



Pre-Arrival Information for J-1 Exchange Visitors

University of Hawai'i
Faculty and Scholar Immigration Services
www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jprearrivalbooklet
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Welcome to the University of Hawai'i!

Faculty and Scholar Immigration Services (FSIS) is pleased to welcome you to the University of Hawai'i (UH) as a J-1 exchange visitor. Exchange Visitors such as yourself are invited to participate in the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), administered by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), to increase your skills and knowledge in your academic field while you contribute to academic, research, and cultural activities at UH.

This booklet provides general pre-arrival information about the UH EVP in which you will participate. We hope this information will assist you in understanding the nature, objectives, and requirements of the EVP, ease your adjustment to a new environment, and help you gain the fullest benefit from your experience. Although many of your initial questions may be answered by reading the information contained in this booklet, you will probably have other questions or concerns. If you have any questions regarding your UH appointment, you may want to first consult with the HR specialist for your college, school, or research unit. The HR specialist is responsible for submitting immigration requests to our office and can assist you with general UH policies and procedures. If you have immigration questions, please feel free to consult with us as well – our contact information is posted on our website at <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/contact>.

Through activities in research, teaching, lectures, demonstrations and performances, exchange visitors from many different countries contribute to the academic and cultural diversity of UH. We hope that your experience with us proves to be both productive and enjoyable.

Aloha,



Isis Bataluna
Director, Faculty & Scholar Immigration Services
Responsible Officer, University of Hawai'i Exchange Visitor Program

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Overview of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

Responsible agency and program sponsor

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) was created in 1961 by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States (U.S.) and other countries through educational and cultural exchanges. The University of Hawai'i (UH) is designated by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) as an EVP sponsor. UH annually sponsors over 400 J-1 exchange visitors, who participate in a variety of activities as students, professors, research scholars, short-term scholars, and specialists.

The DOS is responsible for the administration and regulation of the EVP. U.S. embassies and consulates abroad also contribute to the administration of the EVP through their visa issuance responsibilities. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for admission and departure requirements as well as the administration of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS is a web-based data system that enables program sponsors to create and process Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-1 Nonimmigrant). All exchange visitor program sponsors must enter an exchange visitor's record in SEVIS and report events as required by the DOS regulations. More information about the EVP is available on the DOS's website at <https://j1visa.state.gov>.

Exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents must comply with all UH policies, rules and procedures, in addition to applicable state and federal statutes, rules and regulations throughout their programs. An exchange visitor may pursue only the activities authorized by the invitation letter and Form DS-2019 you used for admission to or change of status in the U.S. If you engage in any activity that is not covered by the invitation letter and Form DS-2019, you will be in violation of the regulations and your program will be shortened or terminated from the UH program (22 CFR 62.16(b)).

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Before the J-1 Program Begins

To show that you have been selected to participate as an exchange visitor in the UH J-1 program, UH will issue you a SEVIS Form DS-2019 "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-1 Nonimmigrant)." Your UH sponsoring department will mail the Form DS-2019 to you after FSIS issues it.

SEVIS fee

In most cases, you will need to pay the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) fee of \$220 before you can begin the UH program. It may be paid by you or by another person, either in the U.S. or abroad, through the **SEVIS I-901 Fee Processing website** (<https://fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html#>) using a credit card or an ACH bank transaction. After the fee is paid, you should retain the receipt to present with your visa application (if coming from outside the U.S.) or to file with your Form I-539 (if changing status within the U.S.). Failure to pay the SEVIS fee can result in a J-1 visa denial by a U.S. embassy or consulate or refusal of J-1 admission at a U.S. port of entry.

The SEVIS fee must be paid by:

- Anyone applying for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate to begin participating in a new exchange visitor program with a sponsor that does not have a G-1, G-2, or G-3 program code;
- Any Canadian or Bermudian who is applying for J-1 admission at a U.S. port of entry to begin participating in a new exchange visitor program with a sponsor that does not have a G-1, G-2, or G-3 program code;
- Anyone who is in the U.S. applying with USCIS for a change to J-1 status from another nonimmigrant status (e.g., F-1); and
- An EV who is transferring to UH from a federal government sponsor with a G-1, G-2, or G-3 program code.

The SEVIS fee does not need to be paid by:

- J-2 dependents;
- An individual who paid the SEVIS fee, but was denied a J-1 visa by a U.S. embassy/consulate, if you are applying for a second visa in the same J-1 category (e.g., research scholar) within 12 months of the first visa denial;
- An EV who is applying for a visa to return to the U.S. to continue his/her ongoing J-1 program with the same sponsor and in which you have maintained status;
- An EV transferring to UH in the same J-1 category (e.g., research scholar) from a sponsor without a G-1, G-2, or G-3 program code; and
- An EV applying for a J-1 extension in the same program.

