MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Mississippi Primary Care Office

Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is a J-1 Visa?

The J-1 Visa allows international medical graduates to come to the United States under an educational exchange program for up to seven (7) years. When the visa expires, they must return home for at least two (2) years before applying for a permanent visa in the United States.

What is a J-1 visa waiver?

A J-1 Visa waiver eliminates the two (2) year home residency requirement and allows the physician to remain in the United States to practice medicine in a designated medically underserved area (MUA) or a health professional shortage area (HPSA). State government agencies can sponsor J-1 physician waiver requests.

How do I request a J-1 Visa Waiver?

The Mississippi Primary Care Office (PCO) is designated to serve as the State Contact and clearinghouse for the Mississippi Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program. Only waiver requests submitted from a healthcare facility or immigration attorney to the PCO on behalf of the J-1 Physician will be considered for program participation.

Applications are accepted year-round beginning October 1st. However, you must first apply to the U.S. Department of State (DOS) for a case file number, which you will need for the J-1 Visa waiver application.

More information is listed on the MSDH website: J-1 Visa Waivers - Mississippi State Department of Health (ms.gov)

How do I apply for a U.S. Department of State case file number?

Before an applicant may apply for a J-1 Visa waiver, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) requires that the applicant complete a federal Form DS-3035.

Instructions on how to complete the DS-3035 are available on the DOS website: https://j1visawaiverrecommendation.state.gov

What is the cost to apply?

A non-refundable processing fee of **$2,000.00** is required to process a Mississippi Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Application. A check or money order from the sponsoring facility should be payable to the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) and submitted with the completed Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Application. A Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver

application will be considered complete with the submission of the processing fee. Application review will be postponed until receipt of payment.

What are the physician applicant requirements?

The physician must agree to practice medicine full-time in the identified healthcare facility for a minimum of three (3) years and begin employment within ninety (90) days of receipt of their waiver. The physician must agree to provide care for a minimum of 40 hours per week.

What are the employer requirements?

The employer must also agree to employ the visa waiver recipient for at least three (3) years at the identified site and plan to increase the possibility of retaining the physician.

The medical facility or practice site must be in a county or portion of a county currently designated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services as an HPSA for primary medical care or mental health, in the case of the recruitment of psychiatrists.

Facilities not located in an HPSA must have at least 30% of their patients from the nearby HPSA(s) to qualify for the application. The facility must submit the facility's patient origin data (by county) for the previous calendar year within the Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Application.

Where are Mississippi's health professional shortage areas (HPSAs) and medically underserved area/population (MUA) designations?

Mississippi has federally designated shortage areas in rural and urban areas. To determine if a county, group of census tracts, or facility is currently designated as a shortage area, click on the links below:

- HPSA: http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/
- MUA: http://muafind.hrsa.gov/

What if a physician wants to apply to work in a non-HPSA or MUA?

The Conrad State J-1 Visa Waiver Program legislation authorizes up to ten (10) FLEX slots to place physicians in practice sites not located in a federal shortage area if documentation is provided to demonstrate that the facility serves patients who reside in one or more federally designated shortage areas or meet other unusually high-need criteria determined by the MSDH.

Which applicants are given priority?

The Mississippi State Department of Health recognizes that rural areas have significant shortages of providers and a need for assistance with the recruitment of physicians. The Conrad State J-1 Visa Waiver Program has made practice sites in rural communities, and physicians who will be practicing in rural areas Mississippi's priority. In addition, priority consideration is also given to primary care physicians and psychiatrists aiming to practice in designated health professional shortage areas (HPSAs).

How does the Mississippi Conrad State 30/J-1 Visa Program define a primary care physician?

Physicians who have completed a U.S. residency training program in family practice, general practice, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, and obstetrics/gynecology are considered primary care physicians and are eligible to participate in Mississippi's Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program. Psychiatrists may also be considered for program participation.

Additional information is available on the MSDH website: Microsoft Word - Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Guidelines Nov 2014.docx (ms.gov)

How are applications reviewed in Mississippi?

All applications received are reviewed for basic eligibility and how well the application meets the priorities set out in the Mississippi Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver program policies. A second-level review process assesses the application against overall need statewide and locally and assigns support to those applications that will most closely meet the goal of increasing access to care for vulnerable populations and high-need areas.

A copy of the program policy is available on the MSDH website at Microsoft Word - Conrad State 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Guidelines Nov 2014.docx (ms.gov)

How are specialist physician applications reviewed?
Applications for physicians trained in other specialties are reviewed and supported as described above.

Who to contact for more information about the Mississippi Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program?
Mississippi Primary Care Office
Email: physicianvisawaiver@msdh.ms.gov
Phone: (601) 576 -7216

Mailing Address:
ATTN: Mississippi Primary Care Office
Mississippi State Department of Health
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This information has been provided by the Mississippi Primary Care Office at the Mississippi State Department of Health.

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