International Student
Resource Center

J-1 Visa Sponsorship Options:

a guide for employers, scholars, and schools

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Executive Summary

The J-1 Exchange Visitor visa promotes cultural exchange while enabling U.S. companies to welcome international talent through collaborations with academic institutions or third-party sponsors. By hosting J-1 participants, U.S. employers can bring new perspectives to their organizations, access talent with specialized skills, advance research and innovation, and strengthen their global networks and partnerships.

How It Works

Companies normally cannot sponsor J-1 visas directly. Instead, companies typically host a J-1 visa holder by partnering with either a State Department-designated J-1 sponsor (such as Cultural Vistas, Cenet, AIC) or a college/university through the BridgeUSA "J-1 STEM Initiative". The J-1 STEM Research Initiative is particularly relevant for STEM companies seeking to hire international graduates or researchers when the H-1B, or other alternative visa pathways, are not viable.

Academic Sponsorship (STEM Initiative)

Universities can sponsor J-1 research scholars hosted at private sector STEM companies, broadening research ties while providing a visa pathway for international researchers. The process involves institutional review, a worksite visit, and ongoing compliance reporting to the State Department.

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01

The J-1 Visa Option

International students and scholars may wish to come to the U.S. for the purposes of study or basic research, and then wish to apply those skills in their field after graduation, or a postdoc period. to remain to work following graduation, or a postdoc period. Non U.S. citizens may also be interested in teaching positions, field specialist positions, or trainee and internship programs. There are various visa options, but the J-1 visa, while including a cultural component, can often provide a meaningful pathway that may be quicker to obtain, and less expensive than other visa pathways.

There are currently regulatory and policy drawbacks to the H-1B visa that might make the H-1B visa unviable for a company seeking talent from around the world.

One solution to the sponsorship question can be found in the J-1 Exchange Visitor visa category. Typically used for programs with an academic and or cultural exchange component, the J-1 visa allows companies to add a global perspective to their team while participating in cultural exchange and academic enrichment. While companies themselves normally cannot directly sponsor for the J visa, the sponsoring process usually goes through an organization or post-secondary academic institution designated by the U.S. State Department as a J-1 sponsor third party organization authorized by the U.S. State Department, or through an academic institution of higher education (college or university), which is also authorized by the Department of State.

Employer Considerations

Access to the best talent should not be constrained by the politics of immigration regulations. If the best talent is located in another country, or subject to U.S. regulations from within the U.S. there are pathways that can facilitate hiring and employment.

For the J-1, the employer will need to contract with a J-1 visa sponsor designated by the U.S. State Department (such as Cenet, AIC, Teacher Lounge, or Cultural Vistas), or create an agreement for sponsorship through an academic institution.

The J-1 is not a standard work visa — it carries cultural exchange requirements, and employees must demonstrate intent to return to their home country. If an employer later wishes to retain the employee long-term or pursue permanent residency, separate immigration counsel is required. The J-1 visa category is a non-immigrant visa, without a clear pathway to U.S. permanent resident status.

There are several categories of sponsorship that allow programs for research, teaching, specialized knowledge, or training. Each category has differing eligibility requirements and allowed durations. Depending on the J-1 visa category, J-1 programs can last from a single day for J-1 Short-Term Scholars, a few weeks to one year for J-1 Interns, or between 3 weeks and 5 years for J-1 Research Scholars.

Timing

Processing paperwork for a J-1 visa can take anywhere from a few days (if the person is already present in the U.S. in J status) to several months (if the person is outside the U.S. and needs to process a visa application at a U.S.Consulate). Generally allowing a month or so for the processing is reasonable.

While a change of status from another visa type to J-1 may be possible, there are challenges to that process. Be sure to consult with the sponsor on whether a consular application for a new J visa would be better.

Costs

J-1 sponsorship fees typically run $1,000–$2,000 per candidate per year, though longer term sponsorships and packages that might include required health insurance and screenings could run higher. Government fees include a $220 SEVIS fee and $185 visa application fee. J-1 candidates and accompanying family members are required to obtain health insurance coverage that complies with State Department requirements. Processing the J-1 paperwork generally takes a few weeks to several months depending on whether the individual is already in the U.S. or requires visa processing at a U.S. consulate overseas.

