof of Funding (if not covered by USG)

The **Host Unit** completes and provides:

- 6) Request for DS-2019 Form/Host Unit Application
- 7) Copy of Draft Invitation Letter
- 8) Budget and Funding Document(s)
For interagency reimbursement/collection agreement, please itemize insurance, monthly reimbursement/stipend payments and include 15% overhead

All forms may be downloaded from our website: http://www.fs.fed.us/global/visitor_program/forms.htm

The Host unit forwards all documents via email to:

Rima Eid, International Visitor Program Specialist (Alternate Responsible Officer)
Tel: (202) 208-3785 Fax: (202) 273-4750 Email: reid@fs.fed.us

STEP TWO:

The US Forest Service International Programs Office and partner agency execute interagency agreement to cover expenses for international visitors.

STEP THREE:

The International Visitor Program Coordinator prepares a Form DS-2019 and sends it via FedEx to the Host Unit. The Host Unit may then forward the DS-2019 directly to the visitor with the official invitation letter.

And BEYOND...

International Programs serves its partners and visitors by providing...

- Pre-Arrival Communication & Services (Visa Application Instructions, Insurance, etc.)
- Arrival and Program Validation (Mandatory Check-in & SEVIS registration)
- Orientation and Adjustment Support
- Payments & Insurance Coverage
- Ongoing Assistance for Extension/Completions/Transfers

Please visit our website or explore the International Visitor Program Handbook for more information about:

- 📄 **J-1 Program Categories, Time Limitations & Eligibility Requirements**
 - 12-month bar, 24-month bar & 30-day grace period
 - Program Categories – Appropriate Activities, Eligibility Requirements
 - Program Design, Invitations & Requests for DS-2019s
 - Dependents – J-2 Status
- 📄 **Pre-Entry and Arrival in the USA**
 - Passports & Expiration Dates, J-1 Visas
 - Entering the USA
 - Validation of Program Participation – Mandatory Check In - Registration and Orientation
- 📄 **Maintaining Exchange Visitor and Lawful Immigration Status**
 - Required Change of Address Notification
 - Length of Stay in the USA & 30-Day Grace Period
 - Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement – 212(e)
 - Travel outside the USA
 - Mandatory Health Insurance
- 📄 **Program Completion and Terminations**
- 📄 **Program Modifications – Extensions, Transfers, Changes & Reinstatement**
- 📄 **Maintenance Allowances – Payments – Debit Cards**
 - Permission for Incidental Employment
 - Social Security & Other Identification Numbers, Taxes
- 📄 **Social Relations, Customs & Life in the USA – Cultural Orientation**
- 📄 **Instructions & Forms**
- 📄 **J-1 Program Orientation Slides & Quiz**

International Visitor Program FAQs

Q Where can I find information on hosting International Visitors?

A Please go to our website: http://www.fs.fed.us/global/visitor_program/, Download the Visitor Handbook, or email or call Brenda Dean (bdean@fs.fed.us, 202-219-9774)

Q How do we apply? Can we recruit participants?

A Please refer to the instruction in this packet or go to the How to Apply section of the website. Host Units should identify program participants. International Programs facilitates the processing of their DS-2019s, but does not provide recruitment or placement services.

Q What types of visas do international visitors have to have in order to volunteer for the USFS?

A Please refer to the charts in this packet. In general, J-1 visitors are permitted to engage in educational exchange and work activities. F-1 Students must have appropriate work authorization from their Universities before working or volunteering in the USA. B-1 (business) visa holders may only volunteer if they are a part of a non-profit voluntary service group and their program was organized prior to entering the USA. Any reimbursements for living expenses must be made by the hosting non-profit group. B-2 (pleasure) visa holders may NOT volunteer or work. Allowing a B-2 visa holder to work, even on a volunteer basis, is a gross violation of immigration and labor laws. Please call Brenda Dean before accepting volunteer services from a non-US Citizen.

Q Are international visitors insured?

A J-1 visa holders are required by the US State Department to have accident and health insurance with minimum coverage amounts. This mandatory coverage also includes medical evacuations and repatriation of remains. Please refer to the insurance section on the website for details. Host units may order this special insurance for international visitors through International Programs by simply providing a job code on the application form. Visitors should also sign a "volunteer agreement" form so they are covered by the Agency's liability insurance.

Q How do we provide an international visitor with a maintenance allowance?

A The easiest way is to request a debit card from International Programs. Monthly allotments may be put on the card, which a visitor may use at ATMs or in retail stores. This method is extremely efficient and helps avoid problems experienced by visitors who do not have Social Security Numbers, bank accounts or other means of cashing or depositing checks. If the host unit does decide to process travel reimbursements or payments through ASC, International Programs will issue a dummy SSN to be used for processing. Another special vendor code will be issued by ASC for other payments.

Q Can international visitors come back again another year?

A Yes, so long as their J-1 Program Category is not subject to the 12-month or 24-month bars. The 12- and 24-month bars should not be confused with the 2-year home presence requirement which prevents coming back to the USA on an H, L, or immigrant visa. The bars on repeat participation apply to Professors, Research Scholars, Trainees and Interns. Please see the website for more information on these regulations related to repeat participation.

