



J1 EXCHANGE TEACHER PRE-ARRIVAL GUIDE

WWW.IEXPERTRESOURCES.COM

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 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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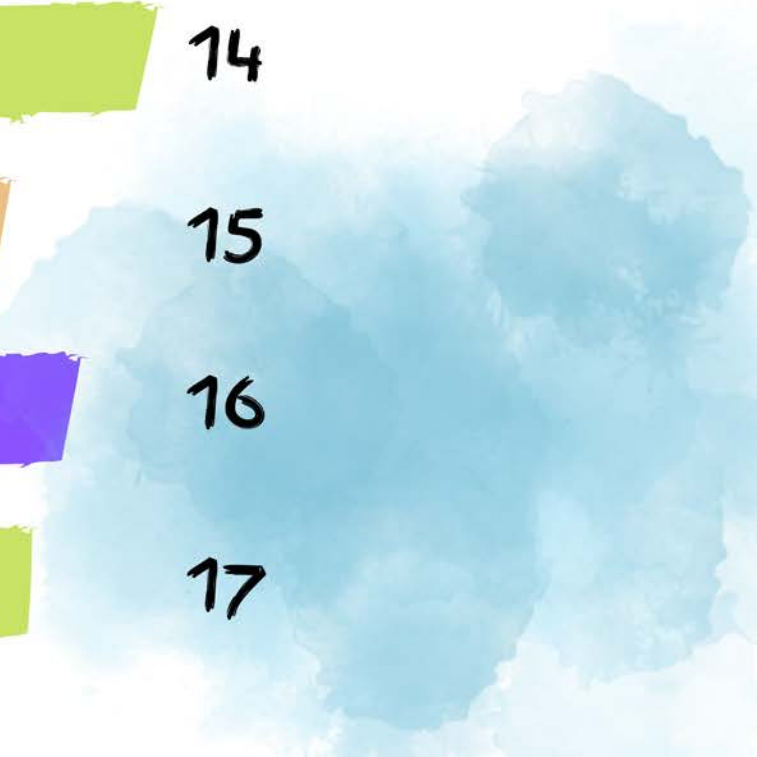
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OVERVIEW



THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXCHANGE TEACHER PROGRAM IS TO ALLOW EXCHANGE VISITORS TO TEACH FULL-TIME IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S. THIS PROGRAM IS ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT UNDER BRIDGEUSA PROGRAM 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 HOME 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.](http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/teacher)



PRE-ARRIVAL

Checklist

- Read the information provided in this guide to have a head start
- Verify all the information on your DS2019 is correct and notify your sponsor and host school for any travel change to the U.S
- Pay SEVIS fee online at www.fmifee.com/i901fee
- Apply J1 visa at your home country or residence. You may apply the visa at the third party country but the process may take longer
- Enroll to IER J1 mandatory Group health insurance prior to departure
- House and Transportation arrangement with host school and keep IER informed
- Filipino Citizen requires to attend a mandatory Pre Departure Orientation Seminar prior departure
- USCIS requires EVP to bring a minimum of \$3000 for initial moving cost. Expect double for family member(s)

APPLY J1 VISA

SEVIS FEE

All J-1 visa applicants must pay the SEVIS fee of \$220. 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 at 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.

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.

APPLY J1 VISA



VISA INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

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

- Locate the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your home country by reviewing the website at <http://www.usembassy.gov>.
- Review the Embassy's website for the non-immigrant visa process and fees.
- Before you receive the J-1 Visa packet, you should begin gathering documents and making preparations to file your application.
- Make arrangements to apply for your J-1 visa immediately! During the busy summer months and holidays, processing times will be delayed.
- Make arrangements to pay the \$160 VISA APPLICATION FEE per visa applicant.
- Make arrangements to pay the \$220 SEVIS FEE for the J-1 visa www.fmjfee.com/i901fee.
- 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 applicant
 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 translation) of children carrying their own passport (J-2 visa only).
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APPLY J1 VISA



VISA INTERVIEW TIPS

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.

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.

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.



APPLY J1 VISA

Be brief: Because 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.

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.

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.

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.

Financial Resources: If you intend to bring your family with you to the US, you should be prepared to have evidence to show financial resources available for your family members to support themselves in the US. 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.

APPLY J2 VISA

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.
- 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.

ARRIVAL

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 Non Immigrant 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

You are required to coordinate with host school for arrival pick up and be sure to inform IER staff on your flight arrival information as well. 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. 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

PROGRAM DATE AND ACTIVITIES

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 initial maximum limit is THREE YEARS. A one time two years extension may be available.

Identification Cards

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). 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. Visit SSA website at <https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/>

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.

Living Cost

ESTIMATE MONTHLY COST OF LIVING PER PERSON (ACTUAL COST WILL VARY BASED ON LIVING STYLE AND AREA OF TOWN)

Security Deposit for Housing/Utilities (may require for lack of credit history in the U.S. and may be refundable when lease ended)	\$500 and up
Rent- shared apartment or teacher housing	\$200-\$600
Rent - living alone or house	\$800 and up
Rent- shared apartment or teacher housing	\$200-\$600
Internet - depending on bandwidth	\$70-150
Electricity	\$50 - \$200
Water	\$50 - \$100
Food	\$250 and up
Cell Phone	\$80
Child Care - per child	\$800 and Up
Transportation - car loan or lease, gasoline - \$3.70 per gallon	\$400 and Up
Car Insurance	\$50-100

Other Important Information:

These sites provide more information about cost of living, tax calculations.

