



**J1 EXCHANGE TEACHER  
PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE**



## WELCOME

Congratulations on being appointed to teach in the United States of America!

We are glad that you choose International Expert Resources (IER) teacher exchange program for your J1 Exchange Visitor Program.

This J1-Exchange Teacher Guide contains critical information about immigration regulations, programs and services for new exchange teachers. This guide will prepare you with new life ahead in the U.S. Be sure to read it through and contact us for any specific questions that you may have or contact host school directly with school related questions. This Guide is intended to address some of the most common questions applicable to all teachers.

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## 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the teacher program is to enroll exchange visitors who teach full-time in primary and secondary accredited educational institutions. The Exchange Visitor Program is administered by the U.S. Department of State to promote the interchange of American and foreign teachers in public and private schools and the enhancement of mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries. In this program, you are the ambassador of your own country. You can share your culture and educate your students, American colleagues and local community about your country. You can also participate in cross-cultural activities with Americans in schools and communities, and to return home ultimately to share the experiences and increased knowledge of the United States. Such exchanges enable our exchange teachers to understand better American culture, society, and teaching practices at the primary and secondary levels, and enhance American knowledge of foreign cultures, customs, and teaching approaches.

We want your stay in the United States to be a positive experience. Please contact us or review the official website of the U. S. Department of State for J-1 information, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for additional information which can be found at: <http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/teacher>.

## 2. PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- ü Read all of the information in the J-1 Exchange Teacher Pre-Arrival Guide. All of the items listed below are discussed in further detail in this guide.
- ü Verify that all the information on your DS-2019 is correct. Note the program begin date and notify IER and Host school immediately if your travel plans have changed.
- ü Pay the SEVIS Fee online at [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee)
- ü Apply for a J-1 Visa at the nearest U.S Consulate or Embassy to your home residence. You may apply for J-1 visa at third party country but the visa process may take longer to issue.
- ü Purchase or make plans to purchase medical insurance coverage. The U.S Department of State requires all individuals who enter the United States in J-1 status to have medical insurance for the Exchange Visitor and any J-2 dependents (See J-1 Health Insurance Requirement p.17).

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- ü For Filipino Citizen, schedule a mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) hosted by Commission on Filipinos Overseas upon visa is issued.
  - ü Housing Arrangement, IER will coordinate with you and your host school with the housing arrangement. You will be responsible for signing the housing lease if required.
  - ü Transportation Arrangement with host school.

### 3. APPLY FOR J-1/J-2 VISA

**SEVIS FEE.** All J-1 visa applicants must pay the SEVIS fee of \$180. The SEVIS fee must be paid at least **THREE BUSINESS DAYS** before the scheduled visa application interview at the U.S. Consulate or embassy. For most individuals, the SEVIS fee can be paid by electronically completing the Form I-901 and paying with a credit card through the Internet at [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee).

You will need the information from your DS-2019 in order to complete the SEVIS Fee payment.


Please print the electronic receipt immediately after payment has been made. You must show the receipt to the consular officer at the time of the interview. Spouses and dependent children (J-2s) do not pay this fee. The SEVIS fee is not a visa application fee. It is used to operate and maintain the SEVIS system. The fee is non-refundable, even if the visa application is denied.

A valid J-1 visa is required to enter the United States on the Exchange Visitor Program. For information on processing times and procedures, visit the U.S. Department of State at [travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types\\_1267.html#7](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1267.html#7).

***A personal interview is required, so you will need to schedule your appointment as soon as possible. Be aware there also could be substantial delays due to security checks, so please plan your travel arrangements accordingly.***

Immediate family members (spouse and children under the age of 21) who will accompany you to the United States may apply for J-2 visas using the DS-2019 forms enclosed. If your family will join you later, a DS-2019 form will be issued by IER upon request.

**Canadian Citizens** are not required to obtain a visa stamp for the U.S embassy generally but must pay for the SEVIS fee at least three (3) business days prior to arrival at a port of entry into the U.S. If you are a Canadian Landed Immigrant, please check



with the nearest U.S Consulate about whether or not you require a J-1 visa stamp, as requirements vary depending on country of citizenship.

## **VISA INTERVIEW PROCEDURE**


To ensure you are ready to apply for your J-1 visa, please review the checklist below.