Q What are international visitors prohibited from doing?

A J-1 visa holders cannot perform any activities outside their original program proposal/description without written permission from their host supervisor and the J-1 Program Responsible Officer, Brenda Dean. They should fill existing positions which would otherwise be positions filled by U.S. Citizens. Also, they should not engage in work that is considered "commercial" in nature (cashiering at bookstores, concession stands, etc.) In general, they may perform most activities considered to have educational and cultural exchange components, except for serving in law enforcement positions. Any involvement in firefighting activities should be cleared through the J-1 Program Responsible Officer.

Q Can International Visitors drive?

A International visitors may rent and drive vehicles in the United States according to a state's Department of Motor Vehicles regulations regarding non-citizens. Each state has different rules. At this time, we are not aware of a National USFS policy regarding driving USG vehicles.

Q What funds can we use to pay or reimburse international visitors?

A You may use any account or authority that is not specifically designated for U.S. citizen activities only. Volunteers can be reimbursed for any incidental expenses they incur as a result of volunteering. This includes lodging, subsistence, travel, uniforms, materials and supplies, etc. However, when an organization signs a "sponsored volunteer agreement" with the FS to have their members volunteer to work on a project, we cannot reimburse the organization for any of its expenses such as administrative costs, supervision, insurance, etc. We can only reimburse their volunteers for any incidental expenses they incur while volunteering. Normally, the FS can use a challenge cost-share agreement or some other type of agreement if providing funding to an organization to carry out volunteer work.

**J-1 Exchange Visitor Program Categories for
US Forest Service International Programs & Exchanges**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Candidate Profile</u>	<u>Minimum Stay</u>	<u>Maximum Stay</u>	<u>Other</u>
<p>Government Visitor</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To develop and strengthen professional and personal ties between key foreign nationals and Americans and American institutions. These people-to-people programs enable government visitors to better understand American culture and society, and to contribute to American knowledge of foreign cultures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation tours • Discussions • Consultations • Professional meetings • Conferences • Workshops • Travel • Other activities approved by the Responsible Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials • Business persons • Professionals • Editors • Students • Labor leaders • Foreign nationals recognized as influential or distinguished persons selected by US federal, state or local government agencies. 	None	18 months	Participants of programs funded directly or indirectly by the US government in all categories, are subject to the 2-year home country physical presence requirement. Visitors must spend 2 years in their home countries before they are eligible to apply for an H, L or permanent residency.
<p>Research Scholar</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To allow educational and cultural exchange through collaboration with American colleagues that will advance research and educational goals of host and home institutions and organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Research • Teaching • Lecturing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Professors • Research Scholars 	3 weeks	5 years	Subject to the 2-year home presence requirement. Subject to the 12-month and 24-month bars. Those who have been in any J-visa status for more than 6 months of the 12-month period preceding the program start date or those who have been in the Research Scholar or Professor categories for any part of the 24-month period preceding the new program are not eligible. Scholars are not eligible for tenure track positions.
<p>Short-Term Scholar</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To allow educational and cultural exchange through collaboration with American colleagues at research institutions, government agencies, museums, libraries, post-secondary accredited educational institutions and similar types of institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Research • Lectures • Consultations • Observation • Training • Demonstrations • Conferences • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor • Research Scholar • Specialist • Graduate Students • Person with similar education or professional accomplishments 	None	6 months	Short-Term Scholars are not eligible for program extensions. Subject to the 2-year home country physical presence requirement. 12- and 24-month bars do not apply.
<p>Specialist</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To facilitate exchange among experts at scientific institutions, government agencies, museums, corporations and similar institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Consultation • Demonstration of special skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts in a field of specialized knowledge or skill 	3 weeks	12 months	Subject to the 2-year home country physical presence requirement.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Candidate Profile</u>	<u>Minimum Stay</u>	<u>Maximum Stay</u>	<u>Other</u>
<p>Trainee</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To facilitate exchange and provide structured and guided work-based learning program set forth in an individualized Trainee Placement Plan that enhances both the trainee's understanding of American culture and society and his/her skills in his/her occupational field through exposure to American techniques, methodologies, and expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in a structured and guided work-based training program in his/her specific occupational field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One who has a degree or professional certificate from a foreign post-secondary academic institution and at least 1 year of prior related work experience in her/her occupational field, OR One who has five years work experience outside the US in his/her occupational field 	None	18 months No Extensions	<p>Subject to the 2-year home presence requirement. Subject to the 24-month bar. Those who have participated in a Trainee program for any part of the 24-month period preceding the new trainee program are not eligible.</p> <p>FORM DS-7002 – TRAINING/INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT PLAN REQUIRED</p>
<p>Intern</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To facilitate exchange and provide structured and guided work-based learning program set forth in an individualized Intern Placement Plan that reinforces a student's or recent graduate's academic study, recognizes the need for work-based experience, and provides exposure to American techniques, methodologies, and expertise, and enhances the Intern's knowledge of American culture and society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in a structured and guided work-based training program in his/her specific academic field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One who is currently enrolled in and pursuing studies at a degree- or certificate-granting post-secondary academic institution outside the US, OR One who has graduated from such an institution no more than 12 months prior to the start date of the intern program 	None	12 months No Extensions	<p>Subject to the 2-year home country physical presence requirement. Repeat participation in a new internship program is allowed so long as the candidate is still a full-time student or has graduated within 12 months of the start date of the new training program.</p> <p>FORM DS-7002 – TRAINING/INTERNSHIP PLAN REQUIRED</p>