Program Extension

Under current regulations, a J-1 program may be extended by having the Responsible officer issue an updated DS-2019 form. There is a new regulation that would also require an extension application be filed with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), but as of September 14, 2026, this rule is halted by litigation challenging the rule. If the new rule goes into effect, the J-1 visa holder (and any J-2 dependents) will be required to submit Form I-539 to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in order to extend their underlying J-1 (and J-2, if applicable) immigration status. The filing fee is $470 (paper filing) or $420 (online filing). This filing fee can be paid either by the employer or the individual.

Recruiting Talent

Finding and recruiting the best talent for the employer will usually be best managed by the Employer. The staff or HR personnel at the employer will likely have the best understanding of what qualifications are needed for a given position. Collaborations with academic or research institutes both in the U.S. and abroad, can be effective places to find qualified personnel.

Employee retention

J-1 positions have varying permissible durations, from one day to five years. The J-1 program is a visa sponsorship with cultural exchange components, and is therefore much more than a straightforward work visa. The J-1 visitor must have access to intercultural opportunities.The J visa also requires the applicant to prove “non-immigrant intent”, meaning the applicant must show strong ties to the home country in order to be approved for the J-1 visa. During the application process, the J-1 candidate will generally need to demonstrate that there is no intention for permanent employment. If the employer later decides to sponsor the J-1 employee for permanent resident status, or for a longer term work visa such as the H-1B, they must consult with an immigration attorney to determine the available options. Sponsor organizations may also have restrictions.

Employee Considerations

Non-immigrant intent

In order to be approved for a J visa the applicant must prove to the Consular Officer that they have "non-immigrant intent", meaning they can show strong ties to the home country, and demonstrate an intent to return back to the home country when the J program ends.

Home residency requirement (INA section 212(e))

In some cases, people sponsored for J-1 visas may be required to return to their home country for a two year period, before returning to the U.S. under a work visa (H-1B or L-1) or U.S. permanent residency. Whether or not someone would be subject to 212(e) depends on a few things:

- Direct government funding for international exchange from the home country government or the U.S. government

Inclusion on the U.S. government's "Skills list"

- Medical Training under sponsorship from the Educational Commission for foreign medical graduates

If a person is found to be subject to 212(e), it will normally be noted on the J-1 visa, and also stamped on the DS-2019 form. If the employee is not sure if they are subject, they can write to the State Department for an " advisory opinion ". An employee can also apply for a waiver to the 212(e) requirement. Information on the waiver application process can be found here . Approvals of waiver applications are common for those subject by the skills list. It is usually not possible to get a waiver approval if subject from direct government funding or medical education.

Important Note:

In December 2024, the U.S. Department of State updated the Skills List, eliminating 35 countries from the list, including India and China. As a result, citizens of the 37 countries are no longer subject to the 2-year requirement based on the Skills List, however, other bases for the 2-year home residency requirement may still apply.

Change of status vs. travel

If the prospective J-1 is already inside the U.S. in a different visa status, it may be possible to apply for a change of immigration status to J-1 from inside the U.S. This requires the filing of form I-539 with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The filing fee is $420, and it can take several months to a year to process.

The preferred method for a J-1 candidate to gain J-1 status, for most J-1 sponsors, would be for the person to depart the U.S. to apply for the new J-1 visa using the DS-2019 form issued by the sponsor. This can take a month or more, depending on visa appointment availability, and possible security delays.

If the person is in the U.S. already in J-1 status, it may be possible to transfer the J-1 program to the new sponsor without exiting the U.S. The category currently held (such as research scholar) must match the category under the new sponsorship.

Travel restrictions and bans

There are currently a range of travel restrictions and bans affecting citizens of certain countries. You can find a listing of the impacted countries and a description of the terms of the bans here: https://www.nafsa.org/regulatory-information/quick-reference-country-restriction-table

If a person is from one of these countries, it will be necessary to review the travel restrictions that will apply to see if visa application and travel to the U.S. will be possible.

Full travel ban

(i.e., entry suspended for immigrants and all nonimmigrants)

Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burma (Myanmar), Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Laos, Libya, Mali, Niger, Palestinian Authority Travel Documents Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen

Partial travel ban

(i.e., entry suspended for immigrants, and on B-1, B-2, B-1/B-2, F, M, and J nonimmigrant visas)

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Burundi, Cote d 'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Accompanying family

The spouse and children (under the age of 21) of the J-1 can accompany them to the U.S. by applying for and receiving J-2 dependent visas. The J-2 visa allows the children to attend public school in the U.S., and the spouse is allowed to apply for a temporary work card by applying to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The only restriction is that the money earned by the J-2 spouse cannot be used to support the J-1.