- ü Locate the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country by reviewing the website at <http://www.usembassy.gov>.
- ü Review the Embassy's website for the non-immigrant visa process and fees.
- ü Before you receive the J-1 Visa packet, you should begin gathering documents and making preparations to file your application.
- ü Make arrangements to **apply for your J-1 visa immediately!** During the busy summer months and holidays, processing times will be delayed.
- ü Make arrangements to pay the **\$140 VISA APPLICATION FEE** per visa applicant.
- ü Make arrangements to pay the **\$180 SEVIS FEE** for the J-1 visa [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee).
- ü Book your visa interview

## **CHECKLIST FOR J-1/J-2 VISA APPLICATION**


Bring these documents with you at the day of visa interview in the consulate office.

1. Original, signed DS-2019 Form Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) status. The J-1 applicant should sign the bottom of the first page of all forms and submit them for the visa application. The DS-2019(s) will be returned to you to present at the U.S port of entry
2. A separate DS-2019 form for each of your accompanying dependents/spouse (if applicable).
3. Receipt showing payment of the SEVIS fee (J-1 visa only) and visa application fee for each visa applicant.

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4. Visa application form for each visa applicant.
  5. Passport(s) valid for at least 6 months into the future, for each visa applicant.
  6. Proof of ties to your home country. Consult the website of your local U.S. Consulate/Embassy for suggestions.
  7. Proof of financial support. Bring the signed school contract to show the financial support.
  8. Two passport-size photos for each visa applicant often required (check with U.S. Consulate).
  9. Marriage certificate and birth certificates (in English with attached transaction) of children carrying their own passport (J-2 visa only).

### **VISA INTERVIEW TIPS**

1. **Ties to your home country.** Under U.S. law, all applicants for non-immigrant visas, such as the J-1 visa, are presumed to be immigrating to the U.S. and will be denied a visa unless they can convince the Consular Officer that they intend to return home. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country. “Ties” to your home country are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence, such as job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. Examples of evidence which shows ties to your home country include property ownership, bank statements from accounts, rental agreements or leases, financial investments (i.e. retirement, stocks, etc.) that you own or will inherit, family owned businesses, personal vehicle title, birth certificates of immediate family members who live in your home country, letter from previous employer indicating intent to rehire you upon your return, and any other evidence that you will return.
2. **Speak for yourself.** Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview, unless they are applying for J-2 visas. The consular officer wants to interview you not your family. You must be polite, but you should also speak with assertiveness and confidence.

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3. **Know how the IER Program fits into your career plans.** If you are able to articulate the reasons that you want to participate in the IER Exchange Teacher program and how your participation in this program will benefit your professional career upon your return to your home country, you will most likely be able to convince the consular officer of your non-immigrant intent. You should also be able to explain the IER Program to the Consular Officer, the processes you undertook to become part of the Program, and a brief description of the IER Program.
  4. **Be brief.** Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. What you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point.
  5. **Additional Documentation:** It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be quickly read or evaluated. Remember you will have 2-3 minutes of interview time, and you must have your evidence organized and clearly labeled.
  6. **Maintain a positive attitude:** Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. You should be polite at all times, but assertive. If you are denied a J-1 visa, you should ask the officer for a list of documents he/she would suggest you bring to overcome the refusal and try to get the reason(s) you were denied a visa in writing.
  7. **Truthfulness:** You should answer all questions on your visa applications and to any question that the consular officer asks you completely and fully. Misrepresentations or falsification of information can lead to a permanent bar from entering the United States.
  8. **Financial Resources:** If you intend to bring your family with you to the United States, you should be prepared to have evidence to show financial resources available for your family members to support themselves in the United States. This can include bank statements, investments, title to property, etc.





## **J-1 VISA GRANTED/DENIAL**

Upon completion of the interview, you will be notified by the officer if you are granted or denied the J-1 visa. Once it is granted, you will be informed to leave the passport, so visa can be stamped on it. Generally, it takes about 5-8 business days for you to receive your passport with visa stamped on it. If you are denied, you should be receiving a letter explaining the denial. If not, ask for the specific reason of denial in writing. Additionally, ask the consulate officer what documents you can present when you reapply for the visa to override the original denial. Contact IER and your host school immediately.

Some may be asking for additional documents, if so, you will need to follow the instruction given by the consulate officer to complete the visa interview.

## **J-2 VISA INFORMATION**


A J-2 visa is a temporary, nonimmigrant visa that allows a spouse or unmarried child under age of 21 to accompany a J-1 teacher to the U.S. and then return home in furtherance of the cultural exchange objectives of the IER Program.