2-year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement - 212(e)

Exchange visitors who participate in the US Forest Service Exchange Visitor Program are usually subject to the 2-year home country physical presence requirement as they are financed in whole or part by US federal government. If an exchange visitor is subject to 212(e), the visitor and his/her J-2 dependents will not be eligible for H, L, or immigrant visas or changes in immigration status from J status to any other status until they have "resided and been physically present" in their country of legal residence or citizenship for a period of 2 years. This requirement does not prevent them from applying for or receiving B, F, J or other classifications of visas.

12-month Bar

To be eligible for a new J-1 program in the professor and research scholar categories, participants can not be in the United States in any other J-visa status for any part of the 12-month period preceding the start date of the new program. The [12-month bar](#) can be waived if the participant is 1) present in the United States no more than 6 months during that period; or 2) was participating in the Short-Term Scholar category. Professors and Research Scholars can transfer from one program sponsor to another within the 5-year maximum program period.

24-month Bar

Individuals who have been present in the United States as a J-1 Professor, Research Scholar or Trainee are not eligible to repeat participation as a Professor, Research Scholar or Trainee until 24 months after the completion of the previous program. There are no exceptions for participation in a program of less than 6 months. Professors and Research scholars can transfer from one program sponsor to another during the 5-year period, but once the continuity of the 5-year period is broken, the 2-year waiting period begins. Transfers in the Training category are not permitted as this would indicate a change of the trainee's program objectives.

30-Day Grace Period

Program duration times are governed by the time limitations described above. However, Exchange Visitors may enter the USA up to 30 days before the official program start date and exit the USA up to 30 days after the official end date. During these 30-day grace periods, the Exchange Visitor may travel or prepare for departure. However, any official duties or employment is not permissible outside the official program dates.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Candidate Profile</u>	<u>Minimum Stay</u>	<u>Maximum Stay</u>	<u>Other</u>
<p>J-1 or F-1 University Students</p> <p>Academic Training for J-1 degree-seeking students sponsored by a university or other sponsor.</p> <p>Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 degree-seeking students sponsored by a university.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>To provide foreign students studying at US degree-granting institutions, to participate in practical training related to their fields of study.</p> <p>US Forest Service International Programs can assist Forest Service units wishing to host these students during their official, approved periods of Academic, Curricular or Optional Practical Training at a US Forest Service facility/site. International Programs works directly with Responsible Officers/Designated School Officials at universities to ensure program compliance and offers guidance to Forest Service Units and Human Resource officers.</p>	<p>Paid or unpaid work, observation or research with the USFS or other host organization or employer.</p> <p>Part-time work during the school year or full-time work during vacation breaks or the months directly following the completion of a degree.</p> <p>Students must have appropriate authorizations for any paid or unpaid work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign students on J-1 or F-1 visas who are already studying in the United States and enrolled in full-time, post-secondary educational programs at accredited foreign universities. Students must have permission to work off campus in a position related to their field of study from the Designated School Official (DSO) overseeing their F-1 visa status, or the Responsible Officer (RO) overseeing their J-1 visa status. Academic advisors overseeing their degree programs must approve the proposed training. The student is in good academic standing at the University and has completed at least one academic year of study. Optional Practical Training and Academic Training must relate to studies but are not required for course or degree program. Curricular Practical training is a required element of a course or degree program and is monitored by an academic advisor/professor. 	<p>None –</p> <p>The length of a training program must be sufficient to meet the negotiated objectives.</p>	<p>F-1 CPT or OPT</p> <p>Up to 12 months</p> <p>J-1 Academic Training: Up to 18 months for bachelor's and master's degree candidates. Post-doctoral training may be up to 36 months.</p> <p>Period of training may not exceed the actual amount of time spent in the J-1 program. Ex: A J-1 program participant studying in a non-degree program lasting only 9 months may only have 9 months of academic training.</p>	<p>Periods of academic, optional or curricular training are cumulative and may not exceed the period of time spent in the formal academic program. Students on Optional Practical Training must apply for and get an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS/Department of Homeland Security. The training must be defined and approved by the DSO prior to applying for this authorization. Thus, the planning process must begin several months in advance of the training period. F-1 Students on Curricular Practical Training are not required to have an EAD, but the DSO submits a record of the training period to immigration officials. J-1 visa holders on academic training are not required to have an EAD, but they must have the approval of their academic training period in writing. The University advises the students on obtaining social security or ITIN numbers.</p>
<p>J-2 or F-2 Visa Holders</p> <p>The spouses or unmarried children under the age of 21 who accompany J-1 or F-1 students to the United States are holders of J-2 or F-2 visas.</p>	<p>J-2 and F-2 dependents can enroll in classes, but they are not full-time students. They do not have the same status or privileges as the principal J-1 or F-2 visa holders.</p>	<p>The spouses or unmarried children under the age of 21 who accompany J-1 or F-1 students to the United States are holders of J-2 or F-2 visas.</p>		<p>Length of stay and status are dependent on the J-1 or F-1 principal's official program dates.</p>	<p>J-2 dependents may apply for Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) and perform unpaid or paid work for any employer with this authorization. F-2 dependents are NOT eligible for EAD cards and are NOT eligible for employment. While they may volunteer for community groups, they may NOT serve as USFS volunteers.</p>