The deadlines to pay the SEVIS fee are:

Circumstances	Deadlines
Applying for J-1 visa and entry from outside the U.S.	<p>Citizens of Canada and Bermuda must pay the SEVIS fee and print a receipt at least three business days before applying for J-1 admission at a U.S. port of entry. The SEVIS fee cannot be paid at U.S. ports of entry.</p> <p>Citizens of all other countries must pay the SEVIS fee and print a receipt at least three business days before applying for J-1 visas at U.S. embassies or consulates. The SEVIS fee cannot be paid at U.S. embassies and consulates.</p>
Applying for an in-country change of status to J-1 with USCIS.	You must pay the SEVIS fee after receiving the Form DS-2019, but before submitting the Form I-539 to USCIS. Attach a copy of the SEVIS fee receipt to the Form I-539.
Transferring to UH from a G-1, G-2, or G-3 program.	You must pay the SEVIS fee after receiving the Form DS-2019 at the FSIS registration/orientation session. You should pay the fee within 30 days after the effective date of the transfer.

How to apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate

Anyone who is a citizen of Canada or Bermuda does not need to apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate prior to applying for admission to the U.S. You should present the Form DS-2019 and SEVIS fee receipt to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at a port of entry with your passport to be admitted as a J-1 exchange visitor. Canadian J-2 dependents may follow the same procedures. (Skip down to “How to apply for J-1 admission to the U.S.,” below.)

Anyone who is **not** a citizen of Canada or Bermuda must apply for a J-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate; J-2 family members must apply for J-2 visas. To apply for a J-1/J-2 visa, first visit the U.S. Department of State’s U.S. embassies and consulates website (<https://www.usembassy.gov>) to view the visa application requirements and to make an appointment for a visa interview. It is best to apply at the U.S. embassy/consulate having jurisdiction over your place of residence, though you may apply at any U.S. embassies/consulates worldwide that permit third country nationals’ applications. If you ever overstayed your visa in the U.S., then you must apply for the visa at a consular office in your country of nationality.

J-1 and J-2 visa application requirements differ by embassy/consulate, so check directly with the specific U.S. embassy/consulate on the requirements for the visa application if you have any questions. You and your J-2 dependents should apply for your visas as soon as possible because it may take a while for the consulate to issue the visas. All visa applications undergo a security check and some may require a more extensive security clearance that may take several weeks.

Generally, all J-1 and J-2 visa applications must include:

- DS-160 nonimmigrant visa application confirmation page;
- Visa interview appointment confirmation page;
- Proof of payment of visa fees;
- A passport-style photograph that meets DOS’s nonimmigrant visa photo requirements;
- A valid, unexpired passport valid for at least six months beyond the Form DS-2019 end date;
- Original Form DS-2019 issued by FSIS;

- Invitation letter from UH sponsoring unit;
- Evidence of financial support, such as letters or documents proving receipt of a fellowship, grant, salary from employer in the home country, bank statements, or affidavits of support; and
- Any other documents required by the specific U.S. embassy or consulate.

When you and your family members receive your visas, the consular officer must return the original Form DS-2019s and other documents to you.

How to apply for J-1 admission to the U.S.

You must enter the U.S. on or up to 30 days before the start date on the Form DS-2019. If you cannot enter the U.S. on time, the department or HR specialist must notify FSIS immediately so we have enough time to change the start date in SEVIS. If you are unable to come to UH for any reason, you must return the original Form DS-2019 to FSIS.

You and your accompanying J-2 family members must present these documents to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at a U.S. port of entry to apply for admission:

- Original Form DS-2019;
- Passport valid for at least six months after the Form DS-2019 end date;
- J-1 or J-2 visa in passport (N/A for Canadians and Bermudians); and
- SEVIS fee receipt (EV only).

Individuals are not guaranteed entry to the U.S. The CBP officer will review all documents and ask each person questions about his/her stay. These officers have the discretion to admit you in J-1 status and any family members in J-2 status and may refer you to a more detailed secondary inspection.

When you are admitted into the U.S., your documents must be returned and an admission date stamp is placed in your passport with the notations “J-1” (EV) or “J-2” (dependents) and “D/S,” which stands for “duration of status” and indicates the person is authorized to stay in the U.S. according to the Form DS-2019 you presented. CBP will issue an electronic Form I-94 for each person to access and print at CBP’s I-94 website (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>). The admission stamp with notations and the Form I-94 printout are proof of admission to and legal immigration status in the U.S.

You and your J-2 family members need to keep copies of their Form DS-2019s, passport biodata/expiration pages, visas, admission stamps, and Form I-94 records permanently in case any of these documents are lost or stolen.

How to change status in the U.S. to J-1

If you are currently in the U.S. and have filed Form I-539 to apply for a change of status to J-1, you cannot begin your program or receive UH payments until U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approves your Form I-539 unless you have some other type of valid work authorization (e.g., F-1 OPT). If you do not have valid work authorization, you must wait until USCIS approves the Form I-539 to begin the UH program.

When USCIS approves the Form I-539 change of status application, you will receive an approval notice (Form I-797) in the mail. USCIS should return your original DS-2019. Please provide copies of the approval notice and the returned Form DS-2019 to FSIS so we are aware the change of status has taken effect.

