



*International  
Student's Pre-Arrival/  
J-1 Visa Guide*

# *Table of Contents*

The J-1 Visa Process .....	3
Securing your J-1 Visa (non-Canadian) .....	3
Visa Paperwork and Scheduling the J-1 Visa Interview.....	3
J-1 Visas for Canadian Students .....	4
J-1 Visa Terms.....	4
Two-Year Home- Country Physical Presence Requirement.....	5
Waiver of the Residency Requirement .....	5
Health Insurance .....	6
Living Expenses.....	6
Estimated Living Expenses.....	6
Contact Information.....	9

# The J-1 Visa Process

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We would like to welcome and congratulate you on your acceptance into The Washington Center's program. These instructions will help you to understand the State Department's regulations for international students regarding the J-1 Visa. The TWC program is inclusive of a full-time internship program (32+ hours per week), an academic course, leadership programming and cultural activities.

Please remember that you cannot travel to the U.S. with a tourist visa. Make sure that you understand the following points and be ready to answer questions at your interview at the U.S. Embassy or at the U.S. port of entry. *If you are a Canadian citizen, please skip to page 4.*

## Securing your J-1 Visa (non-Canadian)

- In order to receive your J-1 visa, you will need to follow the steps below, fill out the necessary paperwork and attend an in-person visa interview
- When attending your J-1 Visa interview, remember you are coming to the U.S. for an "Internship-Training Program." If the officer asks you whether you have come to study or to work, answer that you have come to study. Part of this training program is the "on-the-job training" component. This means that you will be placed at an organization or company to learn about U.S. procedures and work environments. However, you will be "learning" and not "working." Part of the learning experience will include completing research, writing documents, and giving presentations. Again, the important aspect is that you are coming to "learn" and "receive training" and NOT to replace a U.S. worker.

## Visa Paperwork & Scheduling the J-1 Visa Interview

1. Fill out the DS-160 Nonimmigrant Visa Application: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>  
If you do not have your housing assignment, you may use TWC's address as your U.S. address: **1333 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C, 20036**
2. Pay the SEVIS FEE by credit or debit card online at [www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/](http://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/)  
You may use TWC's address again if necessary. A SEVIS Fee tutorial is available at the following website <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/i-901-sevis-fee-payment-tutorial>
3. Call your local U.S. Consulate or U.S. Embassy and schedule an appointment to obtain a J-1 Visa. You may also be able to schedule the appointment

online through your country's US Embassy website.

**Additional fees for booking a J-1 Visa appointment may apply.** If you are beginning your TWC program in less than three weeks, please contact your local Embassy and request an expedited J-1 Visa interview appointment.

4. Review the U.S. Embassy website for your country and prepare all of the requested documents to bring to the J-1 Visa interview appointment.

## Documents you will need to present include:

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- DS-2019 form (sent in visa package by TWC).
- DS-7002 form (sent in visa package by TWC).
- Your passport, valid for six months past the program end date.
- The TWC acceptance letter.
- The DS-160 confirmation form with your recent 2"X2" picture attached.
- Your SEVIS fee receipt.
- **Proof of financial resources:** this can include scholarship letters or bank statements indicating that you have the amount of funding indicated in section 5 of the DS-2019 form. You can use your parents' bank statements for this purpose. In this case, the statement must be accompanied with a letter indicating that these funds have been allocated to you in order to complete the program at The Washington Center.
- **Note:** the officer may request to see your school transcript or TOEFL as well.

You may also be asked to present "proof of ties" to your home country to prove that you do not intend to stay in the U.S., this can include proof of home residence, university enrollment, employment, family or a bank account. You can also show your return ticket for the end of the program.

## Traveling to the US:

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1. For travel to the U.S., keep your DS-2019 form, DS-7002 form and passport with you. You must present these documents at all ports of U.S. entry.
2. Make sure that the immigration officer puts a J-1 Visa stamp on your passport indicating that you are entering with your J-1 Visa and not as a tourist.

**Important Note:** I-94 forms are now automated, you can obtain the document at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>. The I-94 is only available after you enter into the U.S.

# The J-1 Visa Process (continued)

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## J-1 Visas for Canadian Students

The U.S. Consulates in Canada are waiving the requirement for a J-1 Visa interview appointment for Canadian passport holders. According to the latest regulations, you can obtain your J-1 Visa stamp on your passport at the port of entry (airport, or border if traveling by car). **Make sure that the immigration officer puts a J-1 Visa stamp on your passport indicating that you are entering with your J-1 Visa and not as a tourist.** You can proceed to the U.S. port of entry directly with the following documents:

- **DS-2019 and DS-7002 visa forms** (sent by The Washington Center in your visa package).
- \$180 SEVIS I-901 Fee payment confirmation or a copy of the receipt: <https://fmjfee.com/i901fee>. (Be sure to pay this at least three days before you travel to the U.S.)
- **Form DS-160:** complete it online at <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/> and print the confirmation page with the barcode.
- Your Canadian passport (valid for at least six months beyond the program end date).
- The Customs Officer may also ask for proof of funds to cover expenses while in the U.S. This can include scholarship letters or bank statements indicating that you have the amount of funding indicated on section 5 of the DS-2019 Form. You can use your parents' bank statements for this purpose as well. In this case, the statement must be accompanied with a letter indicating that these funds have been allocated to you in order to complete the program at The Washington Center.
- TWC Acceptance Letter.