## **J-2 VISA QUALIFICATION**

Only legal spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21 are eligible for this J-2 sponsorship. Children who marry or who turn age 21 during the course of the Program will need to leave the U.S. and obtain their own visa as they will no longer be eligible for sponsorship in J-2 status.

If your spouse or child is not planning to accompany you full-time, he or she might consider obtaining a visitor's visa or traveling under the Visa Waiver Program. For further details on these visas, visit the U.S. embassy web site for your area. Before applying for J-2 visa for your family members you should consider:

- You are required to maintain financial support for yourself and your J-2 dependent family members.
- All J-2 dependents of Exchange Teachers are required to maintain adequate health insurance policy while their J-2 status remains active, at your own expense.

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- A spouse or child who plans to enroll in full-time, post-secondary education in the U.S. will need to enter under a student visa.

### **APPLYING FOR THE J-2 VISA**

Family members must apply for the J-2 at a U.S. embassy or consulate in their country of citizenship or legal permanent residency and must meet all of the requirements as set forth for all non-immigrant visa holders. J-2 visa applicants should be able to demonstrate to a U.S. Consular Officer proof of the following:

- They have binding ties to a residence in a foreign country which they have no intention of abandoning and that they are coming to the U.S. for a temporary stay.
- Any spouse is legally married to the J-1 holder, and any children are unmarried and under the age of 21
- They have sufficient financial resources to cover all expenses in the U.S.
- The level of evidence required by a Consular Officer may vary greatly depending on the applicant's individual circumstances.

## **4. J-1 PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION SEMINAR**

This section is for the J-1 Exchange Visitors from the Philippines.

Filipinos leaving the country to participate in the (Exchange Visitor Program) EVP are required to register with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO). Part of its registration is the attendance to Pre-departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) to inform Exchange Visitor Participant (EVP) about the conditions and responsibilities as a J-1 visa holder.

**Please do not finalize your travel arrangements until you have undergone registration with CFO.**

Please visit CFO's website at <http://www.cfo.gov.ph> for detail.



## 5. PROGRAM DATES AND ACTIVITY

Your application for a J-1 visa using the enclosed Form DS-2019 implies acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined on the second page of the form. You will be admitted to the United States to engage in the activity described in item 4 of the form and for the period of time specified in item 3.

**Note:** The period of your stay may be extended after your arrival, at the request of host school for the maximum period of time indicated. For J-1 teacher, your maximum limit is THREE YEARS.

## 6. ARRIVAL/ADMISSION

Please present the following documents to the U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at the U.S. port of entry.

- Passport(s) containing a valid J-1 visa (or J-2 visas for accompanying family members).
- Signed Form DS-2019(s) for you and any accompanying family members.


Foreign visitors to the U.S. arriving via air or sea no longer need to complete paper Customs and Border Protection Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record or Form I-94W Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Record. You will need to print your form I-94 form online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/consent.html> and print the record for your SSN application.

### The officer should return:

- Passport(s).
- Stamped Form(s) DS-2019 for you and any accompanying family members.

Even though you may possess a J-1 visa, the Immigration Official makes the final decision about your admission into the U.S. If the Immigration Official has questions about the admissibility of a foreign national, they may allow the person into the U.S. for 30 days for further inspection at local USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) offices. ***This is known as a deferred inspection. Should this occur, please contact IER. In the event of a denial of entry into the U.S., you should contact IER immediately.***

**Entry program:** Customs officers will review your travel documents such as your passport and visa, and ask you questions about your stay in the U.S. You will then be asked to put both index fingers onto a glass plate that will electronically capture two fingerprints. Customs officers will also take your picture.



**Exit program:** When you leave the U.S. you will be asked to scan your documents and repeat the finger printing process at an automated self-service machine. An exit confirmation will be added to your travel records to demonstrate compliance and record status for use in future visits to the U.S. **It is critical that ALL J-1's and J-2's go through the U.S. VISIT Exit Program every time they leave the U.S.** You should also turn in your I-94 card if any, especially if finishing your exchange program. By submitting this card you record your compliance with J visa regulations and protect your status in future visits to the U.S.

## Arrival Information

You are required to inform IER staff on your flight arrival information three days of your departure in order for IER to coordinate the airport pick up with your host school. Fail to do so will result of no pick up at the airport. Please book your flight arrival before or by 3p.m, if your host school is located within three hours or more of driving distance from the arrival airport and arrive before or at 6p.m if host school is located within three hours or less of driving distance from the arrival airport. For arrival later than 7p.m, you will be required to book a one night stay near by the airport. It is recommended to book the lodge that offers free shuttle service to and from the airport. You can book the lodge at [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com). You are required to inform IER or host school about your lodge information for the next day pick up.