More information about changing status in the U.S. is available at <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/j1/sponsor/#step4b>.

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Arrival at UH

When you arrive at UH, you should first check in with your UH sponsoring unit. Within 10 business days, you must attend a registration/orientation appointment with FSIS. Our office is located on the UH Mānoa campus and serves all UH campuses. If the location of your program is not on the island of O‘ahu, an FSIS International Scholar Specialist may conduct the registration/orientation session via videoconference. At registration/orientation, FSIS will review your immigration documents to check that you and your J-2 dependents were properly admitted at the U.S. port of entry. FSIS will also give you an orientation packet containing information about the J-1 program rules, Social Security and identification cards, and other materials to help you adjust to UH and to Hawai‘i. Once you complete the registration/orientation and submit the required documents, the International Scholar Specialist will validate your J-1 program in SEVIS. This appointment is a very important beginning to your exchange visitor program.

Registration/orientation usually takes about one (1) hour, so FSIS cannot accept walk-ins. Please bring these items to the appointment:

- Original Form DS-2019;
- Passport;
- Form I-94 record printed from CBP's I-94 website (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>);
- DS-2019s, passports, and I-94 records for all J-2 dependents;
- Completed J-1 Contact Information Form: www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jcontactinfoform; and
- Completed Health Insurance Compliance Form: www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jhealthcomplianceform.

If you will conduct your program activities on a neighbor island, please provide copies of the above documents to FSIS.

If you do not register with FSIS and your program is not validated in SEVIS within 30 days of entering the U.S., changing status, or transferring to UH, you may be reported to the government as a “No Show.” This indicates a violation of J-1 status and will make you subject to deportation and future inadmissibility to the U.S.

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Maintaining Your J-1 Status

Throughout the program, you and your J-2 dependents are responsible for maintaining current immigration status, which includes following through with these responsibilities:

1. Conduct the **exchange activities as authorized on the Form DS-2019 and invitation letter** and make clear **progress toward finishing your program objectives**. Your J-1 EVP can be shortened or terminated prior to your Form DS-2019 end date if you do not pursue the activities for your J-1 EVP or if you are unable to continue your program. If your program is terminated due to intentional violation of J-1 EVP rules, you must depart the U.S. **immediately**.
2. **Do not engage in unauthorized employment**. As a J-1 EV you are expected to conduct your exchange activities within a UH department at a UH site and may receive compensation from UH as authorized on the Form DS-2019. However, J-1 EVs in the Professor or Research Scholar category may receive payment, (i.e., wages, honorariums) for occasional lectures or short-term consultations if approved by FSIS. Information

about the requirements and procedure for occasional lectures or short-term consultations is available on the FSIS website.

3. **Report changes of your J-1 EVP**, such as additional sites of activity or changes in financial support to your UH faculty sponsor, UH department, and college/school HR Specialist. The college/school must report all changes of your EV program to FSIS for review and approval. Additional sites of activity include all off-campus sites, conferences, workshops, and/or meetings.
4. **Maintain required health insurance coverage for J-1 and J-2 EVs.** All J-1 and J-2 EVs are required to have sickness and accident insurance, medical evacuation, and repatriation insurance for the duration of their J-1 EVP. Intentional failure to have insurance is a violation of J-1 EVP regulations. Information about the insurance requirements is available on the FSIS website.
5. **Maintain J-1 or J-2 EV documents.** All J-1 and J-2 EVs must have a valid Form DS-2019, valid passport, and Form I-94 marked "D/S." If your Form DS-2019 is lost, stolen, or damaged, please notify FSIS to request a reprint. If your passport is lost, stolen, or expiring, you must contact your country's embassy or consulate for renewal/replacement information. Contact information for foreign embassies or consulates are available at www.embassy.org. DOS recommends that lost or stolen visa stamps be reported via email to the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad that issued the visa. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates are available at www.usembassy.gov. Lost or stolen visas cannot be replaced in the U.S. For a replacement of a visa, you must apply in person at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad. Lost or stolen passports and visas must be reported to your faculty sponsor immediately.
6. **Extend J-1 EVP** if more time is needed to complete your program objectives. Requests for extensions are prepared by your UH department, reviewed by the college/school's HR Specialist, and then forwarded to FSIS. Upon review and approval, FSIS will issue a Form DS-2019 to extend your J-1 EVP. **Extension requests must be submitted to FSIS no later than 45 days before your DS-2019 end date.** If the extension is not approved before the end date, you cannot do any program activities beyond the end date.
7. **Report changes of address, phone number, or email address within 10 days.** You must report any changes in your U.S. home address, phone number, or email address to your UH faculty sponsor, department, college/school's HR Specialist and FSIS. FSIS is required to update your personal contact information in SEVIS within 10 days of the change. Email your new contact information to your designated International Scholar Specialist.
8. **Report serious incidents or controversies.** You must report any serious problems or controversies that arise during your J-1 EVP to your faculty sponsor, department, college/school's HR Specialist, and/or FSIS. Examples of serious problems or controversies may include, but are not limited to: 1) death or missing EV; 2) serious illness or injury; 3) litigation; 4) lost or stolen passport or visa; 5) arrests; 6) sexual harassment or abuse; 7) foreign government involvement; and 8) other situations affecting J-1 EV safety (i.e., natural disasters, civil unrest). If you are unsure if an incident is serious, err on the side of caution and report it to your faculty sponsor.
9. **Comply with University of Hawai'i policies and procedures.** This includes, but is not limited to the University's policies on Export Controls, Title IX, and Workplace Non-Violence.