The J-2 status of the family members is dependent upon the J-1 status of the employee. If the J-1 permanently departs the U.S. or their program ends, the J-2 family members would lose their status, and must depart as well.

There is a new DHS rule, currently halted by litigation, which would eliminate the admission notation of "Duration of Status" for J visa holders and replace it with a fixed admission period. If the rule goes into effect, J-2 dependents will have a fixed admission period, which will typically align with the J-1's program end date. Under the pending rule, if the J-1's program end date is extended by the J-1 sponsor, the J-1 and J-2 dependents will need to apply for an extension in order to maintain their underlying immigration status either by filing Form I-539 with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Status, or departing the United States and returning with a valid visa stamp and extended Form DS-2019. If filing Form I-539, dependents can be included in the J-1's Form I-539 extension request at no separate fee if filed on paper by mail. If filing online, each dependent will be required to submit a separate form and pay a separate fee.

02

Department of State Designated J-1 Sponsors

Employers in the U.S. can partner with third party organizations that are designated by the U.S. State Department to provide J visa sponsorships. There are a range of categories of sponsorship and positions that would qualify. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html

BridgeUSA maintains a list of third-party sponsors for the various J-1 categories: https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/how-to-apply/sponsor-search/

The following are a few of the larger sponsors for the research, intern, teacher, trainee and specialist categories.

Cultural Vistas

Programs
https://culturalvistas.org/our-programs/j1services
Cultural Vistas J-1 Program One-pager

Fees
https://culturalvistas.org/j-1-fees-intern-trainee-research-scholar-specialist

Resources
J-1 Research Scholar Qualification Guide
J-1 Specialist Qualification Guide

Cultural Exchange Network (Cenet)

Programs
https://www.cenet.org/professional-exchanges

Resources
FAQs: BridgeUSA Research Scholar, Short-Term Scholar, Professor, & Specialist Programs

American Immigration Council (AIC)

Programs
https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/cultural-exchange/

Fees
https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fees/

Teacher Lounge

https://www.teacherlounge.org/

Programs
https://www.teacherlounge.org/teachers/

03

Academia to Industry: J-1 STEM Initiative Options

International students and scholars on F-1 or J-1 visas may be interested in changing their visa status to allow for future work permission in the U.S. Normally this would likely involve a change of status from F-1 or J-1 to an H-1B work visa. This is the usually preferred path, as the H-1B visa allows “dual intent”, meaning that it allows the holder to have immigrant intent, and eventually pursue U.S. permanent resident status.

Given certain circumstances, the H-1B visa path may not be a viable option for some internationals or their employers. In this case, exploring a J-1 STEM Initiative sponsorship may be useful.

J-1 STEM International Scholar Sponsorship Initiative

The U.S. Department of State (DoS) through their “BridgeUSA ” J-1 STEM Sponsorship Initiative allows designated companies as well as academic institutions to sponsor J-1 research visas in STEM fields for external institutions and companies.

Traditionally, the J visa program has been used by academic institutions to bring scholars from other countries to conduct research and/or teach at that institution. Through this program, colleges and universities can facilitate the sponsorship of J-1 Exchange Research Scholars at third-party host companies doing business in STEM fields. The program streamlines the visa process for scholars who have appointments or position offers at qualifying US STEM companies.

These sponsorships can offer a way forward to the international student or scholar, allow a good hire for the host company, even broaden the scope of research done by the universities and affiliated or collaborative relationships with outside companies.

Some scenarios to which this sponsorship category could apply are:

Support for international graduates:

Research positions offered to international college or university graduates at STEM companies, when an H-1B work visa is not an option

Academic / Tech hubs:

Sponsorship support for international students involved in collaborative entrepreneurial programs between academic institutions and tech or science-based companies

External research support:

Research positions offered to internationals at start-up STEM companies in areas of interest to the academic institution

It is important to note that the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) fosters global understanding through educational and cultural exchanges. As a result, sponsorship under this visa category is not a typical work visa, although it does allow salaried and compensated work. All exchange visitors sponsored through this program will be part of the J-1 research scholar program mission to promote the exchange of ideas, research, mutual enrichment and linkages between research and academic institutions in the United States and foreign countries. More information about the requirements for host companies can be found on the BridgeUSA website.

