

### J-2 Employment Authorization

USCIS may grant an individual in J-2 status permission to accept employment in the United States. An individual in J-2 status may not submit an application for employment authorization with USCIS until they have entered the U.S. A J-2 is not eligible to be employed until they have received employment authorization from USCIS and have been issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Authorized employment for individuals in J-2 status is limited to the dates listed on the EAD. Once the application has been received by USCIS, it may take three months or more to be approved.

### Application Process

Individuals in J-2 status are required to apply for employment authorization to work in the U.S. The application includes the following required documents, which must then be sent to the appropriate USCIS Service Center. Contact an advisor at the International Office if you have questions or require assistance with this application.

- Completed Form I-765**  
[USCIS Immigration Forms](#) Be sure to print out the instructions and note that the Form I-765 is a form-fillable PDF. It is recommended you do not hand write the form.
- Check or Money Order – See USCIS for Fee Amount**  
Fee information can be found on the USCIS Immigration Forms website, and is also located within the downloadable instructions for the Form I-765. When sending a personal check, your name and address must be printed on the check. Temporary checks are not accepted.
- Prepare a letter to USCIS**  
A letter explaining the reason(s) you are requesting employment authorization is a required component. A sample letter can be found below.
- Copies of Form DS-2019**  
Photocopy both the J-1's and J-2's DS-2019 forms. Do not send the originals.
- Copy of J-2 visa stamp** (found in passport)
- Copy of passport biographic page**
- Copies of I-94 card (front and back, for both J-1 and J-2)**  
The I-94 card is the small white card stapled in your passport. Do not send the original.
- Two (2) U.S. passport-style photos**  
Photos should be recent. Write your name and I-94 number in pencil on the back of both photos.
- Copy of Marriage Certificate**  
The marriage certificate must be translated into English. If you, or someone you know has performed the translation, please also include a statement certifying the accuracy of the document and the fluency of the translator.
- Copies of previous EAD cards**  
If you have been previously granted employment authorization (EAD) by USCIS, please include photocopies of prior cards.

Remember to make photocopies of your entire application prior to sending it. Mail all of the required documents to the appropriate USCIS Service Center (the address can be found in the Instructions for the Form I-765). It is advisable to mail the application from a U.S. Post Office by certified mail/return receipt requested.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Q. How long may I work?**

**A.** J-2 dependents with employment authorization may work until the date on the EAD card or until the J-1 principal visitor completes his or her program, whichever is earlier. J-2 dependents may apply to renew work authorization, as long as the J-1 visitor remains in status. If the J-1 receives an extension of stay, the J-2 dependent must re-apply for work authorization once the extension has been granted.

**Q. May I still work if the status of the J-1 ends?**

**A.** If the J-1 visitor discontinues their program at Northwestern University or changes to another visa category, the work authorization for the J-2 dependent will be made invalid. Legal work authorization for J-2 dependents is always dependent on the status of the J-1 principal.

**Q. When should I renew my employment authorization document (EAD)?**

**A.** It is recommended that you renew your EAD at least three months in advance of the expiration date of your current EAD due to the processing time at USCIS. If you are applying for a renewal of your EAD, you cannot work beyond the previously authorized date until you receive a new EAD. To prevent a gap in your employment, it is recommended that you apply as early as you can for the renewal of your EAD.

**Q. What is the process for renewal of my EAD?**

**A.** J-2 dependents may apply to renew work authorization, as long as the J-1 visitor remains in status. If the J-1 receives an extension of stay, the J-2 dependent must re-apply for work authorization once the extension has been granted. The J-2 should follow the same process of application as they did for their initial application.

**Q. Can I work full-time?**

**A.** Yes, J-2's who have a valid EAD can work full-time or part-time.

**Q. Where can I work?**

**A.** Not limited.

**Q. Do I have to pay taxes?**

**A.** Yes, J-2's are subject to social security taxes, federal income taxes and, where applicable, state and local income taxes. It is advised that you consult with a qualified tax consultant.

**Q. Do I need a social security number?**

**A.** Yes, anyone who earns wages in the United States must have a social security number for taxpayer identification purposes. J-2's are not eligible to apply for a social security number until they have received their EAD.

**Sample J-2 Employment Authorization Letter**

Your name  
Your mailing address

Date

USCIS Service Center  
Nebraska Service Center  
P.O. Box 87765  
Lincoln, NE 68501-7765

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to apply for employment authorization on the basis of my J-2 status. I am the dependent (wife or husband) of (name), a J-1 (student or scholar) at Northwestern University.

My (husband's or wife's) DS-2019 shows that we have available \$42,000\* to support us in the U.S. including \$30,000\* from (name of source) and \$10,000\* from (name of source). Of this, \$25,000\* goes for the payment of University tuition and fees. With the money withheld for taxes and the payment of (\$ amount) each year for health insurance, we have about \$16,000\* or about \$1400\* per month for living expenses. Our monthly budget is as follows:

\$ 800\* for rent and utilities  
\$ 400\* for food  
\$ 200\* for miscellaneous expenses (clothing, transportation, etc.)

As the budget shows, we have enough to live modestly, but there are no funds left for expenses that are not essential. I need to work because (Note: insert your reason for employment; please remember that income from employment is to be used to support the family's customary recreational, educational, and cultural activities and related travel).

I declare that the money I earn will be used for cultural, recreational and related travel activities and will not be used to support my J-1 spouse.

Sincerely,

J-2 signature  
J-2 name

**\*Use the actual figures listed on your Form DS-2019.**