Other J-1 Exchange Visitor Categories

There are other categories of exchange visitors that are not discussed in this document. These include short-term work and travel programs and teacher exchange programs. The US Forest Service International Programs Office is a designated sponsor of the program categories listed above, but does not have authority to sponsor exchange visitors in any other exchange visitor program categories.

For more information on the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, go to:

U.S Department of State website: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/>

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement website: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/students/index.htm>

Other Categories and Visa Classifications

All international visitors associated with the Forest Service must enter the United States with the appropriate visa for the specific activity.

In most cases, it is only appropriate for foreign nationals officially sponsored by the US Forest Service or its official partners to enter the USA with a J-1 visa. However, in some limited cases, a B-1(business) visa for a short official visit or meeting may be appropriate. In all cases, host units and prospective visitors should consult with the International Visitor Program Coordinator prior to planning visits. It is important to understand the distinctions between visa types and immigration classifications before preparing documents or applying for visas.

International Programs, as the US Forest Service's coordinating office for International Visitors and as an official J-1 Exchange Visitor Program sponsor, must maintain strict procedures to maintain the integrity of the US Forest Service International Visitor Program and international visitor exchange activities. The activities of international visitors are regulated not only by immigration law, but also by tax and labor laws. Misinterpretation of terms, laws and visa types might cause host offices and visitors to inadvertently engage in activities that can be considered illegal according to immigration, tax or labor laws. Unauthorized employment, engagement of foreign nationals not holding the appropriate visa status, and the inappropriate use of exchange visitor programs are violations of federal law carrying severe penalties. The regulations are complex and somewhat confusing. Hence, the Office of International Programs provides services and information to ease the process of inviting and hosting international visitors, which are an integral part of fulfilling our mission.

<u>Visa Type & Purpose</u>	<u>Allowable Activities</u>	<u>Prohibited Activities</u>	<u>Candidate Profile</u>	<u>Maximum Stay</u>
<p>B-1 Temporary Visitor for Business</p> <p>A letter from the foreign or U.S. company explaining the reasons for the visitor's stay, providing specific details of the trip, and affirming that the visitor has the financial means to complete the travel as planned may assist in issuance of the visa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct negotiations Solicit sales or investment Discuss planned investment or purchases Make investments or purchases Attend meetings or conventions and participate in them fully Interview and hire staff for a foreign firm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment is strictly prohibited for both B-1 and B-2 visa holders. B-1/B-2 visa holders CANNOT engage in salaried employment in the US or receive payments from a US entity, nor can he or she engage in work freelance or as an independent contractor engage in unsalaried or volunteer activities which would otherwise be paid, or which appear as if there is an employer/employee relationship or direct benefit to the host organization/agency. Enroll in a course of study Participate as a professional in entertainment or sporting events Be a representative of the foreign press, radio, film, journalist or other information media may not engage in their vocation in the US unless they have a nonimmigrant Media "I" visa. <p><u>B-1/B-2 visa holders cannot "volunteer" independently for the US Forest Service.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign nationals wishing to conduct business activities in the U.S. for one year or less must prove to consular and border officials they are entering the U.S. temporarily on behalf of an established foreign company. Foreign nationals who have a permanent resident outside the USA, proof of funding to cover their expenses in the USA as well as other binding social and economic ties which will insure their return at the end of the visit. 	<p>6 months to 1 year</p> <p>The length of validity of a visa and all decisions related to the approval or denial of a visa are at the discretion of a US Consular Officer</p> <p>Visitors from designated countries who meet eligibility requirements for the Visa Waiver Program may stay in the U.S. for up to 90 days without first requiring issuance of an entry visa, but then may not extend their stay or change their status</p>
<p>B-2 Temporary Visitor for Pleasure</p> <p>h</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel - Tourism Visits to Relatives Medical Treatment <p>NOTE: It is extremely difficult to change status from "B" to another immigration status after entering the USA. This is especially true for those attempting to change to "F" or "J" student status after arrival. Prospective students should notify the consular and border patrol officials so that upon entry, a "prospective student" notation can be made on the visa stamp. If attending short recreational courses (cooking, yoga, art) one should specify this at the time of application so that "study incidental to visit: I-20 not required" is noted on the visa.</p>	<p>(This column is shared with the B-1 row above)</p>	<p>(This column is shared with the B-1 row above)</p>	<p>(This column is shared with the B-1 row above)</p>

