



NBRC J-1 Visa Waiver Expansion Program FAQ's

What is a J-1 Visa Waiver?

Physicians who have completed their medical training under the J-1 visa exchange visitor program are required by US Immigration and Citizenship Services (USCIS) to return to their home country for at least two years before working in the US. A J-1 Visa Waiver eliminates this two-year home-country physical presence requirement. The NBRC will consider recommending USCIS issue a waiver of the two-year home-country physical presence requirement on behalf of eligible J-1 physicians working in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) and Medically Underserved Areas (MUA).

Don't other Waiver programs already exist for J-1 physicians?

Yes, the State Conrad 30 program and the HHS Exchange Visitor Program. The VA also offers their own waiver program.

Why is the NBRC providing a waiver program in addition to the Conrad 30 and HHS waiver programs? How will NBRC's program be different?

Some states have indicated that their shortage need and J-1 physician interest is well beyond the 30 waivers that are available through the Conrad 30 program. NBRC will work with our four states to complement their already existing Conrad 30 program by accepting an unlimited number of applications on a rolling basis. HHS accepts waiver applications for primary or mental health physicians practicing in a HPSA facility with a score of 7 or higher. NBRC will accept waiver requests for primary or mental health physicians practicing in a facility with any HPSA score or within an MUA. NBRC will also consider waiver requests from specialty care physicians practicing in HPSAs where the shortage and need are proven.

Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible J-1 physicians who have been offered an employment contract to practice medicine for at least three years and 40 hours per week within a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services designated HPSA or MUA of the legislatively defined Northern Border Region of Maine, New Hampshire, New York or Vermont. Eligible primary care includes general or family practice, general internal medicine, pediatrics, or obstetrics and gynecology in a designated primary care HPSA or designated MUA or psychiatric care in a designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area. Specialty care requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis where the shortage and need have been clearly proven within a particular region.

What is the process?

To begin the process, contact the designated J-1 Program specialist in the state you have been offered employment to determine if a Conrad 30, HHS or NBRC works best for your situation. Complete NBRC application information can be found on NBRC's website along with the contact information for the J-1 Program specialist in your state. Once the state provides a preliminary approval for a physician's application for an NBRC waiver it will be sent to the NBRC for final review. If our Federal Co-Chair recommends a waiver for a physician, notification will be sent to the applicant within 30 days and will then be sent to the US State Department for review and final processing by USCIS. The applicant must notify the NBRC once they receive official notification from USCIS on their waiver request.

Does NBRC charge a fee?

No. There is no fee to apply for a waiver recommendation through the NBRC.

Where can I get more information?

Complete application materials can be found on the NBRC website at <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/J1Visa>.