## What to bring

These are the documents/things that you will need to bring with you.

- Official travel documents: Passport and DS2019 form
- Proof of insurance if you will obtain one for yourself and or your family
- Home Country Driver's license
- An International Driver's license is highly recommended
- Money to cover at least one month living expense (See item 9 Living Expenses)
- Personal Medication if any
- Local US Address and Emergency Contact Information

Recommend to bring with you

- Health Record
- Cultural materials for your classroom and community



## 7. US OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

**Social Security Number.** In addition to the official documents being issued to you (DS-2019 and J-1 visa) you will need to apply for your Social Security Number (SSN) after 10 days of arrival. A SSN is required for your payroll and taxes in the United States. Upon arrival, you are required to notify IER, so your arrival record can be validated with SEVIS system. Without validation of your arrival record, you will NOT be able to apply for the SSN. If you already have an SSN, there is no need to apply again. Be sure to keep your SSN card in a safe place. It is NOT recommended to carry your SSN card with you at all time.

**Driver's license.** It is highly recommended to know how to drive in the U.S. Bring your home country's driver's license and obtain an International Driver's License. Once you have received your social security number, you will be able to apply for the Driver's license at the local Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV). For more detail about driving in the U.S, visit <https://www.usa.gov/visitors-driving>.

**Bank Account.** Most US schools require you to submit your bank account information for direct deposit of your payroll. Some major banks like Wellsfargo Bank or Bank of America will allow you to open a bank account without SSN however, most of local community banks do require SSN. It is recommended to set up a direct bank deposit for your payroll, so you do not need to go to the bank each time to deposit the check. A bank direct deposit form can be requested at the bank and give it to the Payroll Staff in the school. You will also need the bank account to write a check to pay for your bills, such as utilities bills, house rent...etc.


## 8. COST OF LIVING

### Housing Information

Prior to your arrival, you will be required to secure your housing in the U.S. IER and host schools may be able to locate an initial housing for you. If not, usually host school will provide some local housing information for you and you will be responsible to sign the lease. It is recommended to share the housing with others to save the cost including the utilities bills, cable TVs...etc. In addition, living with local resident can also enhance your cultural experience in the U.S. These websites provide a good information for the local house rental. [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com) and [www.Apartmentfinder.com](http://www.Apartmentfinder.com). For a small town school area, you can also visit local chamber of commerce for the housing information.

### Transportation Information

Car is an essential tool in the U.S. Most of US cities do not have public transportations except a very large city, like New York or Los Angeles. Initially, most host schools will help you with a temporary car pool. Once you are established there, it is strong recommended to have your own transportation. A used vehicle can be purchased at a variable price ranging from \$1000 to more than \$10,000 depending on the year, model and the




condition of the car. To buy a car, you can visit Kelly Blue Book at [www.kellybluebook.com](http://www.kellybluebook.com) or Edmund at [www.edmund.com](http://www.edmund.com) to get some ideas of the car value for both new and used car at the local market.

You will need to purchase a car insurance once you have a car in the U.S. Cost of auto insurance is vary depending on the car, driving record...etc. You can talk to several auto insurance companies to compare the prices.

## Expenses

You will need to bring at least first month of living expenses (\$2000 or more is recommended) with you to cover the following items before you get paid.

- **First Month Rent.** Rent is varied depending on several factors, such as location, size, sharing with others...etc. If there is a school housing available (generally at the rural area), it usually costs much less, like \$100-300 per month. If your host school is located in a big city, the rent can be more than \$1000 per month if live alone. The normal arrange is around \$350 to \$1000 for a shared housing and will be much higher for a one person accommodation. First month rent and a security deposit (usually one month rent) are due when you sign a lease at the lease office.
- **Utilities (Electricity, Gas, Water).** Most of utilities companies require a SSN when you apply for their services. You are required to apply for the utilities services when you move in to your apartment/house. Without SSN, utilities companies require you to pay for the deposit when service is set up. The security deposit varies depending on the company and the cost is also varied by location and usage. The bill is due once a month and usually can be paid by a credit card or a check.
- **Furniture (Bedding, Chair or Table).** Most of the housing in the U.S is unfurnished. Generally stove and refrigerator are provided but nothing else. You will need to prepare some money to buy a bed or mattress initially.
- **Health Insurance.** You are required to purchase a mandatory J-1 health insurance upon arrival. If IER's partner insurance plan is chosen, it will be \$60 per month for each J-1/J-2 holder.
- **Transportation.** Initially, you are most likely to share the ride with others. If you are car pooling with others, you can share the gas cost. Gas price is varied by location and car usage.
- **Car Insurance.** If you purchase a car, you are required to buy an auto insurance as well. Price is vary with the coverage and vehicle type.
- **Food.** Cost will depend on dining habit (Dine out will be more expensive generally than eat at home) and type of food purchase as well as how many people you will feed.

