



## VISA INFORMATION FOR FAMILY OF EWC DEGREE STUDENTS IN EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS

A **J-1 exchange visitor's spouse and/or unmarried children under 21 years of age are eligible to apply for the J-2 visa** (exchange visitor dependent). Visa eligibility documents and instructions will be provided to you after you have obtained permission from your Program Coordinator to bring your spouse and/or children. Because bringing your family will have a major financial and academic impact, the Center urges you to consider very carefully all aspects of having your spouse and/or children come to Honolulu. The Center requires its degree students in exchange visitor status to come to Honolulu alone first to take time to assess the situation fully and discuss your individual circumstances in depth with their UH university academic advisor, EWC Program Coordinator and other Center students whose family members are already here. **Exchange visitor students are expected to stay on award at the Center at least one full semester before the arrival of dependents.** You will be required to submit a Request to Bring Family form, copies of passport biodata page(s), proof of health insurance, and certification of funding support for dependents (spouse/children) before the Center can issue the Form DS-2019 required for J-2 Entry.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

East-West Center participants assume the responsibility of financial support for their family's transportation and living expenses in the U.S. Living in Honolulu is extremely expensive, and it is very difficult to find affordable housing and suitable jobs. Utilities (electricity, water, telephone, etc.) are not usually included in the rent. You will need to be prepared to pay a rental deposit on your apartment or house; it is *usually* equivalent to one month's rent and is not returned until you move out. There are also deposits required for utilities.

When they apply for a J-2 visa, the U.S. Consulate is responsible for determining whether or not your family has sufficient capability to meet basic living costs in the U.S.; however, practices can vary from one consular post to another. The Consulate usually requires evidence of financial capability before issuing the J-2 visa. Lack of sufficient funds to support the family is considered to be grounds for denying the J-2 visa. Likewise, if the Consulate has reason to believe a prospective J-2 applicant had prior intent to work in the U.S., the J-2 visa will be denied. The Consulate may also expect your family to have return tickets prior to departure for the U.S.

You cannot expect that your spouse will be able to work in the U.S. A J-2 spouse or dependent must apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for permission to work. Employment authorization must be granted by USCIS before the J-2 spouse or dependent is permitted to work. Families should have sufficient funds available to them for the entire period they expect to be in the U.S. Work permission may be used to help offset unexpected financial need which arises after the J-2's arrival in the U.S. Income from employment must be used only for the support of the J-2 spouse and dependents, not to support the J-1 participant. ***Working without USCIS permission is illegal and makes one liable to deportation.*** Thus we URGE you to be fully prepared financially.

**You should have a return air ticket (or equivalent funds) for each family member PLUS at least the following amounts deposited in a U.S. bank saving and/or checking account in addition to other funds required to supplement funding provided by your EWC Award:**

<b>One dependent</b> (Spouse alone)	\$ 6,000
<b>Two dependents</b> (Spouse and one child)	\$12,000
<b>Three dependents</b> (Spouse and 2 children)	\$18,000
<b>(Each additional dependent child beyond 2, \$6,000 per child)</b>	

This is the amount of funds for which you will be **required to provide certification before the Center can issue your family member(s) the Form DS-2019 needed to apply for a J-2 visa.** Please note that the above figures are per year rates. If your country has restrictions against bringing or sending out sufficient funds, you should have additional funds on hand in the U.S. before your family arrives.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to financial preparation, you also need to consider academic, cultural and social factors. Cultural and social factors are less concrete to describe, and responses to them vary widely. In particular, the impact of a family's presence (e.g., the demands of setting up a new household) on the degree student's academic progress is something that needs to be considered carefully by all concerned. This is especially true if your spouse does not speak English or is not accustomed to going out alone. Further, your first semester will include a period of major adjustments to American culture, particularly its educational system which includes frequent quizzes/tests/examinations, research papers and heavy reading assignments for class discussion. In addition, some of you will be required to enroll in English language courses during your first one or two semesters, or may need to take additional coursework to meet departmental prerequisites. We urge you to be fully prepared, financially and academically, for your family's arrival.

**GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE J-2 DEPENDENTS**

1. Extensions of stay may be granted to J-2 spouse and dependents for the same period of time as the J-1 participant.
2. J-2 spouse and dependents must depart the U.S. when the J-1 visa holder's program ends. If a J-1 visa holder leaves the U.S. on extended absence (more than one semester), J-2 spouse and dependents are required to leave the U.S. also.
3. If the J-1 exchange visitor is subject to the two-year home country residence requirement, then the J-2 spouse and dependents are also subject to the residence requirement.
4. J-2 spouse and dependents may work only if employment authorization is obtained from USCIS.
5. Spouses and dependents may study in the U.S. on J-2 visa status. Neither J-1 nor J-2 visa holders may change to F (Student) visa status (or to any status other than A or G) within the U.S. Thus, if a spouse strongly wishes to pursue a specific degree, s/he should apply for admission while still in the home country and enter the U.S. on a F-1 visa specifically for that purpose (unless certain that his/her program will take less time than the J-1's program).

*For further information, write to the following addresses:*

Graduate:

Graduate Division Admissions Office  
Spalding Hall 354  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA.  
<http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/>  
Tel: (808) 956-8544  
Email: [graduate.education@hawaii.edu](mailto:graduate.education@hawaii.edu)

Undergraduate:

Office of Admissions  
Student Services Center 001  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2600 Campus Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA.  
<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/admissions/>  
Tel: (808) 956-8975,  
(800) 823-9771 (Toll-Free),  
(808) 956-7943 (Text V/T),  
Fax: (808) 956-4148  
Email: [manoa.admissions@hawaii.edu](mailto:manoa.admissions@hawaii.edu)

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Once you are already in the U.S. in J-2 status you may apply to study at the University of Hawaii at Manoa as an Unclassified student; however, the university does not sponsor visas for Unclassified students.

It is highly inadvisable to come to the U.S. on a Visitor visa (B-1/B-2) and then try to change to F-1 Student visa status. Most such requests are denied by USCIS.

**PROCEDURE FOR FAMILY TO JOIN YOU IN HONOLULU**

You first need to see your Program Coordinator who will give you a Request to Bring Family form which includes a Certification of Family Support section. When you have completed the form and documented your sources of funds, your Program Coordinator will discuss any special considerations with you. For example, if you wish to bring children, you will need to consider the multiple implications involved including the need to set up a household off-campus and to meet mandatory education requirements for all school-age dependents. After your Program Coordinator has approved your Request to Bring Family form including the needed accompanying documents, you will then meet with the Dean of the EWC Education Program to discuss your plan to bring family. Subsequently, you will take your Request to Bring Family form (containing the 'approval' signatures of both your Program Coordinator and the Dean) to the EWC Visa Officer along with financial certification documents, and evidence of appropriate insurance coverage for at least one year from the anticipated arrival date of family. The Visa Officer will also need you to provide the location of the embassy/consulate that will issuing the visa, a copy of the passport biodata page for each family member you plan to bring which should include the individual's **surname and given names, birthdate, city and country of birth, and country of citizenship**. After the Visa Officer has all the necessary information, it can be expected to take about 15 working days for processing of Form DS-2019 for your family. With the DS-2019 you will also receive instructions for your family on how to apply for the J-2 visa and enter the U.S.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO WRITE TO:

VISA OFFICER,  
AWARD SERVICES OFFICE  
EAST-WEST CENTER  
1601 EAST-WEST ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96848-1601 USA.

Telephone: 808-944-7736.  
Fax: 808-944-7730.  
E-Mail: [smallm@eastwestcenter.org](mailto:smallm@eastwestcenter.org).