

# J-1 Visa Application Process Guide for General Agriculture Exchange Visitor (EV) (Intern/Trainee)



## About J Visas.

WFE is certified by the U.S. State Department as a Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act program, which permits WFE to sponsor J-1 nonimmigrant exchange visitor programs and visas. The J-1 visa is not a work visa, but can be used for cultural exchange work-experience programs. A J-1 visa sponsored by WFE is valid only for participation in the WFE Program, with a WFE Host. As part of the J-1 visa processing, WFE can access SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information System) and use it to generate the DS-7002 and DS-2019 forms. As a program sponsor, WFE is responsible for maintaining secure and accurate data in SEVIS, providing medical insurance to participants, and monitoring participation in the WFE Program. WFE also has the authority to terminate a program and the J-1 visa itself based on intern/trainee status, behavior, etc.

## Program Requirements and Restrictions:

- ✓ Screened and approved by a WFE partner and/or host (in most cases)
- ✓ Intermediate or B1+ English skills
- ✓ Age 18-30 (with limited exceptions)
- ✓ Student or recent graduate in the same field as the internship, plus at least one year of practical experience

### OR

- ✓ No education, but at least 5 years of practical experience in the field

## Reasons WFE may reject your application:

- Lack of experience
- Insufficient English language skills
- Field of study
- Age
- Likelihood of visa denial
- Participation in J-1 program of the same type within the previous two years
- Rule 212e ([Exchange Visitor Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement](#))
- Lack of approval/cooperation from a WFE Partner
- Criminal background
- Insufficient documentation

## 1. Apply

WFE accepts applicants for placement as well as applicants with confirmed placement offers. As a requirement of the U.S. State Department, WFE can only accept applicants from established partner organizations, with very limited exceptions. When submitting the application, include:

- Completed [application form](#)
- [Medical Statement](#) (completed by licensed physician)
- CV/resume and/or Diploma (if applicable)
- Offer letter from host (if applicable)
- Copy of identification page of passport and any previous visas
- Any other documentation, links, or photos related to your application

## 2. Placement and DS-7002 form

If a host offers you a placement, WFE will create your DS-7002 form (Training/Internship Placement Plan) and send it to you by email. You must sign the DS-7002 form and return it to WFE by email before we can process your visa documents. The DS-7002 describes the placement offer, location, rate of pay, supervisor, and other terms of the placement. If there will be any deductions from pay, fees charged by the host, or other supplemental information, WFE will share these at the same time. At this time, candidates for the Wine Program must pay the first installment of the WFE Program Fee.

## 3. Visa Document Transmission and DS-2019

After the DS-7002 form is signed, WFE will create and send (by email or DHL) a package of documents you will need to apply for a J-1 visa. This package will include:

- ✓ DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status [J-1 Nonimmigrant])
- ✓ Letter of support to the consular section
- ✓ DS-7002 form (signed by WFE staff, host, and you)
- ✓ Receipt for payment of the SEVIS (I-901) fee (**Wine Program only**)
- ✓ Summary of health insurance coverage provided by WFE
- ✓ Region-specific cultural exchange materials and important information related to the Exchange Visitor Program and J-1 visa application process
- ✓ U.S. State Department Exchange Program Welcome Brochure

## 4. Visa Application

When you have your SEVIS Id number and Program Number (shown on your DS-7002 form) you can begin the visa application process:

- Find the [embassy or consulate](#) where you will apply for your J-1 visa and review the Nonimmigrant Visa application procedures. Review the Nonimmigrant Visa application requirements and procedures for the consulate where you will apply. **It may be possible to apply for a visa outside of your home country. WFE recommends contacting the NIV unit of the consulate where you intend to apply for confirmation.**
- **DS-160:** Complete the [Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application \(DS-160\)](#). Be sure to check the requirements for the DS-160 before beginning the form, as it is usually necessary to create an account, upload a photo, etc. Make sure you are applying for a Nonimmigrant Exchange Visitor (J-1) Visa, as the wait is usually shorter for an interview for this visa type.
- **Pay the I-901/SEVIS fee:** Pay the I-901 (SEVIS) fee to the Department of Homeland Security, which is charged for your SEVIS record. For Wine Program candidates, WFE prepays this fee.