Form DS-2019

Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status

International visitors invited to participate in programs with the US Forest Service are issued U.S. Department of State Certificates of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status. This document is commonly referred to as a DS-2019 Form. The holder of a DS-2019 may apply for and be granted a J-1 visa, the special visa class for exchange visitors engaging in educational and cultural exchange. It is generally used for visiting researchers, professors, specialists and students sponsored by the US Forest Service who are coming to the United States for programs of limited duration. This visa category is not intended for permanent employment nor may it be used to engage an exchange visitor in an activity that might otherwise displace a U.S. citizen.

Exchange Visitors (EV) classified in J-1 status are governed by regulations of the U.S. Department of State, immigration regulations enforced by the Department of Homeland Security and Program Sponsor policies.

Department of State (DOS)

- **The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)** administers the Exchange Visitor Program in compliance with the regulations found at [22 CFR 62.9[c]]. **ECA** creates and administers federal regulations and policies governing the Exchange Visitor Program. **US Consulates and Embassies** issue “J-1” visas to Exchange Visitors (EV) and “J-2” visas to their dependents.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Within the Department of Homeland Security, three bureaus oversee the majority of immigration activities:

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program Office within the Bureau for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) manages the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**, a data management system used by officials to monitor participants, programs, sponsor activity and issue forms for immigration purposes. The DS-2019, or certificate of eligibility for exchange visitor (J-1) status is issued through SEVIS. ICE also manages immigration investigations, detentions and deportations. **US Customs & Border Protection (CBP)** handles immigration enforcement at the borders and admits aliens into the US in J-1 Exchange Visitor status. **US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** is responsible for adjudicating immigration benefits.

Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors - The US Forest Service

Organizations, educational institutions and government agencies, must apply for and receive designation from the US Department of State in order to conduct an Exchange Visitor Program.

Responsible Officers (RO) and **Alternate Responsible Officers (ARO)** representing the sponsor have access to the **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**, issue DS-2019 forms, and monitor the Exchange Visitor program.

The US Forest Service has obtained specific authorization from the Department of State to invite international exchange visitors in the program categories of Government Visitor, Research Scholar, Specialist and Short-Term Scholar to engage in professional, cultural and educational exchange. Government visitors may take part in a variety of activities sponsored by the US Forest Service. Research scholars and students are able to engage in study, research and scholarly activities that meet the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program eligibility requirements. An exchange visitor's activities must be clearly described by the responsible US Forest Service unit and primary activities must meet the J-1 Exchange Visitor program criteria. Exchange visitors may receive a maintenance allowance for their stay or salary for research positions; however, the J-1 program is an exchange program and cannot be used for general employment purposes.

Eligibility Requirements

All Exchange Visitors are required to meet the following requirements to be eligible for program participation and to maintain lawful immigration status:

- Intent to pursue and engage in only the appropriate, approved activities at the designated site of activity and follow all rules of program and program category
- Intent to return to home country (Establishing non-immigrant intent is determined by consular officer)
- Sufficient funding
- Appropriate background/qualifications for program activity - Professors and research scholars are expected to have appropriate academic or similar credentials. Generally, a prospective exchange visitor professor or researcher should have at least a bachelor's degree with appropriate experience in the field of activity.
- Adequate English
- Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage
- Attend appropriate program orientation offered by program sponsor
- Meet program criteria for participation
- Hold a passport that is valid for at least 6 months into the future beyond their program end date
- Hold a Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) status, known as the DS-2019 Form. This form is issued by the program sponsor for specific program activities.
- Provide all updates required for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a large database accessed by program sponsors, the US Department of State and the US Department of Homeland Security.
- Follow procedures and go through application process and interviews at a US Embassy or Consulate to successfully obtain a J-1 visa to enter the USA.
- Enter the USA successfully by being issued a "J-1" stamp at port of entry.
- Register with the International Programs Office upon arrival and continue to follow guidelines for maintaining Exchange Visitor status to avoid violating immigration regulations.
- Hold an I-94 card marked "D/S" – "D/S" stands for the duration of status and refers to the program period listed in Item 3 on the DS-2019 form. The duration of status is the period specified on the DS-2019 form plus a period of 30 days preceding or following the program dates for the purpose of travel.
- Have appropriate authorization for work – unauthorized employment is a violation of program status. The program can be terminated for unauthorized employment.
- Have health insurance which meets J-1 requirements for self and all dependents.
- Request approval from Responsible Officer for any changes in program activities, program sites prior to making changes.
- Notify Responsible Officer of any changes in address within 10 days of move.
- Abide by the 2-year home country physical presence requirement.
- NOTE: It is unacceptable for exchange visitors to become a burden to the state or a public charge. Accepting forms of State or Federal aid for which non-immigrants are not eligible may compromise legal immigration status. This may include assistance or support for child care, food aid programs or other assistance programs.