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- **Phone.** A mobile phone is recommended and you can get a prepaid phone plan for \$30-50 a month with a basic phone and text service. A mobile internet service can be added on with additional fee. You will need to purchase a new phone with a prepaid plan if you don't have an unlocked phone that you can bring from your home country.
  - **Travel/Entertain.** Bring additional money to cover your personal travel and entertainment.

## 9. TAXES AND PAYROLL

Upon signing a contract with your host school, you will be informed on how much your salary will be each month and how many pay period. Many schools send out the payroll twice a month that will be 24 pay period and some will do a 10 month pay period instead of 12 month. Your ANNUAL GROSS salary is the same. It is just divided differently. If there is any uncertainty, you should contact school payroll personnel or human resources staff for detail.


### Federal Tax

Many countries have a bilateral income tax treaty with the U.S. that may minimize or eliminate the possibility of double taxation (in which you would be required to pay taxes in both the U.S. and your home country). Of these treaties, more than 30 contain an article extending the tax treaty to teachers. Each treaty that offers an exemption varies as to the time period of exemption and eligibility requirements. IER does not offer advice as to whether a teacher will qualify for any specific exemption or treaty, and thus each teacher is responsible for determining his or her eligibility. For more general information on possible tax treaties between your home country and the United States, please check out the Tax Treaty link on [www.windstar.com/public/treaties.html](http://www.windstar.com/public/treaties.html).

U.S federal and state income taxes will be withheld if your country does not offer a tax exemption or is not qualified under the treaty.

### FICA (Social Security and Medicare Taxes)

U.S. government rules about FICA withholding are somewhat complicated. Generally, the U.S. assesses Social Security and Medicare taxes (FICA) at 7.65% of gross pay. However, since you are a teacher temporarily in the U.S. as a non-resident under a J-1 visa, then you may be exempt from paying FICA tax for a certain period, provided you complete and submit the appropriate form with your annual tax return. The U.S. government allows J-1 visa holders an exemption for FICA for two calendar years (January - December), or any part of two calendar years. Thus, for many initial-term IER teachers, FICA is not withheld from paychecks until January of the **second school year**. However, if you have been in the U.S. under an F, J, M or Q visa in two of the past six years, you will not be eligible for the exemption and FICA will need to be withheld from your paycheck. In order to claim the "exempt person" status, you must complete and file



Form 8843, Statement for Exempt Individuals, with your tax returns for the years you are exempt from FICA taxes. Family members holding a J-2 visa who choose to work in the U.S. are not exempt from FICA and thus employers will begin making deductions immediately upon receiving compensation.

### **Social Security Agreement**

There are approximately 20 countries that have a Social Security Agreement with the U.S. in place. Social Security Agreements help to coordinate the U.S. retirement program with comparable programs in other countries. If you are from a country with an agreement in place, and meet the minimum eligibility requirements, you may receive credit in your country for the contributions you make to the U.S. Social Security program. For additional information on Social Security and the countries that have agreements, refer to the Social Security Administration's website at <https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Alien-Liability-for-Social-Security-and-Medicare-Taxes-of-Foreign-Teachers,-Foreign-Researchers,-and-Other-Foreign-Professionals>.

### **Teacher Retirement System**

In the U.S, teachers under the school payroll are generally required to contribute to the Teacher Retirement System in most of States. Some states will exempt J-1 visa holder from Teacher Retirement Contribution. You can check your status with the Teacher Retirement System at the state you are teaching. If you are required to contribute to the Teacher Retirement System, you can file for a refund once you are no longer teaching at that state.