It is important that you understand and follow the J-1 EVP regulations and UH policies. Violations of the J-1 EVP regulations and/or UH policies have serious consequences and may result in the shortening or termination of your J-1 EVP. Termination of program may jeopardize future visits to the U.S.

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Family Members

A J-1 exchange visitor's spouse and unmarried children under age 21 may apply for J-2 visas as dependents. Please inform the HR specialist of your UH sponsoring unit if your dependents are accompanying or following to join you. If any dependents accompany or join you in the U.S., they may apply for visas and admission to the U.S. using a UH-issued Form DS-2019 issued to each person. FSIS will issue Form DS-2019s for your family members after we receive the necessary documents from your department.

As the J-1 exchange visitor, you are responsible for your family's financial support, including roundtrip transportation and living expenses. When your family applies for J-2 visas, the consular officer at the U.S. embassy/consulate will determine whether your family has sufficient funds to meet basic living costs in the U.S. If the officer has any reason to think a prospective J-2 has a prior intention of working in the U.S., the J-2 visa may be denied. The officer will also expect your family to have return tickets or funds set aside for return transportation prior to departure for the U.S. Due to these requirements, you are required to submit evidence of sufficient funds for family support before UH will issue Form DS-2019s for family members.

Please see <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/j1/j2/#eligibility> for more information about J-2 dependents.

If you have other family members and/or dependents who do not qualify for J-2 status, an FSIS International Scholar Specialist can provide information on other visa types for which they may be eligible.

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Rights in the U.S.

While you are in the U.S. as an exchange visitor, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under U.S. law. You have the rights to be:

- Treated and paid fairly;
- Not held in a job against their will;
- Allowed to keep their passports and other ID documents in their own possession;
- Able to report abuse without retaliation;
- Able to request help from unions, immigrant and labor rights groups, and other groups; and
- Able to seek justice in U.S. courts.

UH departments cannot discriminate against you because of your gender, race, nationality, color, religion, or disability. In particular, women cannot receive negative treatment for being pregnant or for simply being a woman. Both men and women may not be sexually harassed by any UH employee or affiliate – they may not demand sex acts from an EV, touch an EV in a sexual manner, or say sexual or offensive comments to the EV. EVs may find more information about UH's sexual harassment policy and the procedures on the UH Title IX and The Office of Institutional Equity's website at <https://www.hawaii.edu/titleix/>.

For more information, please review the U.S. Department of State's Rights and Protections website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/temporary-workers.html>.

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Living in the U.S.

Hawai'i culture and customs

Hawai'i's history has established it as a uniquely multicultural state with a variety of customs from many different cultures. Although Hawai'i became the U.S.'s 50th state in 1959, it was previously an independent kingdom, first settled by Polynesians and over time, unified and ruled by monarchs. In the late 1800s, American businessmen and plantation owners imprisoned and overthrew the reigning monarch with the aid of the U.S. military; in 1898, the U.S. annexed Hawai'i as a territory. Throughout the late 1800s into the early 1900s, sugar and pineapple plantation owners brought in immigrants from Japan, China, the Philippines, and Portugal to work the fields. The cultural practices of these immigrants and their descendants in combination with traditional Hawaiian customs have significantly contributed to the present-day diversity of Hawai'i's community.

These days, a wide range of cultural experiences, such as ethnic festivals, international foods, dance and theater performances, art exhibits, publications in many languages, and international sports activities are widely available. Nearly all UH campuses hold international fairs, speakers from around the world, workshops and seminars, musical and theatrical performances, film festivals, and sporting events featuring local, U.S., and international participants. Because of this diversity, there are many types of customs practiced and etiquette expected throughout Hawai'i. Below are links to a few articles and websites providing more information on this topic:

- Minding Your Manners in Hawai'i, Sheila Beal: <https://www.govisithawaii.com/2007/08/20/minding-your-manners-in-hawaii/>
- Customs and Etiquette in Hawai'i, Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customs_and_etiquette_in_Hawaii
- Hawai'i Tourism Authority Ma'ema'e Tool Kit: <https://www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org/what-we-do/tools-resources/maemae-tool-kit/>
- The Hawaiian Historical Society: <https://www.hawaiianhistory.org/>

Banking and payments

When you first arrive in Hawai'i, you should have enough money saved to purchase necessities, secure housing, etc. However, for safety reasons, do not carry a lot of cash with you. Shortly after arriving, you should open a checking account at a local bank to establish credit and to provide an easy method of paying for purchases. Using traveler's checks and/or a credit card that is accepted in the U.S. are also good ideas.