J-1 Sponsorship Process

Final determination as to whether the company is in a STEM field, or the position offered qualifies under the State Department policies is made solely by representatives of the sponsoring college or university.

The sponsorship for the J-1 STEM Initiative might involve several steps:

1. The university representative should meet with the sponsoring company's HR office representative, the scholar's work or performance supervisor, and the scholar, to discuss the process and review the work conditions and location. A contract for sponsorship between the company and the school should be signed by both the school and the hosting company.

2. The Responsible Officer (RO) or the Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) for the school's J-1 program will visit the work location to ensure the facilities and the purpose of the exchange falls within State Department policies.

3. The hosting company and the international will submit applications for sponsorship to the school's J-1 program representative (RO or ARO).

4. The RO or ARO will review the position offered and the person's educational and experiential credentials to ensure an appropriate match with State Department guidelines.

5. If approved, the RO or ARO will issue Form DS-2019 and send it to the international, with a copy to the HR representative at the host company.

6. If outside the U.S. the international will apply for the J-1 visa at a U.S. Consulate, and enter the U.S. in J-1 status. If inside the U.S. in a different visa status, the international may explore the option of filing a change of status application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If the person is already in J-1 status, in an academic category, the process is even simpler – involving either a transfer of the SEVIS record to the new sponsoring school, or the addition of a "site of activity" and amended funding, if the original school will continue to sponsor for the new host company.

7. The scholar completes the required check-in with the ARO or RO.

Conditions of the Position

The duration of the sponsored research position may be between three weeks and five years. Sponsorship may be for up to one year initially, with up to four subsequent annual extensions for the researcher and professor categories. The Specialist category is limited to one year total. The employer must pay the offered salary and provide health insurance and other benefits as are offered to other employees. If the position is non-funded, the international would have to show evidence of personal funds sufficient to support themselves.

The Responsible Officer (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) at the academic institution is responsible for reporting certain information regarding the sponsorship to the U.S. Department of State and Department of Homeland Security. This will require information from, and communication between, the company and the College or University.

Once in the U.S., the international scholar will complete a required check-in with the RO or ARO, confirming they have entered the U.S. in the correct J-1 status and are beginning the sponsored position. Depending upon the length of the position, subsequent “check-ins” with the RO or ARO may be required to ensure the sponsorship is progressing smoothly and successfully, including ensuring availability to cross-cultural events and / or programming.

The J-1 researcher must comply with health insurance requirements set by the Dept. of State and must be offered health insurance that is normally offered by the employer to all employees. This must include supplemental medevac and repatriation insurance.

The position may be funded by the hosting employer, or it may be self-funded by the J-1. It can also be funded by outside agencies or organizations.

Possible Home Residency Requirement (INA section 212(e))

Certain individuals may be subject to a 2-year home residency requirement following a J-1 position sponsorship, if they have received direct government funding, or if they are from a country that has a “ Skills List ” on file with the U.S. Department of State. This list was revised in December of 2024, to remove many countries, retroactively, including China and India. The 2-year home residency rule prevents the subject person from getting an H-1B work visa, an L-1 visa, or U.S. permanent residence, and from changing status to nearly any other category in the U.S., until the 2-year period is fulfilled, or the person receives a waiver.

Sponsorship Costs:

The college or university is allowed to charge a fee for the sponsorship. Additional fees may also be charged if travel is required to inspect the worksite.

In addition, the international scholar will need to pay the “SEVIS” fee to the U.S. government prior to applying for the U.S. visa, and the U.S. visa application fee to the U.S. Dept. of State. The fees may be paid by the company or the scholar. As of Spring 2026 these fees are:

SEVIS fee:	$220
US Visa application fee:	$185

Depending upon the country of citizenship, there may be an additional visa application “reciprocity” fee. These government fees are subject to change.

04

Sample Draft Contract

If an institution of higher education chooses to sponsor a J-1 exchange visitor for an outside STEM company, it is likely they will wish to enter into a formal agreement. While not required by the U.S. State Department, an executed contract can help to avoid misunderstandings between the parties, and outline the relevant obligations and requirements.