## **10. HEALTH INSURANCE**

U.S Department of State regulations require all J-1 Exchange Visitor to have medical insurance for themselves and J-2 dependents (spouse and children under age of 21) accompanying them for the duration of the program. Willful violation of the insurance requirement is a violation of J-1/J-2 status and can result in the termination of your J-1/J-2 program, in accordance with immigration regulations. Your insurance must meet the following requirement:

1. Medical benefits of \$100,000 per accident or illness
2. A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.
3. Medical evacuation in the amount of \$50,000
4. Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000

Most of host schools will provide a standard health insurance for the J-1 teacher and its coverage will most likely satisfy the requirement set by the Department of State except





for the repatriation and medical evacuation portion. IER provides the insurance coverage that meets all the requirements of Department of State for J-1 Exchange Visitor. You can purchase the insurance plan through IER or elsewhere.

**IER Health Insurance Coverage Period.** If you decide to purchase IER's health insurance plan, you are required to inform IER prior to your arrival, so coverage will be in effect once you are in the U.S. You will be covered during summer months when your contract is renewed in the program. If you are no longer in the program, the coverage will be in effect until your visa is cancelled. Upon completion of your program term with IER, your insurance coverage will be ended on the same date that your visa is ended.

**Health Insurance Premiums.** Premium is varied based on your individual circumstances. Some host school may share the cost with you and some don't. Generally, if IER's insurance is used, the bill will send to your host school for one year payment, then school can deduct it from your payroll monthly.

Envisage Global Insurance is the third party that will process for your claim and the plan is administered by Seven Corners and Underwritten by Lloyds, London. For any information, you can email [info@envisageglobalinsurance.com](mailto:info@envisageglobalinsurance.com), phone 1888-247-1387.

## 11. 212(E) TWO YEAR HOME RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Based on US Department of State guideline. Certain exchange visitors (J-1) are subject to a two-year home-country physical presence requirement which requires you to return to your home country for at least two years at the end of your exchange visitor program. This is also known as the foreign residence requirement under U.S. law, Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212(e). If you are unable to return to your home country to fulfill the two-year requirement, you must obtain a waiver approved by the Department of Homeland Security prior to changing status in the United States or being issued a visa in certain categories for travel to the United States.

If you are subject to 212(e), it does not mean that you cannot return to the U.S. for two years in any nonimmigrant status, (e.g. F student or B tourist). However, it does mean that you cannot **change status** in the U.S. or obtain a work visa (H), or an intra-company transferee visa (L). You are also not permitted to **adjust status** while in the U.S. to immigrant visa/lawful permanent resident status (LPR); receive an immigrant visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate; or receive a temporary worker (H), or fiancé (K) visa.

For more information about the two year home residency requirement, visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student/residency-waiver.html>



## 12. TEACHING LICENSE

You are generally required to receive a teaching license in the state that your host school is located for public schools. Some states have a license that is specifically designed for J-1 teacher while some states don't. As J-1 teacher under IER's Exchange Teacher Program, you must be a licensed teacher at your home country and have taught at school setting for three years or more. Most state department of education will issue a provisional license based on your current credential at your home country. You are required to submit an educator licensure application to the department of education for review. Then specific requirement for the standard license will be stated on the review result for you to complete. While some states will issue a standard license based on teaching experiences and teaching license at your home country. Each state has different rule and regulation for the educator license. You will need to check with the department of education for more detail.

These are the general documents required for the educator licensure application in the U.S. All documents must be in English or English translated authenticated copy.

- **An Original Detail Course by Course Evaluation Report** by a private accredited agency. You can check with department of education for the list of the agencies or visit NACES for a list of members <http://www.naces.org/members.html>.
- **Official Transcripts from University and College.** We recommend that you request several copies of the official transcripts from the schools you have graduated or attended.
- **An educator license** issued from the country of residency or nationality.
- **Educator License is in good standing.** An original written statement provided by the authorized licensing agency in the issuing country that the credential is in good standing, and has not been revoked, suspended, or sanctioned for misconduct and is not pending disciplinary or adverse action.
- **An English language proficiency**
  1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL). Some states require TOFEL and or
  2. Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an institution of higher education outside the United States where the primary language or instruction was English or
  3. Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an institution of higher education in the United State
- **Teaching Verification Form.** This should indicate on years of teaching experience and days per calendar year worked, and grade level taught.
- **Educator License Application** for the state that you will apply for it.

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- **Educator License Application Fee.** Fee is varied in each state.

You will need to contact individual state department of education for detail information of their licensure application process.

**HAVE A WONDERFUL STAY IN THE USA!**

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