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J1 Two-Year Home Residence Requirement

Some Exchange Visitors are subject to what is called the two-year home country physical presence requirement. This "two-year residence" requirement applies to J-1 visa holders if the Exchange Visitor receives any funding (including nominal travel grants) from their home government or a U.S. government agency. It also applies to Exchange Visitors if trained personnel in their field are identified by their home government as being in short supply and their field has consequently been included on the U.S. government's "Exchange Visitor's Skills List."

The two-year residence requirement also applies to persons receiving graduate medical education or training. For information on the "Exchange Visitor's Skills List," check the Department of State website.

An exchange visitor who is subject to this requirement must reside for an aggregate of two (2) years in his or her country of nationality or last legal permanent residence or have the requirement waived before being eligible for other U.S. immigration statuses, including H, L or permanent resident status. For information about the process of applying for a waiver of this requirement, check this web site at the Department of State. Please note that OISS does not assist with the waiver process. J-1 visa holders who want to apply for a waiver should consult with an attorney.