Research Scholars:

- May participate in programs of up to 5 years to engage in research and/or teaching
- May NOT hold or be candidates for tenure at an academic institution
- May NOT receive a DS-2019 for a new program if they have been in the US for 6 months or more in any other J Status during the immediately preceding 12 months (this does not apply to short-term scholar category)
- May NOT receive a DS-2019 for a new program if they have been in the US as a Research Scholar or Professor for any part of the 24-month period preceding the new program.
- May change categories between research scholar and professor
- May engage in occasional outside lectures or consultation for compensation with written permission from the Responsible Officer

Short-Term Scholars:

- May participate in programs of up to 6 months to lecture, observe, consult and participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, or other similar types of educational or professional activities.
- Have no minimum length of stay. May NOT extend their stay beyond 6 months
- Are exempt from the 12- and 24-month bars for professors and research scholars
- Although they are technically exempted from orientation requirement, it is required by International Programs

Trainees & Interns:

- May participate in structured and guided work-based training programs of up to 18 months (trainees) or 12 months (interns) so long as an approved Individualized Training Plan is developed and followed and so long as the trainee/intern meets eligibility requirements

DRAFT



1. Family Name: Doe		First Name: John		Middle Name:		Gender: MALE					
Date of Birth (mm-dd-yyyy): 01-01-1965		City of Birth: Capital City		Country of Birth: ALBANIA		Citizenship Country Code: AL					
Legal Permanent Residence Country Code: AL		Legal Permanent Residence Country: ALBANIA		Position Code: 100		Position: CATEGORY - GOVERNMENT					
U.S. Address: 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 12345-1127											
2. Program Sponsor: US Forest Service International Programs						Exchange Visitor Program Number: G-3-10895					
Participating Program Official Description: GOVERNMENT VISITOR; RESEARCH SCHOLAR; SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR; SPECIALIST											
Purpose of this form: Begin new program; accompanied by number (0) of immediate family members.											
3. Form Covers Period:				4. Exchange Visitor Category:							
From (mm-dd-yyyy): 11-21-2006				GOVERNMENT VISITOR							
To (mm-dd-yyyy): 12-31-2006				Subject/Field Code: 01.0701							
				Subject/Field Code Remarks: Forestry Research							
5. During the period covered by this form, the total estimated financial support (in U.S. \$) is to be provided to the exchange visitor by:											
6. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / INS USE OR CERTIFICATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER THAT A NOTIFICATION COPY OF THIS FORM HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (INCLUDE DATE).				7. Brenda Dean				Responsible Officer			
				Name of Official Preparing Form 1099 14th Street, NW Suite 5500W Washington, DC 20005				Title 202-219-9774			
				Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer				Telephone Number 11-21-2006			
				Date (mm-dd-yyyy) of Signature							
8. Statement of Responsible Officer for Releasing Sponsor (FOR TRANSFER OF PROGRAM) Effective date (mm-dd-yyyy): _____, Transfer of this exchange visitor from program number _____ sponsored by _____ to the program specified in item 2 is necessary or highly desirable and is in conformity with the objectives of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended.											
Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer						Date (mm-dd-yyyy) of Signature					
PRELIMINARY ENDORSEMENT OF CONSULAR OR IMMIGRATION OFFICER REGARDING SECTION 212(e) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AND PL 94-484, AS AMENDED (see item 1(a) of page 2).						TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (Maximum validation period is one year*)					
The Exchange Visitor in the above program:						*EXCEPT: Maximum validation period is up to six months for Short-term Scholars and four months for Camp Counselors and Summer Travel/Work.					
1. <input type="checkbox"/> Not subject to the two-year residence requirement.						(1) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time					
2. <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to two-year residence requirement based on:						Date (mm-dd-yyyy)					
A. <input type="checkbox"/> Government financing and/or						Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer					
B. <input type="checkbox"/> The Exchange Visitor Skills List and/or						(2) Exchange Visitor is in good standing at the present time					
C. <input type="checkbox"/> PL 94-484 as amended						Date (mm-dd-yyyy)					
Name _____ Title _____						Signature of Responsible Officer or Alternate Responsible Officer					
Signature of Consular or Immigration Officer _____ Date (mm-dd-yyyy) _____											
THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE FINAL DETERMINATION REGARDING 212(e).											
EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION: I have read and agree with the statement on item 2 on page 2 of this document.											
Signature of Applicant _____						Place _____			Date (mm-dd-yyyy) _____		

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AND CERTIFICATION BY THE ALIEN BENEFICIARY NAMED ON PAGE 1 OF THIS FORM:

Read this page and sign the Exchange Visitor Certification block on the bottom of page 1 and prior to presentation to a United States Consular or Immigration Official.