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SPONSORED EXCHANGE VISITOR AGREEMENT

This Sponsored Exchange Visitor Agreement ("Agreement") is made and entered into on the date of the final signature below, by and between XXXX and YYYY on behalf of the XXXX and <Host Company>.

WHEREAS XXXX desires to sponsor eligible international exchange visitors for quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) training and/or research opportunities with U.S.-based STEM businesses, offering researchers and students from other countries opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experience.

AND WHEREAS <Host Company> desires to offer eligible international exchange visitors quality STEM training and/or research opportunities in their respective fields of study and expertise;

AND WHEREAS XXXX and <Host Company> desire to comply with US immigration regulations and other applicable law in such collaboration;

THEREFORE XXXX and <Host Company> hereby agree as follows:

I. Program Summary

A. This Agreement is designed to establish Exchange Visitor Sponsorships under the U.S. State Department's "BridgeUSA Program" (hereinafter "Program") whereby XXXX may sponsor eligible international exchange visitors ("hereinafter "Exchange Visitors") for quality STEM training and research opportunities at <Host Company>.

B. XXXX's Office International Scholar Services (ISS) shall coordinate the Program on behalf of XXXX, communicating with <Host Company> and Exchange Visitor on behalf of XXXX.

C. Eligible companies must be authorized to do business in the State of ZZ.

II. Nomination, Application and Approval

A. <Host Company> and XXXX ISS must file statements of interest with the U.S. State Department. These documents and related information may be currently found online at: https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/early-career-stem-research-initiative

B. In addition to XXXX ISS screening STEM host candidates, the <Host Company> may identify and nominate Exchange Visitors to participate in the Program. All Exchange Visitors are subject to the review and approval of XXXX ISS.

C. Host shall provide XXXX ISS with a copy of the appropriate invitation letter. The letter must include the following:

- <Host Company> name and address;
- Description of the services and/or mission of <Host Company>.;
- Confirmation that <Host Company> operates in a STEM field;
- Proposed position title and a list of duties and responsibilities;
- Minimum degree required by the position;
- Name, date of birth, and citizenship of Exchange Visitor;
- Minimum degree earned by Exchange Visitor;
- Start and end date of position;
- Worksite address, with telephone number and email address; and
- Offered salary and benefits, including housing and living expense reimbursements.

D. <Host Company> shall require the Exchange Visitor to provide XXXX ISS with the following:

- Copy of their CV and highest degree certificate earned;
- Address in home country; and
- Cell phone number and email address.

E. XXXX ISS shall review the material submitted pursuant to Section (C) and (D) herein. XXXX ISS may request that materials be supplemented and/or may require that additional materials be submitted. If XXXX ISS requests additional documentation from the Exchange Visitor or <Host Company> the documentation must be provided in 10 business days.

F. <Host Company> shall be responsible for payment of XXXX ISS sponsorship fees relating to the hosting agreement. These fees currently include $xxx for an initial sponsorship broken down into an Initial Review Fee and a Sponsorship Fee (see below). There will be a $xxx fee for an amendment or extension. Fees are subject to change at the discretion of XXXX.

- The <Host Company> will be invoiced for an initial non-refundable “Review Fee” of $xxx.
- If the sponsorship proposed meets all State Department and XXXX requirements, the company will be invoiced the final sponsorship fee of $xxx. The final document to facilitate the visa application will not be issued until the final payment is received.

G. Pursuant to State Department policies, a representative from XXXX ISS will initially visit the worksite location, either virtually or in person, to confirm the appropriate nature of the working conditions. Cost of a site visit if required, including but not limited to travel, meals, and lodging if necessary, will be the responsibility of <Host Company>. XXXX ISS will invoice the <Host Company> for these expenses within ten days after completion of the site visit.

H. Subject to the Exchange Visitor's qualifications, Department of State regulations, and XXXX ISS policies regarding J-1 sponsorships, XXXX ISS shall issue the required paperwork for the Exchange Visitor's J-1 visa application, and forward the same to the Exchange Visitor.

I. XXXX ISS can only submit the required paperwork for the Exchange Visitor's J-1 visa application. XXXX ISS cannot guarantee a J-1 visa will be approved by the U.S. Consulate.