There are several commercial banks near the various UH campuses that offer checking and savings accounts. EVs are eligible to join the University of Hawai'i Federal Credit Union (UHFCU), which provides full banking services to its members. There are UHFCU branches on the Mānoa and West O'ahu campuses and in McCully (Honolulu).

UH payment delays

If you will receive payments from UH, your sponsoring department should have advised you that there are often substantial delays before you can get the first payment. At arrival, you should have at least three months' worth of funds you can readily access to support yourself and any dependents. Delays in receiving the first UH payment are most commonly caused by these factors:

- No Social Security Number (SSN): You must have an SSN before you can receive payments from UH. Before applying for an SSN, which can only be done in person at a Social Security Administration (SSA) office no less than 10 days after arriving in the U.S., you must register with FSIS. Even after the SSA approves the application, the SSN card can take as long as 3-4 weeks to arrive in the mail.

- UH paperwork processing: Despite the best planning efforts, delays in processing immigration and/or departmental appointment paperwork can occur not only when initially obtaining a DS-2019, but also at the time you arrive in Hawai'i.

Living expenses

Most food, building materials, and other goods must be shipped to Hawai'i. As a result, food, housing, and other basic living necessities are more expensive here than in many other U.S. states and other countries. Therefore, it is important that you develop a budget before coming to Hawai'i to ensure you are able to support yourselves throughout their stay.

Housing

In Honolulu, the cost of rent and utilities for a one-bedroom apartment averages \$900-\$1800 per month; a two-bedroom apartment averages \$1800-\$2500 per month. In other locations on O'ahu and on the neighbor islands, housing costs may be similar or lower depending on the specific area in which the exchange visitor (EV) and his/her family will live.

On-campus housing

On the UH Mānoa campus, there are two options for on-campus housing:

- The East-West Center's (EWC) international graduate residence hall, which is a dormitory ("dorm"). For more information, see the EWC's website (<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/>) or contact the EWC Housing Office by phone at (808) 944-7805 or by email at housing@eastwestcenter.org.
- UH faculty housing, which is available only to those rare exchange visitors who will be appointed to temporary, fixed-term faculty positions. Faculty housing is assigned on a priority basis; temporary faculty receive lowest priority and are eligible for one year of residence. For more information, see the UH Faculty Housing website (<https://www.hawaii.edu/fachousing/>) or contact the Faculty Housing Office by phone at (808) 956-8449 or by email at fachsg@hawaii.edu.

Off-campus housing

Due to the limited availability of on-campus housing, most EVs live off-campus. Before arriving, you should consult a map of the area near your campus so you can avoid places that are too far from campus. By entering the street address of your program site, you can use Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) to find the closest residential areas and even use "street view" to see the appearance of those areas.

UH Mānoa EVs can begin their off-campus housing search by checking the Exchange Housing and Rentals website (<https://www.hawaii.edu/wcc/exchange.html>), which lists rentals on O'ahu that are updated monthly by the Women's Campus Club. EV's can also use housing search engines, such as [ApartmentList](#), [RentCafe](#), [Zillow](#), [HotPads](#), or [HiCentral](#).

Another excellent source of rental listings is local newspapers. EVs who will conduct their programs on O'ahu or Hawai'i Island (Big Island) can consult the housing listings from the *Honolulu Star Advertiser*, *Hawai'i Tribune Herald*, and *West Hawai'i Today* (<http://www.hawaiiislandhomes.com/>); those on Maui can check the classifieds section in *The Maui News* (<http://mauinews.com/>); and EVs on Kaua'i may refer to *The Garden Island's* rental listings (<http://classifieds.thegardenisland.com/real-estate/>).

Rental listings often describe available properties using these terms:

- Shared room/room for rent: Room in an apartment or house that is shared with others of the same or different genders. The kitchen and bathroom are also usually shared by all residents of the apartment/house. Scheduling a visit with those sharing the unit is important to make sure everyone understands and respects each other.
- Studio: Apartment that is one large room that usually has its own small kitchen or kitchenette and bathroom. There is no separate bedroom. Accommodates one person or a couple.
- 1-bedroom: Apartment that has a kitchen, bathroom, and separate bedroom. Usually accommodates 1-3 people.
- Furnished: Apartment/house that includes basic kitchen appliances as well as beds and some furniture.
- Partly furnished: Apartment/house that has basic kitchen appliances such as a stove, refrigerator, and water heater, but comes with little to no furniture.
- Unfurnished: Apartment/house does not have appliances or furniture.

