

## Conrad/30 J1 Visa Waiver Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program?

The Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program allows J-1 medical doctors to apply for a waiver for the two (2) year residence requirement upon completion of the J-1 exchange visitor program. See section 214(l) of the Immigration Nationality Act (INA). The program addresses the shortage of qualified doctors in medically underserved areas.

### 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. State government agencies can sponsor J-1 physician waiver requests.

### 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/>.

### How do I apply for a J-1 visa waiver?

The Massachusetts Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Program is administered by the Health Care Workforce Center at the Department of Public Health (DPH). The DPH only considers requests submitted by the employing health care facility or agency. Applications are typically accepted October 1st through December 31st. Details are in the Massachusetts [program policy](#).

### Where are Massachusetts health professional shortage areas and medically underserved area/population designations?

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

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

Massachusetts has some areas where there are physician shortages in areas that do not currently have a federal designation. Please see the [Massachusetts policy document](#) for details about the Flex

component of the program (also at <https://edit.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/24/conrad30-j1-visawaiver-policies-2017.pdf> )

### **What are the physician applicant requirements?**

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

### **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 have a plan to increase the possibility of retaining the physician.

### **What is the cost to apply?**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) does not charge a fee to apply for a J-1 visa waiver. 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. The DOS charges a processing fee for this case file number.

### **How are applications reviewed in Massachusetts?**

All applications received are reviewed for basic eligibility and how well the application meets the priorities set out in the Massachusetts Conrad-30 / J-1 Visa Waiver program policy using a scoring methodology. 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 our program web portal page at <https://edit.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/24/conrad30-j1-visawaiver-policies-2017.pdf> )

### **How does the Massachusetts Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Program define a primary care physician?**

The Massachusetts Conrad-30/ J-1 Visa Waiver Program recognizes primary care physicians as doctors of osteopathic and allopathic medicine including family medicine and general practice, geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics, and gynecology. Primary care physicians are given a priority in the Massachusetts Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Program.

### **How are specialist physician applications reviewed?**

All applications received by the deadline set by the Department of Public Health will be reviewed and scored as described including specialist physicians.

### **Is there a limit to the number of physicians an applicant agency or employer may request?**

Yes, there is a limit to the number of applications an agency or employer may submit per waiver year to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). Massachusetts will accept for review up to three (3) physician applications per agency or employer per visa waiver year.

The DPH recognizes that in some cases an agency or employer has sites in separate counties. The DPH will account for that in reviewing applications and overall need.

### **If an agency or employer submits multiple applications is there a guarantee that at least one application will be supported by the Department of Public Health (DPH)?**

There is never a guarantee that an application will be supported. All support is at the discretion of DPH and subject to the approval of the U.S. Department of State.

**My rural community has great difficulty recruiting physicians. How are applications from rural areas reviewed?**

The Massachusetts Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Program understands that rural areas have significant shortages of providers and need for assistance with recruitment of physicians. Therefore, the program has made local agencies in rural communities, and physicians who will be practicing in a rural area, one of our key priorities. Some of our rural areas are in HPSAs and/or MUA/Ps, but some are not. The section on Flex slots in our Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program Policy includes detail that would be of interest to rural communities that are not currently in a federally designated shortage area. Please see the Massachusetts policy document for details about the Flex component of the program or: at <https://edit.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/24/conrad30-j1-visawaiver-policies-2017.pdf> )

**What if Massachusetts does not fill all 30 slots in the first review process?**

In the event that Massachusetts does not fill all 30 slots according to priority criteria in the January review, the program **may** open for additional applications and a second round of reviews. Should the program have an additional review session, those eligible applicants that were not supported in the January review will have the option of having their application reviewed again. Any decision about holding a second review will be posted on our webpage.

**Will Massachusetts post the number of applications supported on the web page?**

Yes, the number of slots that are supported will be posted.

**Who do I contact for more information about the Massachusetts Conrad 30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program?**

Email: [Nicole.Watson@state.ma.us](mailto:Nicole.Watson@state.ma.us)

Phone: (617) 624-6051

This information is provided by the Health Care Workforce Center at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.