J. <Host Company> shall ensure that the Exchange Visitor completes an online immigration check-in form with XXXX ISS upon entry to the U.S. and uploads copies of the following documents:

- Valid passport;
- U.S. J-1 visa (Canadians are exempt from this required document);

I-94 sheet from www.cbp.gov/i94; and

- Signed DS-2019 form.

K. Failure to meet the requirements set forth in subsection (J) above shall result in termination of the Exchange Visitor's SEVIS immigration record.

III. Compliance

A. <Host Company> shall provide access to XXXX ISS staff for periodic worksite visits, either virtually or in-person, to ensure the facility is appropriate to the position as required by U.S. immigration regulations, applicable law, and XXXX ISS policies. Costs of these visits will be the responsibility of Host. Cost of a site visit if required, including but not limited to travel, meals, and lodging if necessary, will be the responsibility of <Host Company>. XXXX ISS will invoice the <Host Company> for these expenses within ten days after completion of the site visit.

B. Failure to allow for a site visit by XXXX ISS may result in the termination of the Exchange Visitor's SEVIS immigration record.

C. XXXX ISS shall send periodic email requests to <Host Company> and Exchange Visitor to confirm the sponsorship is progressing successfully. <Host Company> shall promptly reply to these requests and ensure Exchange Visitor promptly replies to these requests. Failure to reply to these requests and/or ensure that Exchange Visitor promptly replies to these requests may result in termination of the scholar's SEVIS record.

D. The <Host Company> acknowledges that XXXX ISS office is responsible for reporting to the Department of State pursuant to the regulations found at 22 CFR Chapter 1, Subchapter G, Part 62 to report and said reporting is not discretionary.

IV. Modification, Extension, and Termination

A. <Host Company> and Exchange Visitor shall provide XXXX ISS with no less than 30 days advanced written notice of any proposed changes to the terms of Exchange Visitor's position and activities with <Host Company>. XXXX ISS shall review such proposed changes to determine if they are within the scope of the original purpose of the exchange agreement, as outlined in the original position offer letter. XXXX ISS will authorize these changes and re-issue the DS-2019 form if appropriate and in compliance with U.S. immigration regulations, applicable law, and XXXX policies. XXXX ISS retains the right to decline to authorize changes and re-issue the DS-2019 form.

B. <Host Company> may provide an updated position offer letter and proof of salary and request that XXXX ISS extend the DS-2019 form for a longer time period. Extensions shall be subject to applicable immigration requirements, law, and XXXX policies. <Host Company> is aware that pursuant to a final rule, Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media, effective September 15, 2026, following the issuance of any extended DS-2019 by XXXX ISS, in order to maintain lawful immigration status, the Exchange Visitor will be required to extend their underlying immigration status directly with the U.S. federal government by either:

Submitting a completed and signed Form I-539 , Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to request an extension of stay, or

- Departing the United States and re-entering with the extended DS-2019, provided that the Exchange Visitor has a valid J-1 visa and is not from a country on a travel ban or restriction list.

C. Six months before the DS-2019 expires, XXXX ISS shall provide notice to <Host Company> and Exchange Visitor that the sponsorship is ending.

D. <Host Company> shall terminate the Exchange Visitor's participation in the Program by the end date on the DS-2019 form, and advise Exchange Visitor that they should depart the U.S. within 30 days following the DS-2019 end date, but may consult with an immigration attorney and the <Host Company> about options to change status and or otherwise remain in the U.S. if allowed under U.S. regulations.

E. If <Host Company> and Exchange Visitor desire to continue with the position sponsorship beyond the DS-2019 end date in a new visa status, without XXXX as a sponsor, <Host Company> shall notify XXXX ISS of the same and forward XXXX ISS a copy of the new approved status within 10 days of approval.

V. General Terms

A. XXXX ISS appoints <Insert Position/Name> and <Host Company> appoints <Insert Position > to coordinate the development and implementation of this Program.

B. Neither party shall discriminate against any Exchange Visitor on account of such Exchange Visitor's race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

C. Neither party is an agent, employee, or servant of the other. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to create a partnership or joint venture between the parties. Neither party shall have the authority to make any promise, representation, or to enter into contractual obligations on the other party's behalf.

