



## J-1 VISA APPLICATION INFORMATION FOR HOST LAW FIRMS & VISA APPLICANTS

1. The ABA Section of International Law's (ABA International) J-1 Visa Office will facilitate the issuance of the J-1 Visa for international attorneys to come to the United States to receive practical training at a law firm, or law office, **only** if he/she has received an offer in writing from a host firm. The Section is not able to process J-1 visas for interns. Please note that U.S. Department of State regulations for the J-1 Visa have changed as of **July 19, 2007** ([http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/about/interim\\_0607.pdf](http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/about/interim_0607.pdf)). Under the new regulations, trainees must:
  - ♦ hold a degree from a post-secondary academic institution outside of the U.S. **and** have at least one year of prior related work experience in their occupational field acquired outside of the United States;
  - ♦ possess verifiable English language skills sufficient to function on a day-to-day basis. Trainees' English language skills must be verified by a recognized English language test, by signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school; and
  - ♦ complete an acceptable training placement plan (form DS-7002).
2. Host organizations and firms that employ fewer than 25 employees and earn less than three million dollars in annual revenue who have not previously participated successfully in a training program with the Section will need to ensure their host organization or firm possesses and maintains the ability and resources to provide structured and guided work-based learning experiences according to the training placement plan. Host organizations and firms can arrange for a site visit to be conducted by our staff at the organization's expense or may partner with a larger organization or firm for the training program.
3. In order to apply for the J-1 Visa through ABA International, the trainee must complete the J-1 Visa Training Program Application as well as all items listed below (further explanation provided as well for some items). **All components of the application should be original, signed documents** unless otherwise noted and sent directly to the J-1 Visa Office for processing. A DS-2019 form will not be processed until all required information is received, which includes the following:
  - ♦ completed J-1 Visa Training Program Application including the personal statement and photo;
  - ♦ proof of English language proficiency if non-native English speaker;
  - ♦ two letters of reference;
  - ♦ proof of health and repatriation insurance;
  - ♦ reference to total compensation during the training period including verification;
  - ♦ payment of U.S. \$1000 for the J-1 Visa processing fee & \$500 for each J-2 Visa;
  - ♦ completed DS-7002 (including signatures);

- ◆ resume or curriculum vitae;
  - ◆ copies of educational documents including diplomas and certificates;
  - ◆ copy of your and any J-2 visa applicants' passports; and
  - ◆ return UPS or FedEx shipping label to either the trainee or host firm.
4. The application form and DS-7002 must be **typed**. (Answers can be directly inputted into the PDF form and then printed).
  5. (No. 10 on application form) - Please list the languages that you speak. Under the U.S. Department of State regulations for the J-1 Visa, trainees whose native language is not English must have verifiable English language skills sufficient to function on a day-to-day basis. Trainees' English skills must be verified by a recognized language test or signed original documentation from an academic institution or English language school. Recognized English language tests include: Test of Spoken English (TSE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or International English Language Testing System (IELTS). **A copy of your examination score or signed original documentation from an academic institution or English language school must be included in your application.** If you are unable to take a TOEFL exam, a letter from the host firm verifying your English language skills is acceptable.
  6. (No. 14 on application form) - The minimum placement period is three months; the maximum is eighteen months. Please note: the starting date that appears on the DS-2019 is the date the trainee is expected to arrive in the U.S. to begin his/her training. Therefore, the host firm should allow ample time for the trainee to get settled. However, U.S. immigration will allow a J-1 visa holder to enter the U.S. up to a month before their program begins, if necessary. The J-1 Visa Program Office will ***not*** issue a DS-2019 form to extend a training program. If the trainee needs a replacement DS-2019 form any time during their training period, a replacement fee of **U.S. \$500** will be charged.
  7. (No. 19 on application form) - Applicants should attach **two** reference letters to the application. The letters should be as specific as possible about the applicant's experience and qualifications; a letter simply stating that the reference personally knows the applicant is not acceptable. The letters should be from two separate sources (i.e. not from two lawyers at the same firm).
  8. (No. 20 on application form) - Applicants are required to submit written proof of health and repatriation insurance coverage for the period they will be in the U.S. receiving training. The insurance should cover medical benefits of at least \$50,000 per accident or illness and repatriation of remains in the amount of \$7,500. A copy of the insurance company's coverage of the trainee must be included with the application. Insurance requirements remain the same for J-2 visa applicants. Failure to include insurance coverage documentation can jeopardize the trainee's stay in the U.S. and will be reported to the State Department's immigration system.
  9. (No. 22 on application form) - Except in those cases that hosts will offer the trainee a salary or stipend, **each applicant must be prepared to finance the entire undertaking from his/her own resources.** Please list all compensation sources during the training period, either from the host firm or government, or state that you will be using your personal funds. If funding is being received from an outside source, verification of the amount from the source must accompany the

application. A specific amount of funding must be listed sufficient enough to cover living expenses during the entire stay in the U.S.

10. The training placement plan (form DS-7002) should be completed and enclosed with the entire application package. A training placement plan must include at least three, comprehensive phases (minimum of five if applying for the maximum placement period of 18 months).
11. The J-1 Visa Training Program application fee, in the amount of **U.S. \$1000**, should be made payable to ABA/ILEX. Any accompanying family members will need a J-2 Visa. The J-2 Visa application processing fee is **U.S. \$500** per visa. The application fee must be paid via a check from a U.S. bank account.
12. All applicants for J-1 exchange visitor visas must pay a U.S. \$180 fee via credit card online for the maintenance of the Immigration Service's J-1 exchange visitor administrative database. A sample form for this fee will be sent along with the applicant's DS-2019 form. The administrative fee must be paid at least three days before the applicant's visa interview with the consular officer. This fee is in addition to the J-1 Visa Training Program Application fee and if you do not pay it, you will not be issued a J-1 nonimmigrant visa for admission to the U.S. For additional information, please refer to the website: [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com).
13. Applicants should notify the J-1 Visa Program Office if there are any changes of address or other information which in any way would affect their participation in the program. Trainees or their supervisors must contact the ABA upon the commencement of the trainee's program including the trainee's local address immediately so the trainee's program can be validated in the State Department's SEVIS system.
14. At the end of the training program, a brief report describing professional activities conducted and any cultural activities arranged by the host firm during the course of stay will be required. This report must be reviewed and signed by the host firm. For 12 month or longer training programs, a mid-point evaluation is also required. **A copy of the report must be sent to the J-1 Visa Program Office within 60 days of your departure from the U.S.**