**If you have any questions, please contact [visainfo@twc.edu](mailto:visainfo@twc.edu).**

## J-1 Visa Terms

- **J-1 Visa:** The Exchange Visitor (J) non-immigrant visa category is for individuals approved to participate in work-and study-based exchange visitor programs. These intern and trainee programs are designed to allow foreign university students, recent graduates and professionals to come to the United States to gain exposure to U.S. culture and to receive hands-on experience in U.S. business practices in their chosen occupational field. These programs also increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.
- **DS-7002 Form:** The purpose of the DS-7002 is to demonstrate the Intern/Trainee's activities while in the U.S. and to show that they will be supervised throughout the program and that they will advance through stages of development that are not duplicative of prior experience.
- **DS-2019 Form:** The DS-2019 identifies the exchange visitor and their designated sponsor and provides a brief description of the exchange visitor's program.
- **DS-160:** The basic Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application, must be filled out before applying for the J-1 visa. Electronically submitting your DS-160 online application is the FIRST STEP in the visa application process.
- **SEVIS I-901 Fee:** Each exchange visitor is responsible for paying this fee to SEVP, which keeps track of students and exchange visitors and ensures that they maintain their status while in the United States.
- **I-94 Form:** This website form will be used to retrieve your arrival and departure records from the Non-Immigrant Information System (NIIS) collected during the preceding five years.
- **Stipend:** Any form of payment received from your internship site, including money given for transportation. Internship sites are not required to provide a stipend.
- **J-1 Visa Registration Form:** This form is used to validate your J-1 visa in the online visa system. This form is for TWC purposes only and will be given to the J-1 Visa Specialist at the TWC Orientation.

# Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement

Some exchange visitors may be subject to the “Two-Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement” or Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This requirement is indicated on your J-1 Visa or on your DS-2019 form. If you are subject, you will be required to return to your home country for at least two years (cumulatively) at the end of your exchange visitor program before applying for an H, L or K visa or for immigrant lawful permanent resident status. If you would like to apply for an H, L or K visa or permanent residency in the US, you will need to waive the two-year requirement.

The intent of the J-1 Visa is to have your home country benefit from your experience as an exchange visitor in the United States. This requirement is intended to prevent a participant from staying longer than necessary for that objective.

**You may be subjected to this two-year requirement if any of the following conditions apply:**

- If your participation in an exchange program was financed, directly or indirectly, by the United States government or a foreign government for purpose of exchange.
- If the skills that you are coming to develop or exercise are in a field which your “home” government requested be included on the State Department skills list.

## Waiver of the Residency Requirement

An exchange visitor may request that the two-year home country physical presence requirement be waived only on the following bases:

- Statement from the exchange visitor’s home country that it has no objection to the waiver.
- Request for a waiver made by an interested U.S. government agency.
- Exceptional hardship to the U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse or child of the exchange visitor.
- Fear of persecution on account of race, religion, or political opinion,

**Important Disclaimer:** The Washington Center does not extend the length of the J-1 Visas nor change the immigration status of our participants after completion of the programs.



Example: intern not subject to 212(e)

## Health Insurance

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The State Department requires that all exchange visitors (EVs) have health insurance that covers for sickness or accidents during their entire program period. EVs who do not maintain this insurance coverage during the program dates are in violation of State Department regulations and will have their J-1 visa terminated.

In order to comply with these requirements you must certify that you have a valid health insurance policy that includes the following:

- Medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per accident or illness.
- Repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000.
- Expenses associated with the medical evacuation to my home country in the amount of \$50,000.
- A deductible not to exceed \$500 per accident or illness.

The insurance provider must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- The policy must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of A- or above;
- A McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's claims paying Ability rating of A- or above;
- A Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above;
- A Moody's Investor Services rating of A3 or above or
- Backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country

Accompanying spouses and dependents are required to also be covered by insurance in the amounts set forth above. We recommend that you take extended coverage to make sure that you are covered on the dates of your travel as well as a few days after the completion of your program until you return home.

Please note that as an exchange visitor, you and any accompanying spouse or dependent(s), also may be subject to the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

The Washington Center can recommend local health insurance providers. The policies can be purchased online for approximately \$50 per month. For more information, please contact [visainfo@twc.edu](mailto:visainfo@twc.edu).

## Living Expenses

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Please note that 50% of the program fee is due as soon as you accept to participate in the program and receive your itemized invoice from TWC. The housing payment and your full program fee must be paid before you enter the US.

### Estimated Living Expenses

<i>Air Travel (estimated)</i>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>
<i>Estimated monthly health insurance expense:</i>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>
<i>Daily Expenses (Metro, Meals and Extra)</i>	<b>\$ 40.00</b>
<i>Weekly Expenses (Metro, Meals and Extra)</i>	<b>\$280.00</b>

Updated and itemized TWC price lists are available on our webpage: [www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu). Please keep in mind that even if you are provided with an internship stipend or hourly wage, this funding might not cover all expenses and it is advised that you bring additional personal funds.

# Contact Information

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An overview of all TWC policies, conditions and restrictions can be found here:

<http://twc.edu/programs/intern-policies>

If you have any visa questions or concerns please contact:

## **Sasha Gerhardson**

Manager, International Programs & J-1 Visa Specialist  
202-238-7918 (direct)  
[Sasha.Gerhardson@twc.edu](mailto:Sasha.Gerhardson@twc.edu)

## **Melissa Aslo de la Torre**

Senior Enrollment Services Coordinator  
202-238-7934 (direct)  
[Melissa.Aslo@twc.edu](mailto:Melissa.Aslo@twc.edu)

## **TWC Phone**

**Toll Free:** 1-800-486-8921  
**Main:** 202-238-7900  
**Fax:** 202-238-7700

## **TWC Email**

**Visas Email:** [Visainfo@twc.edu](mailto:Visainfo@twc.edu)  
**General Email:** [Internationalinfo@twc.edu](mailto:Internationalinfo@twc.edu)  
**Housing:** [Housing@twc.edu](mailto:Housing@twc.edu)  
**Finance:** [Finance@twc.edu](mailto:Finance@twc.edu)



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