1. I understand that the following conditions are applicable to exchange visitors:

(a) TWO-YEAR HOME-COUNTRY PHYSICAL PRESENCE REQUIREMENT (SECTION 212(e) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AND PL 94-484, AS AMENDED):

RULE: Exchange visitors whose programs are financed in whole or in part, directly or indirectly by either their government or by the U.S. Government, are required to reside in their home-country for two years following completion of their program before they are eligible for immigrant status, temporary worker (H) status, or intracompany transferee (L) status. Likewise, if exchange visitors are acquiring a skill which is in short supply in their home country (these skills appear on the "Exchange Visitor Skills List") they will be subject to the same two-year home-country residence requirement. The requirement also is applicable to alien physicians entering the United States to receive graduate medical education or training. The U.S. Department of State reserves the right to make the final determination regarding 212(e).

NOTE: MARRIAGE TO A U.S. CITIZEN OR LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT, OR BIRTH OF A CHILD IN THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT REMOVE THIS REQUIREMENT.

(b) Extension of Stay/Program Transfers: A completed Form DS-2019 is required in order to apply for a program extension or program transfer, and must be obtained from or with the assistance of the sponsor.

(c) Limitation of Stay: STUDENTS - as long as they pursue a full course of study towards a degree, or if engaged full-time in a non-degree program, up to 24 months. Students for whom the sponsor recommends academic training may be permitted to remain for an additional period of up to 18 months after receiving their degree or certificate; post-doctoral academic training may be approved by the sponsor for a period not to exceed 36 months; **SECONDARY STUDENTS** - up to 1 academic year; **TRAINEES** - 18 months; **FLIGHT TRAINEES** - 24 months; **TEACHERS, PROFESSORS, and RESEARCH SCHOLARS** - 3 years; **SHORT-TERM SCHOLARS** - 6 months; **SPECIALISTS** - 1 year; **INTERNATIONAL VISITORS** - 1 year; **ALIEN PHYSICIAN** - the time typically required to complete the medical specialty involved but limited to 7 years with the possibility of extension if approved by the U.S. Department of State; **GOVERNMENT VISITOR** - up to 18 months; **CAMP COUNSELOR** - up to 4 months; **SUMMER TRAVEL/WORK** - up to 4 months; **AU PAIR** - 1 year; **INTERN** - up to 12 months.

(d) Documentation Required for Admission/Readmission as an Exchange Visitor: To be eligible for admission to the United States, an exchange visitor must present the following at the port of entry: (1) a valid nonimmigrant visa, unless exempt from nonimmigrant visa requirements; (2) a passport valid for 6 months beyond the anticipated period of admission, unless exempt from passport requirements; (3) a properly executed Form DS-2019 (with 2-D barcode) which must be retained by the exchange visitor for readmission within the period of previously authorized stay. Exchange visitors are permitted to travel abroad and maintain status (e.g., obtain a new visa) under duration of the program as indicated by the dates on this form (see item 3 on page 1 of this form).

(e) Change of Visa Status: Exchange visitors (and dependents) are expected to leave the United States upon completion of their program objective. Exchange visitors who are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement are not eligible to change their status while in the United States to any other nonimmigrant category except, if applicable, that of official or employee of a foreign government (A) or an international organization (G) or member of the family or attendant of either of these types of officials or employees.

(f) Insurance: Exchange visitors are required to have medical insurance in effect for themselves and any accompanying spouse and minor children on J visas for the duration of their exchange program. At a minimum, insurance coverage shall include: (1) medical benefits of at least U.S. \$50,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of U.S. \$7,500; and (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of U.S. \$10,000. A policy secured to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds U.S. \$500 per accident or illness, and must meet other standards specified in the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, 22 CFR Part 62.14. For details, consult your program's Responsible Officer (see item 7 on page 1 of this form).

2. **EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION:** I have read and understand the foregoing, including the Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement, and agree to comply with the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, as amended (22 CFR Part 62). I certify that all the information on the Form DS-2019 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I agree that I will maintain compliance with the insurance regulations as specified in 22 CFR 62.14, including maintaining health insurance coverage for myself and my J-2 dependents throughout my J-1 program. **I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain my exchange visitor status.** For the purposes of 20 U.S.C. 1232g and 22 CFR 62, I authorize the U.S. Department of State-designated sponsor and any educational institution named on the Form DS-2019 to release information to the U.S. Department of State relating to compliance with Exchange Visitor Program regulations.

NOTICE TO ALL EXCHANGE VISITORS

To facilitate your readmission to the United States after a visit in another country other than a contiguous territory or adjacent islands, you should have the Responsible Officer of your sponsoring organization indicate on the TRAVEL VALIDATION BY RESPONSIBLE OFFICER or Alternate Responsible Officer section of the Form DS-2019 that you continue to be in good standing.

The signature of the Responsible Officer or the Alternate Responsible Officer on the Form DS-2019 is valid for up to one year* or until the end date in item 3 on page 1 of this Form, or to the validation date authorized by the Responsible Officer, whichever occurs sooner.

***EXCEPT:** Maximum validation period is up to six months for Short-term Scholars and four months for Camp Counselors and Summer Travel/Work.

