A J-2 is defined as a dependent (spouse, or child under 21) of a J-1 Exchange Visitor. If the J-2 dependent meets the required criteria and complies with the guidelines for employment, any type of lawful employment is permitted, full or part-time. However, it cannot be for the purpose of supporting the J-1 parent or spouse.

Below are the regulations applicable to J-2 Employment:

**Employment (8CFR 214.2(j)(1)(v))**

(A) The accompanying spouse and minor children of a J-1 exchange visitor may accept employment only with authorization by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. A request for employment authorization must be made on Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, with fee, as required by the Service, to the district director having jurisdiction over the J-1 exchange visitor’s temporary residence in the United States. Income from the spouse’s or dependent’s employment may be used to support the family’s customary recreational and cultural activities and related travel, among other things. Employment will not be authorized if this income is needed to support the J-1 principal alien. (Amended 6/3/95; 60 FR 21973)

(B) J-2 employment may be authorized for the duration of the J-1 principal alien’s authorized stay as indicated on Form I-94 or a period of four years, whichever is shorter. The employment authorization is valid only if the J-1 is maintaining status. Where a J-2 spouse or dependent child has filed a timely application for extension of stay, only upon approval of the request for extension of stay may he or she apply for a renewal of the employment authorization on a Form I-765 with the required fee.*

**Application Process**

Please note that the information below is provided as general guidance and not as specific or legal advice. USCIS fees, processes and regulations are subject to change, and it is imperative that the J-2 applicant go to uscis.gov/files/form/i-765instr.pdf, prior to submitting the application, to be updated on any USCIS regulatory changes, changes in USCIS fees or USCIS processes. (Also see USCIS filing locations and addresses, as well as option to e-file, if interested, on above website.)

To apply for employment, the J-2 dependent must submit the following:

- Form I-765 (uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf) (Instructions are included with the form and should be read carefully.)
  - In item 3, use an address that will not change as mail from USCIS will not be forwarded
  - In item 16, write: (C)(5)
  - The J-2 applicant signs the form in blue ink
- $380 check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
- Letter explaining why work authorization is sought (see sample below), written by J-2 applicant; the letter should state that employment is not necessary to support the J-1
- Photocopies of the J-2’s and J-1’s current and prior DS-2019 forms
- Two photos (Photos should be passport style: white background, un-mounted glossy, un-retouched, with a full face position, and taken no earlier than 30 days before submission to USCIS. Lightly print your name on the back of each photo with pencil. Place the photos in a small plastic bag or envelope and staple to the I-765 form.)
- Photocopy of the identification page in the J-2’s passport
- Photocopy of the visa page in J-2’s passport
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- Photocopy of J-2's I-94 card (front and back, or printout if accessed online)
- Photocopies of any Employment Authorization Document (EAD) cards issued previously to the J-2
- Photocopy of the J-2's driver's license or other photo identification, if available
- Marriage certificate (if spouse of the J-1), or birth certificate (if child of the J-1); foreign-language documents should include an English translation

*Employment is generally authorized up to twelve months, and may be renewed annually. However, if J-2 status (DS-2019) is valid for more than one year, the J-2 can attempt to request more time by submitting a statement such as "I would like to request employment until the end date of my DS-2019 on ______ (include actual end date here)."

SAMPLE LETTER

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[Your Phone or Email]

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the J-2 dependent of J-1 Exchange Visitor, (insert J-1's name) and I wish to apply for an Employment Authorization Document. My (insert word “spouse” or “parent”) receives a (insert salary, stipend, grant, scholarship, whichever is relevant) from (insert funding source) sufficient to provide for our living expenses. I am requesting to be employed to pursue (insert activities, such as recreational, cultural, travel, experience in the American workplace, etc.) I respectfully request to be granted permission to be employed in the U.S.

Enclosed are all required documents. (List documents here if prefer):

Thank you very much for your kind assistance.

[Your Name]
[Your Signature]