D. Neither party has made any representations or promises regarding the services to be provided beyond this Agreement.

E. The parties understand that the granting of the J-1 Visa is at the sole discretion of the United States Department of State.

F. The parties will attempt in good faith to settle any disputes arising under this Agreement.

G. All activities developed hereunder will be in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, including but not limited to applicable immigration and export control regulations.

H. The parties understand that the XXXX IS, as a J-1 Program sponsor approved by the U.S. Department of State will have certain reporting requirements pursuant to regulations found at 22 CFR Part 62.

I. The <Host Company> shall participate fully in the defense of, indemnify, and hold harmless XXXX IS, XXXX, and their Agents from and against each and every claim, arising out of or relating to any act, omission, willful misconduct, violation of Applicable Law or governmental requirements, or breach of this Agreement, of or by Host or its Agents, except where such Claim is caused by or attributable to any negligent act or omission, willful misconduct, of XXXX ISS and XXXX. Except with respect to Host's indemnity obligations, neither Party shall be liable to the other for indirect, incidental, or consequential damages arising out of the terms or conditions of the Agreement or with respect to any performance hereunder except when such damages were caused by gross negligence or willful misconduct of a party. The liability provisions in this section shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

J. This Agreement does not grant <Host Company> any rights to use any trademarks, logos or service marks belonging to XXXX. Should <Host Company> request the use of any trademark, logo or service mark to perform its obligations under this Agreement, a request shall be made in writing to the XXXX's Division of Marketing and Communications, which may be granted or denied upon XXXX's sole discretion.

K. This Agreement and all issues arising under or relating to this Agreement, including, without limitation, its construction, interpretation, breach, and damages for breach, shall be governed and construed in accordance shall be governed by, construed and applied in accordance with the laws of the United States and the State of XX, excluding any conflicts or choice of law rule or principle that otherwise might refer construction or interpretation of this Agreement to the substantive law of another jurisdiction.

L. The parties agree that any claim arising under or relating to this Agreement shall be brought only in the state courts of ZZ County, ZZ.

M. Neither Party shall be liable for any delay or failure of performance of any obligation hereunder by reason of Force Majeure; provided however, that a Party asserting any excuse for delay or failure of performance shall: (a) immediately notify the other Party; (b) be excused from such performance only to the extent of such duty or failure; (c) undertake good-faith efforts to resume performance hereunder and do all things reasonably possibly to remove the cause of such delay or failure and mitigate its effect; and (d) continue performance hereunder with the utmost dispatch as soon as the cause for such delay or failure is removed. In the event any delay failure of performance is attributable to Force Majeure, the time for performance affected by Force Majeure shall be extended for a period equal to the time lost by reason of such delay or failure; provided, however, that if such delay or failure is not attributable to Force Majeure and continues for a period of ninety (90) days or more, then the other party may, at its option, terminate this Agreement. In the even any Force Majeure exists for more than sixty (60) days, the Parties shall meet to negotiate in good faith a mutually satisfactory solution to such Force Majeure.

N. Unless sooner canceled as provided below, this Agreement shall be valid for up to “#” years, commencing on execution. This Agreement may be renewed or amended at any time with the mutual written consent of the parties. This Agreement may also be canceled at any time by either party upon not less than ninety (90) days written notice, provided any Exchange Visitor currently in the Program may complete the same and any and all obligations herein shall remain in place with respect to such Exchange Visitor until their participation in the Program concludes.

O. This Agreement contains the entire understanding of the parties concerning its subject matter.

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Examples from the field

Some institutions have put in place programs to allow for STEM Initiative sponsorships for outside organizations or companies. Internal policies differ as to how the institution manages the program, and the criteria used for determining eligibility for sponsorship, but all hope these sponsorships will improve their J-1 programs, and cultivate new research and corporate connections.

University of Connecticut

Global Talent Initiative

Rutgers University

STEM Research Sponsorship Program

University of Georgia

STEM Initiative Sponsorship

More Information:

More information about the J-1 STEM Initiative can be found on the U.S. State Department website or on ResearcherUSA.com

See also the following webinar on the J-1 Early Career STEM Research Pathway hosted by the International Student Resource Center, the Presidents' Alliance on HIgher Education and Immigration and Cultural Vistas, on May 6, 2026.

Find a partial list of J-1 sponsors designated by the U.S. Department of State.