* Under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended, the U.S. Department of State has been delegated the authority to designate Exchange Visitor Programs for U.S. Government agencies, and for public and private educational and cultural exchange organizations. The information is used by Exchange Visitor Program sponsors to appropriately identify an individual seeking to enter the United States as an exchange visitor. The completed form is sent to the prospective exchange visitor abroad, who takes it to the U.S. Consulate (Embassy) to secure an exchange visitor (J-1, J-2) visa. Responses are mandatory. An Agency or organization may not conduct or sponsor, and the respondent is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 45 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, researching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: U.S. Department of State, A/RPS/DIR, Washington, D.C. 20520.

PAGE ONE

Section 1:

- NAME, GENDER - This should include accurate information about the Exchange Visitor (EV) and match passport information.
- DATE OF BIRTH, CITY OF BIRTH, COUNTRY OF BIRTH, COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE, ETC. – Please make sure this is correct.
- POSITION CODE & POSITION – This refers to the EV’s status in his/her home country.
- US ADDRESS - The US Address portion will be completed with 1099 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. This is the IP office address. The visitor’s current US address will be put into the SEVIS system upon verification of arrival at their program/activity site.

Section 2:

- PROGRAM SPONSOR & EV PROGRAM # - US Forest Service its program number
- PURPOSE OF THIS FORM: Here you will see “Begin new Program” or “Amend Previous Form”

Section 3:

- PROGRAM DATES – Please review these carefully. The EV may enter the USA up to, but no earlier than 30 days before or no later than 30 days after the start date. The EV must leave the USA within 30 days after the completion date.

Section 4:

- EXCHANGE VISITOR CATEGORY: Government Visitor, Research Scholar, etc.
- SUBJECT/FIELD: a general category for EV’s activities.

Section 5:

- FUNDING SOURCES: This lists the amount required and demonstrated for the EV’s stay.

Section 6:

- CERTIFICATION: The Immigration Officer will place a stamp here verifying the EV is in J-1 visa status upon entering the USA. It should be valid for “D/S” the duration of stay of the EV’s program which is indicated in Section 3.

Section 7:

- RESPONSIBLE OFFICER – This will include the name, address and signature of the Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who prepared the DS-2019 Form.

Section 8:

- TRANSFER OF PROGRAM – This section is used if an EV transfers from one program to another within the approved limits of the program category.
- PRELIMINARY ENDORSEMENT OF CONSULAR OFFICER REGARDING 212e
The consular officer reviewing a visa application will complete this portion of the form. If an EV is subject to the 2-year home country resident requirement, it will be indicated here. *For more information, please see section on Two-Year Home Presence Requirements included in this handbook.*
- TRAVEL VALIDATION – After entering the USA and validating program participation, the EV must have a travel validation before s/he exits the country again if there is an intention of returning to the USA in J-1 status. This will be signed by the RO or ARO prior to trips outside the USA. *For more information, please see section on TRAVEL included in this handbook.*
- EXCHANGE VISITOR CERTIFICATION: *The exchange visitor must read Page 2 of the Form DS-2019 and sign the document. By signing, the exchange visitor agrees to abide by all federal regulations pertaining to this program as outlined on Page 2.*

PAGE TWO

Exchange Visitors (EV) must read the regulations as they are described on Page 2 of the DS-2019. The EV must sign Page 1, acknowledging that s/he has read, understood and agreed to abide by these regulations. Any willful acts of non-compliance can be considered terms for termination of the program and deportation from the United States.

- 1) Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement – Section 212e of the Immigration and Nationality Act
- 2) Extension of Stay/Program Transfers
- 3) Limitations of Stay
- 4) Documentation Required for Admission/Re-Admission as and Exchange Visitor
- 5) Change of Visa Status
- 6) Insurance

Financial Support

Exchange visitors invited to participate in the activities of the US Forest Service or its official partners must demonstrate that sufficient funding exists to support themselves and their program activities. Funding for course fees, living expenses, mandatory insurance, maintenance allowance, support of dependents and any other relevant and required expenses must be obligated and demonstrated at the time an international visitor is issued an invitation and DS-2019. Funding may come from multiple sources, but all sources must be defined. A minimum of \$1150 per month must be demonstrated to cover these expenses. This amount is reduced for exchange visitors who are provided free housing at a Forest Service facility.

J-1 Exchange Visitors may be financed by:

- ✿ Program Sponsor – US Forest Service
- ✿ US Government Agencies
- ✿ International Organizations
- ✿ The Exchange Visitor's Government
- ✿ The Binational Commission of the scholar's country
- ✿ Other Organizations
- ✿ Personal Funds
- ✿ Combinations of any of the above



Acceptable documents to demonstrate proof of financial support

Acceptable proof of financial support

- ✿ Letter of Invitation from Program Sponsor – US Forest Service Unit & International Programs
- ✿ Grants or Letters of Sponsorship from associated US Government Agencies
- ✿ Sponsorship documents from International Organizations
- ✿ Sponsorship letters/documents from the Exchange Visitor's Government
- ✿ Sponsorship letters/documents from the Binational Commission of the scholar's country
- ✿ Letters of support from Other Organizations
- ✿ Official, original bank statements & letters from Banks verifying Personal Funds
- ✿ Combinations of any of the above