Scam and Fraud Awareness

The convenience of shopping online brings with it a heightened risk of scams and fraud. You should always be mindful and vigilant before providing anyone your personal information or sending payment of any kind. Housing scams primarily appear as online advertisements on sites such as craigslist.org. The contact person will insist that you send them money for housing accommodations even though you have not yet visited the property in person. Never send money or give out personal information or immigration details to anyone over the phone or online. If you are required to wire money ahead of time, please be sure the housing post is legitimate. Check the address on Google Maps or a search engine to ensure it is a residential building. Try to arrange a digital viewing via Skype, FaceTime, etc. to confirm it is a real address and to see the unit in person.

How to begin renting a property

Once you find listings for properties you would like to rent, you should contact the landlords or property managers stated in the listings. You will need to set up appointments to walk through and see the houses/apartments/rooms. If an advertisement for a rental looks promising, you should call the landlord/property manager right away, since desirable rentals are usually taken quickly.

The rental agreement (lease)

When you have viewed a property you would like to rent, you will enter into a rental agreement (also called a “lease”) with the landlord/property manager. Ideally, the lease should be in writing and should be signed by both the landlord and by you as the tenant. This agreement outlines the responsibilities that the landlord and tenant have with respect to the rental property.

Leases can vary in duration. A lease with a specific end date is called a “fixed term lease.” Six months to one year is the usual length of a fixed-term lease and can be re-negotiated and extended when it is about to expire. Another type of lease has a “month-to-month tenancy,” which means it does not have a specific end date. In a month-to-month agreement, you may continue renting the property monthly as long as you pay the rent and the landlord/property manager agrees you may remain in the property. If a fixed term ends and a landlord keeps accepting money, the fixed term becomes a month-to-month lease. The advantage of a month-to-month lease is that renters can leave the property at any time with a 28-day written notice to the landlord/property manager. On the other hand, the landlord/property manager can raise the rent at any time or ask you leave by giving you 45 days written notice.

You must read and discuss the terms of the lease with the landlord/property manager to be sure there will be no misunderstandings about each person’s responsibilities. Beware of scams and fraud. You should always be mindful and vigilant before providing anyone your personal information or sending payment of any kind. A

written inventory of furniture and appliances and evaluation of the condition of the property should be checked and confirmed before you move in. Be sure to should point out any discrepancies and/or damages so you are not blamed for any damage or missing appliances/furniture. You should also keep a copy of the inventory for future reference in case it is needed at the time of vacating the property.

Security deposit

When you enter into a rental agreement, you will usually need to pay a security deposit at the time of paying the first month's rent. The security deposit is normally equal to (but cannot be more than) the amount of one month's rent. The purpose of the security deposit is to protect the property owner in case of damage to the property or failure to pay the rent when due. This deposit (or part of it) should be returned at the time the EV moves out if the landlord/property manager determines that the apartment is left in satisfactory condition.

Setting up a residence

If you need furniture or other items for your rental property, you may want to browse thrift shops and discount stores for inexpensive items. The classifieds sections of newspapers, the used furniture store section of the "Yellow Pages" in the telephone book, or campus bulletin boards are also good sources of secondhand items. Compare prices and check the quality of the item to make sure you are getting a good deal.

Transportation

There are a few options you and your family can use to get around Hawai'i. Many exchange visitors who live close to the campuses where they conduct their program activities are able to walk, bike, or use public transportation. Others may prefer to drive their own cars or other vehicles.

Public transportation

Exchange visitors at UH Mānoa may wish to use the free UHM Rainbow Shuttle (<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/commuter/rainbowshuttle.html>), which is available to all members of the public. The shuttle runs on a regular schedule during semesters and on a limited schedule during school breaks.

All of the islands with UH campuses have county-maintained public transportation systems.

- Hawai'i Island: Hele-On Bus (<http://www.heleonbus.org/>)
- Kaua'i: Kaua'i Bus (<https://www.kauai.gov/BusSchedules>)
- Maui: Maui Bus (<https://www.mauicounty.gov/605/Bus-Service-Information>)
- O'ahu: TheBus (<http://www.thebus.org>)

Driving

If you wish to drive a car, motorcycle or moped, you must have accident and liability insurance and the vehicle must be registered with the appropriate county and have a current safety inspection sticker. You also must have one of the following driver's permits:

- A valid State of Hawai'i driver's license; or a driver's license issued by another U.S. state or territory or
- A valid foreign driver's license and an International Driving Permit.

Health insurance

A significant expense you should consider is health insurance. Exchange visitors and J-2 dependents are required to purchase health insurance that meets the U.S. Department of State's (DOS) minimum coverage levels for the entire duration of their UH programs. You must carefully review the health insurance guidelines (see below) before moving to Hawai'i so you are able to find a qualifying insurance policy in which you can enroll as soon as you begin your program.

Keep in mind that in addition to health insurance being required by the DOS, it is extremely risky for you to be in the U.S. without adequate levels of health insurance. In the U.S., individuals, and not the government, are responsible for their own health care costs. Even one day of medical treatment can cost thousands of dollars, so many hospitals and doctors refuse to treat uninsured patients except in life-threatening emergencies. Therefore, you may not want to simply choose the cheapest insurance plan. A quality plan will ensure you and your dependents have access to better health care and will provide needed protection against the significant costs of health care in the U.S.

