

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



## 2024 WINE PROGRAM APPLICATION DEADLINE: 14 JUNE 2024

WFE strongly recommends you find your own placement offer. WFE cannot guarantee placements for independent applicants.

### Program Requirements and Restrictions:

- Ages 18-32 (with few exceptions)
  - University level degree or equivalent in the same field of study as the internship, plus at least one year of practical experience
- or**
- Current student status in the same field of study as the internship (six months minimum enrollment prior to start date) plus at least one year of practical experience
  - At least five years of professional experience in the field of training

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 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

Complete the [online application](#) and upload the following documents:

- ✓ [Medical Statement](#) (completed by licensed physician)
- ✓ CV/resume and/or Diploma (if applicable)
- ✓ Offer letter from host/winery
- ✓ Copy of identification page of passport and any previous visas

## 2. DS-7002 form and Fee Payment

If a host winery accepts you as a trainee/intern, 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. At this time, you must also pay the first installment of the Program Fee (see section titled **2024 WFE Wine Program Fees**).

## 3. Visa Document Transmission

After the DS-7002 form is signed and the required fee is paid, WFE will create and send (by email) 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 winery, and you)
- ✓ Receipt for payment of the SEVIS (I-901) fee
- ✓ 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.
- **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 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.
- **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. Do this as soon as you can, as appointments may be made for weeks or months in advance. Please inform WFE of your interview date right away.
- **Go to your visa interview:** During the interview, be prepared to discuss your intentions for your training while in the U.S., how this program will help you pursue your professional goals when it is complete, and your ties to your home country which demonstrate that you do not intend to emigrate to the U.S. When you go to your visa interview, make sure you take 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 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 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.

**The decision to approve or deny a visa is the 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 the winery'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 both WFE and your host winery. If possible, we strongly advise that you arrive in the U.S. at least three weeks before your program start date to allow you time to apply for the Social Security number (see below.)

### 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.

## 2024 WFE WINE PROGRAM FEES

The 2024 WFE Wine Program Fee for up to four (4) months of internship/training is <b>USD2700</b>	o <b>USD1700</b> -payable at the time the DS-7002 form is signed WFE will not send your visa application documents until this fee is paid
	o <b>USD1000</b> -payable upon visa issuance, before arrival in the U.S. WFE will not validate your SEVIS record until this fee is paid

### What's included in the WFE Program Fee



- ✓ J-1 visa application processing
- ✓ DS-2019, DS-7002, and SEVIS documentation
- ✓ SEVIS fee (USD220)
- ✓ Medical insurance coverage for up to four months during your stay in the U.S.
- ✓ Tax return assistance through Sprintax following your Program

### What's NOT included in the WFE Program Fee:

- x Shipping fees if original documents are required
- x MRV fee (~\$180, paid to consulate in local currency)
- x Fees for extended programs (over four months)
- x Tax return services other than Sprintax
- x Travel, housing, utilities, auto insurance, and other incidental costs

The fees shown here are the only fees charged by WFE. There are no application fees, no fees to your host, and no hidden charges by WFE for a program lasting up to four-months.

If your visa is denied or your application canceled prior to arrival in the U.S., you may request a refund of USD1000 of the initial USD1700 fee.

 If your Program Fee has not been paid before your arrival, WFE cannot guarantee your medical insurance or program activation, which will prevent you from obtaining a Social Security number. 

### Extended Programs (over four months):

Programs lasting more than four months will be assessed the following additional fees:

**Extension fees per month after four months: USD400**

**Extension fee for eight months (paid in advance of extension for a full 12-month program): USD2700**

## 6. Arrival and Validation

### MAKE SURE WFE KNOWS YOUR ARRIVAL DATE!

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

- **IMMEDIATELY** – Email 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.

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.