

J-1 Visa Waiver Program Summary

The purpose of the Maryland Conrad State 30 (J-1 Visa Waiver) Program is to recruit needed primary care and specialty physicians into federally-designated health professional shortage areas. The Maryland Office of Primary Care Access reviews applications and makes recommendations to the U.S. Department of State for foreign - born physicians requesting waivers from their J-1 Visa. The waiver is granted in exchange for the physician's agreement to work in an underserved area for three years.

Congress and the President signed into law a bill granting each state the ability to sponsor annually as many as thirty (30) waivers for J-1 Visa physicians to work in federally-designated shortage areas. This legislation is referred to as the Conrad 30 bill.

The Conrad 30 (or 'State-30') Program exists because states are permitted to recommend visa waivers for a physician recruited to practice in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) of the State. Maryland is authorized, in Section 214-(1) of the Immigration and Nationalization Act [8USC-Section 1184(1)], to submit waiver recommendations to the Waiver Review Section of the U.S. Department of State. In Maryland, this authority is delegated to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where it is handled by the Office of Primary Care Access.

The State of Maryland is willing to recommend physicians holding J-1 Visas for waivers, especially for the purpose of improving access to primary care services in federally designated shortage areas. Out of the 30 slots, Maryland can utilize up to 10 spots as FLEX spots - meaning the provider does not have to be working in a federally designated area.

Process in Maryland:

Every year Maryland receives 30 J-1 Visa slots. These slots are allocated on the federal fiscal year (October - September). Applications are accepted for Primary Care (Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Geriatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry, and General Practice) practicing in underserved areas from October 1 through December 1. From December 1 through September 30 applications are accepted on a rolling basis for specialists and for those in FLEX spots.

DHMH will give preference to those applications from:

- Primary care foreign national physicians in designated HPSAs and MUAs/MUPs;
- Medical practices in underserved communities;
- Medical practices that have a demonstrated historic commitment to serving the underserved; and
- Those medical practices that have had difficulty recruiting physicians because of their geographic location.

For more information contact:

Temi Oshiyoye

Office of Primary Care Access

Phone: 410-767-4467 Fax: 410-333-7501

E-Mail: temi.oshiyoye@maryland.gov

Website: <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/opca/SitePages/J-1%20Information.aspx>