- **Pay the MRV fee:** The consulate charges an MRV fee (~USD185) for the interview and visa printing. The MRV fee must be paid in local currency. Sometimes it is necessary to pay the fee before scheduling an interview, but sometimes the fee is collected at the consulate before the interview appointment. Check the website of the [embassy or consulate](#) where you will attend the interview for more information about how to pay this fee.
- **Schedule a visa interview appointment (if required):** After the DS-160 is complete, you can schedule an interview for the J-1 visa through the [consulate's website](#). You can check the wait times for visa interviews [here](#). Reserve your interview appointment as soon as you can, as appointments may be made for weeks or months in advance. Inform WFE of your interview date right away.

### Preparing for your Visa Interview

When you go to your visa application interview, be sure to bring printed copies of the required documents:

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ DS-7002 and DS-2019 forms
- ✓ Letter of support from WFE
- ✓ DS-160 confirmation page
- ✓ Receipts for payment of the SEVIS fee and MRV fee
- ✓ Other forms required by the consulate

### Visa Interview Tips

Be prepared to discuss:

- Your professional goals, your plans for after the Program, and why this opportunity is important to you.
- How this program will help you pursue your professional goals when completed
- Your ties to your home country, demonstrating that you do not intend to emigrate to the U.S.

#### Remember:

- The dates on the visa show when you will be permitted to enter the U.S., and the dates on the DS-2019 show how long you can stay in the U.S.
- Your visa can expire anytime, as long as the dates on the DS-2019 are current.
- If you intend to leave the U.S. and return again during your Program, it may be possible to request a multi entry visa. Do this during your interview if you need to.
- You are permitted to enter the U.S. up to 30 days before your start date and exit the U.S. up to 30 days after your end date.
- For more information about the visa and the 30-day grace period, see [this page](#).

**VISA APPROVAL OR DENIAL:** Please contact WFE immediately to let us know the result of your visa interview! If your visa is approved, the consulate will print the visa inside. They will then either return the passport to you by mail or ask you to come pick it up in a few days. If the visa is denied and you believe you are qualified, you are entitled to reapply. Please see [this page](#) regarding visa denials.

**Visa approval or denial is the sole decision of the consular officer.**

## 5. Plan Your Travel

### YOU MUST SEND YOUR TRAVEL PLANS TO WFE BEFORE YOU ARRIVE!

Failure to notify WFE of your arrival date can cause major problems with your visa status, insurance, ability to apply for a Social Security number or Driver License, and your host's ability to pay you! WFE recommends you make your travel plans **ONLY** after you have received your passport with the visa inside, and you have coordinated your arrival date with WFE, your Partner, and your host.

### Requirements for Entering the U.S.

When you are traveling, bring your passport and DS-2019 Form in your carry-on luggage. Don't leave them in your checked bag. You will need to show these documents when entering at the U.S. border.

Full vaccination against COVID-19 is no longer required to enter the U.S. Please check [here](#) for current COVID-19 testing requirements for travel from your area.

## 6. Arrival and Validation

### MAKE SURE WFE KNOWS YOUR ARRIVAL DATE!

If you have informed WFE of your arrival date, your SEVIS record will be validated accordingly. The next steps to maintaining your visa status are below:

- **IMMEDIATELY** – Email, text, or call WFE to confirm arrival in the U.S.
- **3 days after arrival** – Get your [I-94 admission number](#)
- **10 days after arrival** – Apply for a Social Security number. Start the process online [here](#) and take the completed application to a [local SS office](#). You should receive the SS card in 10-14 days.

If you already have a SSN from a previous stay in the U.S., that is the one you should use for life. You do not need to apply for a new SSN.

- **Before starting training/work**- Complete payroll paperwork (W-4 Form) with your host (see WFE Tax and Payroll Fact Sheet for more information). As a J-1 visa holder, you are subject to income tax but are not subject to deductions for Social Security or Medicare.
- **7-30 days after arrival** – You will receive a medical insurance packet from WFE by email and by mail. Please notify us if you do not receive it within three weeks of your arrival in the U.S.
- **Halfway into your Program** – Complete a Program Report. Let us know how it's going!
- **30 days before your Program ends** – Tell us your travel plans for departure and complete a Final Report. Let us know how it went, and if you had a good experience. We want each Program to be successful!

Following Program Rules and communicating with WFE are very important to maintaining your visa status.

Maximum program length is currently 12 months for all WFE Programs. Participants are entitled to a [30-day grace](#) period before and after their program dates.