Each EV and J-2 dependent must enroll in an insurance plan or policy that:

- Provides medical benefits of at least US\$100,000 per accident or illness;
- Provides at least US\$25,000 for repatriation of remains to the home country in the event of death;
- Provide at least US\$50,000 in medical evacuation coverage to the home country in the event of serious illness or injury upon a doctor's recommendation;
- Requires a deductible of no more than US\$500 per accident or illness;
- May establish a reasonable waiting period before pre-existing conditions (health problems the person had before buying the insurance) are covered – "reasonable" is defined by current insurance industry standards;
- May include co-insurance provisions, but must pay at least 75% of covered medical expenses;
- Does not unreasonably exclude coverage for perils inherent to the activities of the exchange program in which the EV participates; and
- Is guaranteed through one of the following means: (1) underwritten by a health insurance corporation rated "A–" or above by A.M. Best, "A–" or above by McGraw Hill Financial/Standard & Poor's Claims-paying Ability, "B+" or above by Weiss Research, Inc., "A–" or above by Fitch Ratings, Inc., "A3" or above by Moody's Investor Services, or other DOS-specified rating; (2) backed by the full faith and credit of the EV's home country's government; (3) is part of a health benefits program offered on a group basis to employees or enrolled students by a designated sponsor; or (4) offered through or underwritten by a federally qualified HMO or eligible Competitive Medical Plan as determined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

How to choose an insurance policy/plan

First, contact a few different insurance providers for premium quotes and to compare plans. You should feel free to ask the insurance representatives any questions and take the time to learn about each plan before making a decision. If you are uncertain or confused, you should not purchase anything until you fully understand the options. If needed, you may want to consult with a knowledgeable friend or your faculty sponsor for help.

You may choose to enroll in the UH Student Health Insurance Plan

(<https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/j1/compliance/healthplans/#uhplan>) through HMSA, a pre-screened plan (<https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/j1/compliance/healthplans#prescreened>) that appears to meet DOS's requirements, or another plan you find independently. Another option is to contact a NAFSA-suggested health insurance company

(https://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Browse_by_Interest/International_Students_and_Scholars/Network_Resources/International_Enrollment_Management/Health_Insurance_Companies/) that regularly assists

exchange visitors. If you already have a primary plan that is only missing the repatriation and medical evacuation coverage, you will just need to purchase a separate repatriation and medical evacuation plan (<https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/j1/compliance/healthplans#rme>) that provides the necessary coverage.

Once you purchase a plan, the insurance company will issue a card for the individuals covered under the policy. This card should be presented when one of the covered individuals goes to a hospital or doctor for medical treatment.

How health insurance works

After enrolling in a health insurance plan, you will make regular payments to the insurance company – these payments are called the “premiums.” The premiums from everyone enrolled in the plan are combined to form a pool of money. That money is used by the insurance company to pay the medical bills of the plan participants who need medical treatments. A person’s insurance coverage will continue only as long as he/she continues to pay the premiums. If you or a family member needs to go to the doctor for medical treatment, you should present the insurance card at the appointment. After the appointment, you will usually need to pay the bill and then seek reimbursement from the insurance company, which is called “filing a claim,” by providing documentation for qualifying medical expenses. The company will evaluate the claim and pay you the appropriate amount as determined under your particular policy. In some cases, you will not need to file a claim; you will only need to pay the co-payment to the doctor and the insurance company will pay the rest of the bill directly to the doctor.

Providing health insurance documentation to FSIS

As a condition of participating in UH’s Exchange Visitor Program, you and your J-2 dependents must maintain the DOS-required insurance coverage for the entire duration of sponsorship and provide the necessary documentation to FSIS. Whenever you purchase or extend health insurance coverage, you must submit a completed UH FSIS Health Insurance Compliance Form (<https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jhealthcomplianceform>) and the applicable type of evidence of coverage to FSIS.

Taxes

Everyone who earns income while present in the U.S., including J-1 exchange visitors and J-2 dependents, must submit to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) a complete and accurate income tax statement (this is called “filing a tax return”). It is important to note that the U.S. government defines “income” broadly; “income” can be wages, stipends, or any other monetary benefit that is considered taxable. In other countries, the government assesses and collects taxes from individuals. However, in the U.S., there are different kinds of taxes and it is each person’s personal responsibility to determine and pay any taxes owed by established deadlines. If you owe taxes, the U.S. government will not notify you, but it may penalize you if you do not pay the required taxes on time.

If you will be appointed to a University of Hawai’i employment position and receive a salary while you are participating in your program, you must help UH estimate how much of your income should be withheld (deducted) from your wages for the purpose of paying taxes. As your employer, UH will pay the withheld amounts directly to the U.S. federal and State of Hawai’i governments on your behalf. When you file your annual tax returns, you must reconcile the amount of taxes you owe with the federal and state governments. If you withheld (paid) too much, then you may claim a refund. However, if you will be a non-employee who will receive a stipend from UH (e.g. postdoctoral fellow), UH will only withhold U.S. federal tax and you will be responsible for paying the full amount of State of Hawai’i tax on your own.

