



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Rural Health WORKFORCE

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
RURAL HEALTH

J-1 VISA WAIVER PROGRAM



BACKGROUND

Federal law requires that international physicians pursuing graduate education or training in the United States must obtain a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. Once they have completed their studies, physicians must return to their home country for at least two years before they can return to the United States.

The J-1 Visa Waiver Program eliminates the two-year home residency requirement and allows physicians to stay in the United States and practice in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

OVERVIEW

The goal of the program is to increase the number of physicians available to work in rural and underserved areas of the state. The program is considered a secondary tool in recruitment, used when efforts to recruit a U.S. trained physician have been unsuccessful for an extended period.

The Washington State Department of Health can sponsor up to 30 waivers per federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).

- Waivers are available for primary care physicians and specialists.
- Practice location must be in a Health Professional Shortage Area (a limited number of Non-HPSA waivers are available)
- Primary care physicians are encouraged to use the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services J-1 Visa Waiver Program for Clinical Care](#).

CONTACT

J-1 Visa Waiver Program

J1VisaWaiver@doh.wa.gov

[Workforce Recruitment and Retention
Washington State Department of Health](#).