



## Employment Authorization for J-2 Dependents

J-2 spouses and children are eligible to apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in order work in the U.S.

- Work can be full-time or part-time, at any job, for any employer (except J-2s cannot practice medicine even if they have a license).
- The income from the employment can be used to support recreational, cultural, and/or travel activities but cannot be used to support the J-1 principal exchange visitor.

### Eligibility

- J-1 principal exchange visitor is maintaining status and [I-94](#) reflects valid J-1 status
- J-2 applicant is maintaining status and [I-94](#) reflects valid J-2 status
- Income will not be used to support the J-1 principal exchange visitor

### Work Authorization

It can take 3-5 months to obtain an EAD. Please keep this in mind when applying for your initial EAD and renewing your EAD as a J-2 spouse or child cannot begin working in the U.S. until the **EAD has been received** and it is **within the employment authorization dates** indicated on the EAD.

USCIS can authorize J-2 employment for the length of time that the J-1 exchange visitor has permission to stay in the U.S. or for one year, whichever is shorter.

- Permission for a J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor to stay in the U.S. expires on the date shown on the I-94. If the I-94 shows “Duration of Status” or “D/S”, permission to stay expires on the date shown on the DS-2019.

If your permission to stay in the U.S. expires, so will your EAD. A pending application for a new EAD does not authorize you to continue working if your current EAD has already expired. You cannot continue working until you receive your new EAD and it is within the authorization period indicated on the EAD.

### Applying to USCIS

The following is a list of recommended application materials; USCIS may request additional documentation.

- [I-765 Application Fee](#) (Pay by Check, Money Order, or Credit Card)
  - *Credit Card Payment:* Submit the [Form G-1450](#) to authorize a credit card payment
  - *Check/Money Order Payment:* Make payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
- [Form I-765](#): Type information into the form, print, and sign in *black* ink.
  - Item 20: Enter the appropriate eligibility category: (c) (5)
- Two identical color U.S.-style passport photographs taken within the last 30 days
  - 2” x 2”in accordance with [Department of State photo requirements](#)
  - Do not reuse old photos or photos used in passport/visa applications. If USCIS requests new photos, it will delay OPT application processing.
- A written statement (with supporting evidence) that explains why employment is desired; indicating the source and amount of support for the J-1 exchange visitor; and specifically stating that income earned from employment will not be used to support the J-1 exchange visitor.
- Copy of your (J-2) current DS-2019

- Copy of J-1's current DS-2019
- Copy of your current [electronic I-94](#) or front and back of current paper I-94
- Copy of the J-1's current [electronic I-94](#) or front and back of current paper I-94
- Clear (color) copy of your valid passport ID page(s) and any renewal, extension, amendment, or correction pages
- Clear (color) copy of most recent U.S. entry visa or change of status I-797 approval notice (Exception: Canadians)
- A photocopy of the marriage certificate (for a spouse) or birth certificate (for a child) as proof of the relationship with the J-1, and thus of eligibility for J-2 status.

**EAD Renewal Applications:**

- A copy of the front and back of your last EAD

**Optional:**  [Form G-1145](#): Place this form on the top of your application if you would like to receive an email/text message when USCIS accepts your application at the Lockbox

It is recommended that you make a copy of your complete application prior to mailing it.

Applications for J-2 employment authorization are filed with the [USCIS Lockbox Facility with jurisdiction over the J-2's place of residence](#).

**Social Security Numbers**

Applicants can apply for a [Social Security Number](#) (SSN) on the I-765 (see questions 9-13). Applicants who receive their approved EADs from USCIS should receive their Social Security card from the Social Security Administration within the following two weeks. A SSN is required for your employer to put you on the payroll.

**I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification**

All employees in the U.S. must complete the [I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form](#) with their employers within 3 days of starting a job. Your EAD is proof of both your identity and your permission to work in the U.S. You will have to update your I-9 with your employer if you renew your EAD.

**Taxes**

The earnings of J-2 dependents are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes and Social Security contributions. Employers are required by law to withhold taxes and Social Security contributions from your paychecks. By April 15 each year, you must submit an income tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and may also have to submit tax forms with the state. The return determines if you owe additional taxes or if you are entitled to a refund.

ISSS does not provide tax advice. You must consult a tax professional.

- [ISSS Tax Obligations](#) (webpage)
- [Local Tax Preparation Professionals](#) (handout)
- [Internal Revenue Service website for Foreign Students and Scholars](#)
- [IRS Publication 519, "US Tax Guide for Aliens."](#)
- [Colorado Department of Revenue](#)
- [NAFSA Tax Resources for International Students and Scholars](#)
- [NAFSA Federal Income Tax Brochure](#)

# Sample Support Letter for J-2 Employment Authorization Application

[Your street address]  
[Your city, state, and zip code]

[Date]

USCIS  
[Street address]  
[City, state, and zip code]

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the J-2 dependent of the J-1 Exchange Visitor [J-1's name] and I wish to apply for permission for employment authorization.

My [spouse/parent] receives [indicate source of funding—e.g., stipend, salary, or grant from source] funding sufficient to provide for [his/her] expenses.

Our monthly budget is the following:

\$ [ ]	Rent and Utilities
\$ [ ]	Food
\$ [ ]	Health Insurance
\$ [ ]	Miscellaneous (clothing, transportation, recreation)
\$ [ ]	TOTAL

As this budget shows, we have enough money to live on. J-2 work permission would enable me to gain work experience and earn income that I could use to fund [my/my families'] participation in recreational and cultural activities during [my/our] stay in the United States.

The financial support that my [spouse/parent] receives for [his/her] J-1 program is adequate to cover our expenses. Any income derived from my employment is not needed to support my J-1 [spouse/parent].

Sincerely,  
[Your signature]  
[Your name]