U.S. federal taxes

You must file a U.S. federal tax return with the IRS if you earn income while you are in the U.S. Even if you did not have income from a U.S. source, you must file a tax form just for U.S. government records. The deadline for filing a tax return covering a given calendar year is April 15th of the next year. In other words, you must file a tax return by April 15th next year if you arrive in the U.S. at any time during this calendar year. For more information, visit the IRS's website at <https://www.irs.gov>. You may also find more information at <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/taxes/federal/>.

State of Hawai'i taxes

A Hawai'i nonresident is an individual who is in Hawai'i for a temporary or transient purpose and whose permanent residence is not Hawai'i. A nonresident who earns income from Hawai'i sources must file a State of Hawai'i tax return and will be taxed on income from Hawai'i sources only. State of Hawai'i tax returns covering this calendar year are due by April 20th of next year. For more information, visit the State of Hawai'i Department of Taxation's website at <http://tax.hawaii.gov>. You may also find more information at <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/taxes/state/>.

An important exception to state tax withholding applies to persons receiving non-degree fellowships or stipend payments from a Hawai'i source (e.g., postdoctoral fellows) – these individuals receive Form 1042-S instead of Form W-2. UH is not required to withhold state taxes from these types of payments throughout the year, the result is that an individual may owe a large amount of Hawai'i income tax that must be paid in full when they file their state tax return the following year. Therefore, anyone who receives these types of payments from UH should read the State Department of Taxation's [Tax Fact 2019-3](#), "Estimated Income Tax for Individuals." Hawai'i law generally requires taxpayers who have income not subject to withholding to pay estimated income taxes if it results in a tax liability of \$500 or more. If you do not pay estimated taxes this year and you owe at least \$500 in taxes for the year, you may incur a penalty that will be added to your tax liability. [Form N-200V](#) for the current tax year should be used to make these quarterly estimated tax payments. The first payment for the current tax year is generally due on April 20th.

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Program Completion

At least two weeks before completing your program, you should submit a J-1 Completion Form (<https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jcompletionform>) to FSIS. If you are departing the U.S., please attach copies of the departure air tickets or itinerary to the form as proof of departure. Your J-2 dependents must leave the U.S. before or at the same time as you since their J-2 status is contingent upon the EV maintaining J-1 status.

On-time completion

If you complete the program on or within 15 days before the current Form DS-2019 end date, you will automatically receive a 30-day travel status ("grace") period. During the grace period, you and your dependents may stay in and travel throughout the U.S., but you may not conduct any program activities.

Early completion

If you will complete the program more than 15 days before the current Form DS-2019 end date, you must notify FSIS immediately so we can report the earlier end date in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

(SEVIS). If we are notified about the early completion before you cease program activities, we will be able to update SEVIS and you will receive the 30-day grace period from the new end date of the shortened program.

The two-year home country residence requirement (Sec. 212(e))

Exchange visitors and their J-2 dependents may be subject to the "two-year home country residence requirement" as a condition of being granted their visa status. Under this requirement, exchange visitors must return to their home countries for at least two years after finishing their programs. The purpose of this requirement is to allow the home country to benefit from the exchange visitors' experiences in the U.S. Exchange visitors come to the U.S. for a specific objective, such as a program of study or a research project. The requirement is intended to ensure that the exchange visitor spends at least two years in the home country, after completing the objective, before coming back to the U.S. for a long-term stay on an H or L nonimmigrant work visa or immigrant visa. While in the U.S., J visa holders cannot change to another visa status (except "A" or "G"), or get a permanent resident visa (green card) without first fulfilling the two-year requirement or having it waived.

Only the DOS Waiver Review Division can determine with finality whether an exchange visitor is subject to the requirement. Many exchange visitors think this is determined when a consular officer stamps the passport with a statement that the visitor is not subject to the requirement. However, the consular officer is only making a preliminary determination. UH also makes only a preliminary determination about this requirement when a similar notation is entered on Form DS-2019. You may request an advisory opinion from the U.S. Department of State (DOS) Waiver Review Division to determine conclusively whether you are subject to Sec. 212(e). For more information, see the DOS website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/advisory-opinions.html>.

12- and 24-month bars on repeat participation as a J-1 research scholar or professor

Depending on the J-1 category or the length of the J-1 program, an exchange visitor may also be subject to a 12-month or 24-month bar on repeat participation as a J-1 research scholar or professor. An exchange visitor who begins a J-1 program in either the research scholar or professor category automatically becomes subject to the 24-month bar. This means that once you complete your current J-1 program, you may not participate in another J-1 research scholar or professor program until 24 months have passed. For more information on these bars and how they apply, please visit <https://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/fsis/downloads/jbars>.