

J-2 DEPENDENTS

**Office of International Students and Scholars
Eastern Illinois University**

Your husband or wife (spouse) and children under the age of 21 can obtain J-2 dependent visa status to accompany you or join you later as long as sufficient funding to cover their expenses is documented. Eastern Illinois University requires the following amounts for dependents: \$500 per month for your spouse \$250 per month for each child. The J-2's status is completely dependent on yours. When your J-1 program ends, the J-2 status ends. Also, if you travel outside the U.S. and leave your dependents in the U.S., you must return within a reasonable amount of time or the J-2s will be considered to be out of status.

NOTE: Your dependent may come to the U.S. in an independent status such as F-1 (student), H-1 (temporary worker) or even as an independent J-1 if he or she qualifies for that status.

Obtaining a J-2 visa

If your sponsoring department has informed us that your dependents will be coming with you to the U.S., we have sent you a Dependent Certificate listing their names which will allow them to apply for J-2 visas when you apply for your J-1. They can apply for their visas with you now, even if they will be coming later. If your dependents will come after you, we can only issue their DS-2019 after you have arrived in the U.S. and reported to our office. Before we will process this request, we will make sure that you have complied with the insurance requirements. Insurance J-2 dependents are required to have exactly the same insurance coverage as J-1s.

Two-year home residence requirement

If you are subject to the two-year home residence requirement, your dependents are also subject to the same restrictions. If you obtain a waiver, the waiver applies to your dependents as well.

Employment

Unlike many other dependents, J-2 dependents may apply for an employment authorization document (EAD) through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Instructions for applying for an EAD are available under the [J-2 work permission link](#). A J-2 with an EAD can work legally almost anywhere--stores, restaurants, on campus, off campus. The permission is normally valid for one year or for the same length as the DS-2019 form if it is valid for less than one year. If you extend your J-1 status, the J-2 will have to extend the work permission.

NOTE: Unlike J-1s, J-2s do have to pay into the Social Security system. Application for employment authorization is made by mail and can take several months. Work permission cannot be extended until the J-1 program is extended first. Because of the delays in EAD processing, the J-2 who is employed must sometimes stop working until the new work permission arrives.

Travel

If your family travels with you outside the U.S. and will be coming back with you, the entire family can travel with their respective DS-2019s.

Extensions

J-2 dependent status is extended at the same time and for the same amount of time as your status. Adequate funding for the dependents is required for the amount of time requested. The required insurance coverage must be maintained at all times.

Changes of status

The J-2 dependent may apply for a change from J-2 status to any other nonimmigrant status or immigrant status if the conditions for that status are met, and if he/she is not subject to the two-year home residence requirement. The same restrictions apply to J-2s who are subject as to J-1s.

J-2 to J-1

A J-2 dependent may wish to change to J-1 status in order to accept academic employment or for other reasons. The J-2 is restricted by the rules described in "Beginning a new program" and may not change status to J-1 if subject to the two-year home residence requirement. The dependent's prospective J-1 sponsor will assist with the change of status application, but if it appears that the change will cause the applicant's stay to extend beyond the time limit for your J-1 category, USCIS will also require a letter from the applicant stating that he/she understands that you probably will not be allowed to change to J-2 status and thereby extend your stay beyond the original time limit to remain in the U.S. with your dependent who has changed to J-1. The twelve-month rule applies to J-2s as well. An individual who has been in J-2 status for more than six months is not eligible to become a J-1 professor or research scholar until he/she has been out of J status for twelve months.