



## WVHEPC J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

### Dear International Visitor:

Welcome to West Virginia! We are pleased that you will be joining our global community.

Enclosed is the form DS-2019, which you use to obtain a J-1 visa for entry into the U.S. Please read the DS-2019 completely and sign your name where indicated. You will need to present all copies of this form, your passport, two passport-sized photographs, and proof of financial support at the nearest U.S. embassy or Consulate to request your visa. If you should decide to postpone or cancel your visit, please return the form DS-2019 to the HEPC institution that issued the form. You will also need to pay a fee of \$220 called a "SEVIS Fee" prior to applying for your J-1 visa. Instructions on how to do this are below.

Also enclosed is an Exchange Visitor Handbook. It will assist you in making your transition to West Virginia so please read it before your arrival in the U.S. You should pay special attention to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) section of the handbook.

### SCHEDULING A CHECK-IN

**Once your visa is issued but prior to your arrival in West Virginia** you need to schedule a formal "Check-in" with the campus that issued your DS-2019. ALL new international visitors are REQUIRED to "check in" with the appropriate HEPC institution prior to beginning your exchange visitor program.

To schedule a Check-in you should contact the appropriate institution. Visit the WVHEPC J-1 Exchange Visitor webpage at <https://www.globalwv.org/j1evp/> and click on List of Responsible Officers to see list of HEPC institutions and contact information.

### SEVIS FEE

Before applying for a J-1 visa, you may be required to pay a fee of \$220, called the "SEVIS Fee", to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Individuals who are not required to obtain a visa (Canadian students) will be required to pay this fee before entering the United States. The fee can be paid by mail, using Form-901, or by credit card and should be made payable to the Department of Homeland Security. If your visa has been denied, you do not need to pay the fee again if you re-apply for the same visa within nine months of the denial.

### Who Must Pay the Fee

*You will be required to pay this fee if:*

- You are seeking a J-1 visa from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for initial participation in an exchange program. **The fee must be paid before applying for the visa.**
- You will enter the U.S. in J-1 status, but are not required to have a visa. **The fee must be paid before you apply for admission to the U.S.**
- You are applying for a change of status to J-1. **The fee must be paid before you submit your change of status application.**

*The fee is NOT required:*

- For J-2 dependents.
- For J-1 participants in an exchange program sponsored by the U.S. federal government.
- If your immigration status is J-1 and you are transferring to another school, program, or program category.
- If you are requesting an extension of your program or course of study.
- If you paid the fee but your application for a J-1 visa was denied and, within 12 months of the denial, you re-apply for the same status.

## Fee Payment Process

- Prior to paying the fee, you must first receive the SEVIS Form DS-2019, respectively. With this form you will have all the pertinent information to complete the Form I-901, Fee Remittance Form for Certain F, M, and J Nonimmigrants.
- The fee may be paid over the Internet using a credit card, or by mail to a lockbox using a check or money order. Checks and money orders must be in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank. We highly encourage you to use a credit card whenever possible as it will generate the receipt you need quicker.
- Within three days of the fee payment being processed, a paper I-797 receipt is mailed to the applicant. To expedite the process, the student or exchange visitor also has the option to use a courier to deliver the I-797 receipt. The courier option is available at an additional cost of \$30 and is a flat rate so that the cost of the delivery does not depend on the country where the applicant is located.
- Applicants using the internet and paying by credit card will be able to use the receipt generated from such processes as evidence of fee payment. These receipts will be available immediately upon processing.
- Fee payment information will also be electronically provided to SEVIS and the Department of State.

## MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

All J-1 Exchange Visitors (and dependents) **are required** to have health insurance that meets the following requirements: coverage and benefits of \$100,000 per accident or illness; a deductible not in excess of \$500; repatriation of remains of \$25,000; and medical evacuation benefits of \$50,000. The insurance policy must be underwritten by an insurance corporation having an A.M. Best rating of 'A-' or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of 'A-1' or above, a Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability rating of 'A-' or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above. Insurance coverage backed by the full faith and credit of the government of your home country shall be deemed to meet this requirement. You will be required to provide HEPC with proof of insurance that meets the requirements upon arrival. Failure to produce such proof of insurance will result in the termination of your J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.