<https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

http://www.suburbancomputer.com/tips_calculator.php

<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/IRS-Withholding-Calculator>

Tax and Payroll



ESTIMATE MONTHLY SALARY DEDUCTION

Federal Tax Deduction

Taxable income between \$9225 to \$37450 for single filing	15%
Taxable income between \$37450 to \$90750 for single filing	25%
Standard deduction per dependent	\$1000
Social Security Tax - employee portion	6.25%
Medicare Tax - employee portion	1.45%
State Payroll Tax - vary by state	6%/Average
J1 Teachers are exempt from Social Security and Medicare taxes for the first year and first semester of the second year of their program. Deduction begin in January of second year of teaching	
Teacher Retirement - can request refund on your contributed portion once no longer teaching at that state	6% to 12%
Retiree Health Care - vary by state	1%
School Health Insurance Plan - general provide broader coverage for routine health check up, dental and vision	\$0-750/mo

NOTE: IER cannot legally provide you with tax advice or endorse services from tax accountants. The information provided here is to assist you in your research only. It is your responsibility to understand your US tax obligation.

Tax Exemption Status:

Some countries have tax treaties with the United States whereby a portion or your entire income is exempt from certain taxes for up to 2 years for first-time exchange visitor teachers. (Be sure to understand what your tax obligations would be after your exemption period expires). We have provided links to the following sites which may help with your research:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/international-businesses/united-states-income-tax-treaties-a-to-z>

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
 4. 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.
- Educator License Application Fee. Fee is varied in each state.

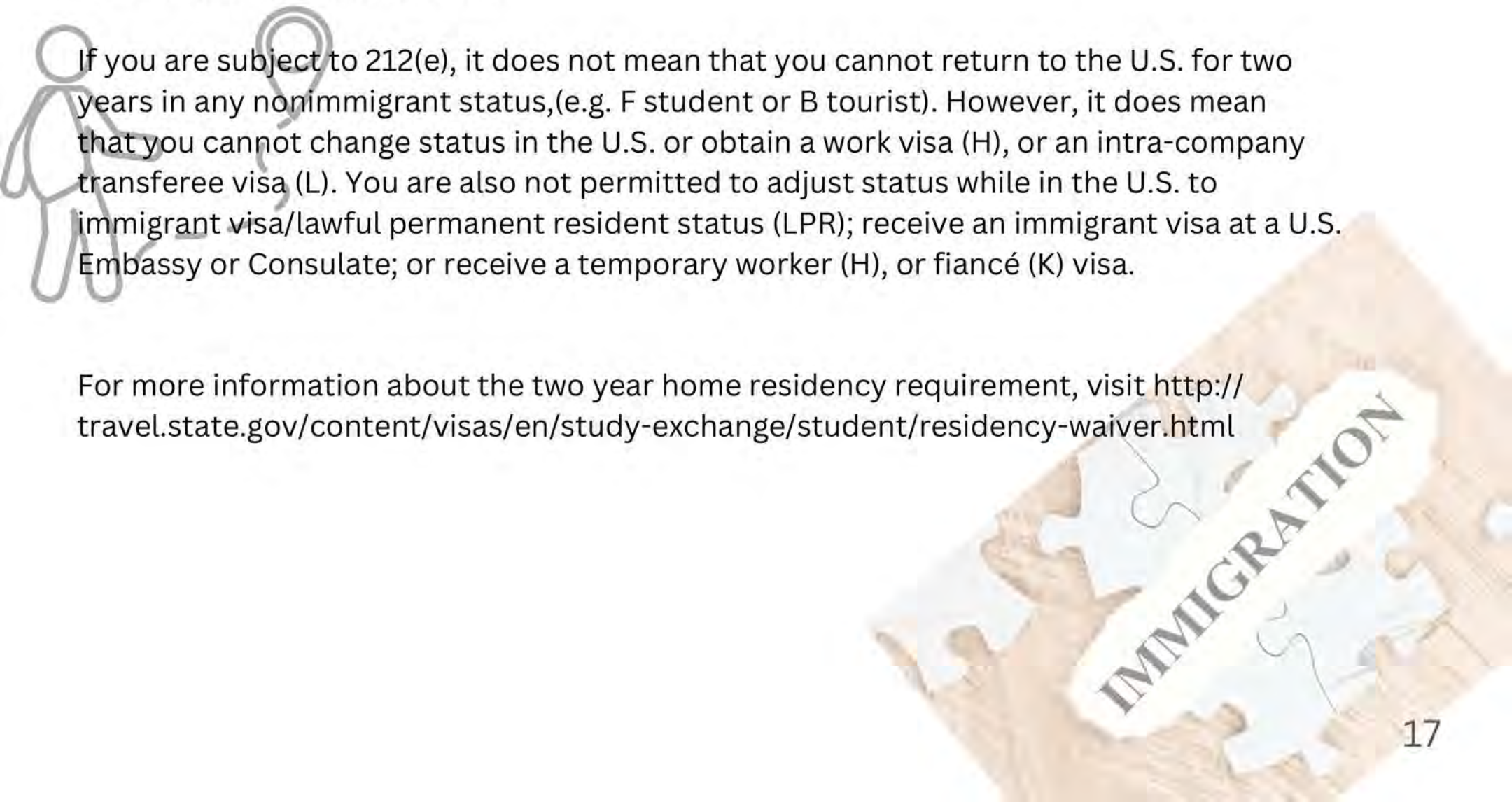
You will need to contact individual state department of education for detail information of their licensure application process.



212(e) TWO YEAR HOME RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Based on US State Department 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>



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