

Change of Category: Departure



FOR PHYSICIANS WHO COMPLETED PARTICIPATION AS A J-1 EXCHANGE VISITOR WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE PROPOSED CLINICAL TRAINING START DATE

The information in this memorandum applies to you if:

1. You are currently outside of the United States, AND
2. You held status as a J-1 exchange visitor (e.g., research scholar) within the six months preceding your proposed clinical training start date BUT are no longer in J-1 status.

Individuals in the United States in J-1 status at the time of application to Intealth for sponsorship in the J-1 alien physician category must file a formal change of category request for review by Intealth and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). These requests generally require that the applicant maintain the underlying J-1 status (e.g., research scholar) until the proposed start date of Intealth-sponsored clinical training. If an applicant completes participation in the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program and departs the United States **within six months** prior to the proposed clinical training start date, a COC request must still be submitted but with slightly different documentation. The documentation listed below is the minimum required to file such a request.

Potential applicants should be aware that the DOS has indicated that worthy change of category requests must document consistency with and relationship to one's original exchange objective. The DOS has also indicated that applicants who will complete four or more years as a research scholar by their proposed clinical training start date are not eligible for a change of category, as they are considered to have fulfilled the objective of their J-1 category. These applicants must be away from the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program for a minimum of 12 months to be considered for sponsorship in the J-1 alien physician category.

Additionally, the DOS has indicated that applicants who have applied for or received a waiver of a two-year home country physical presence requirement associated with their current (or any previous) J status are not eligible to apply for a change of category.

Required "Departure" COC Documentation

All required documentation must be uploaded by the TPL and/or applicant through MyIntealth at the time of application or as soon as available.

- **COMPLETE APPLICATION FOR INTEALTH SPONSORSHIP**

The standard initial application documents are required in addition to the documents outlined below. View the application checklist here: <https://www.ecfm.org/evsp/initial-accredited.pdf>.

- **COPIES OF ALL PREVIOUS FORMS DS-2019**

Please submit all previously issued Forms DS-2019, including the first issued Form DS-2019 stamped by the U.S. embassy/consulate.

- **STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES (SEO) FROM APPLICANT**

Completion of SEO Form. In the form, the applicant should provide justification as to why the proposed clinical training is being pursued and how it relates to their previous research activities. If additional training is anticipated after the proposed program, specify the program's duration and subspecialty if known. If available, also upload any future offer letters. The SEO Form is available at <https://www.ecfm.org/evsp/applicant-SEO.pdf>.

- **LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM RESEARCH MENTOR AND CLINICAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

The applicant's most recent research program director/mentor and the proposed clinical program director must each provide a letter of support for the applicant on institutional letterhead. The letters do not need to be lengthy but must focus specifically on the clinical value of the proposed training, how the physician will benefit from the clinical skills and knowledge to be acquired, and how the applicant's research activities relate to the proposed clinical training activity. The two letters cannot be identical and must be signed by the research mentor and proposed clinical program director respectively. If they are the same person, one strong letter is sufficient.

In drafting the letters, it is important to be aware that the J-1 visa is a temporary, nonimmigrant visa reserved for educational and cultural exchange, and thus carries with it the expectation that physicians will return to their home country at the end of their training.

- **INTEALTH APPLICATION FEE OF \$370.00**

The standard \$370.00 application fee must be paid through MyIntealth at the time of application submission.

- **DOS CASE PROCESSING FEES OF \$567.00**

After the application is determined to be a DOS case, the applicant will be invoiced an additional \$567 (\$200 Intealth review and preparation fee + \$367 DOS processing fee). Once received, Intealth will submit the \$367 processing fee to DOS on the applicant's behalf.

- **PROOF OF DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES**

Please submit all of the above documents as soon as possible; however, the application will not be considered complete and under final review until proof of departure from the United States is submitted. Acceptable documents include, but are not limited to, a copy of the boarding pass, passport entry stamp, or a copy of the travel history from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website.

Change of Category (COC) Departure Requests – What to Expect

- **Intealth and the U.S. Department of State are mindful of clinical training start dates** and work collaboratively to reach a decision **before the start date whenever possible**.
- Once an application is complete and under review, **status updates are generally not available**. We understand that waiting can be stressful and appreciate your patience.
- Applicants and TPLs will be **notified promptly by email** as soon as there is an update or a decision to share.
- **COC requests are reviewed individually**, based on each applicant's circumstances. While every request receives careful consideration, **approval cannot be guaranteed**.
- Applicants pursuing a "departure" COC must remain outside of the United States while the COC request is pending with the DOS.
- If a COC request is approved, Intealth will issue a new Form DS-2019 for sponsorship in the J-1 alien physician category. The applicant is then required to pay another SEVIS fee and apply for a new visa at a U.S. embassy/consulate to re-enter the United States (Canadian citizens exempt from applying for a visa).
- Intealth sponsorship following COC approval applies **only to the training program and time frame approved**. Any proposed changes, including subspecialty training, must be reviewed and approved through a **formal sponsorship authorization request**.

NOTE: The preferred pathway for any individual seeking a COC is for the applicant to maintain J-1 status in the United States and request a COC with direct program transfer. For these COC requirements, see <https://www.ecfm.org/evsp/evspcocmemo.pdf>.

**Please contact JProgram@intealth.org
with questions about the "departure" COC request process.**