Eligibility

Who is eligible for J-2 dependent status?
Students in valid J-1 status may request dependent DS-2019s for the following:
- Spouse (husband or wife)
- Unmarried child or children under the age of 21

Who is eligible to apply for a J-2 dependent?
J-1 Students may request a dependent DS-2019 at any point during their degree program or during Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Requesting a Dependent DS-2019

Why do I need to submit this request?
Students may request a dependent DS-2019 for their spouse (husband or wife) and for their eligible children to join them in the U.S.

What must I submit for this request?
- Request for Dependent DS-2019: Student Request form
- Documentation of relationship to dependent
  - For spouse: Marriage certificate, copy of both original and English translation
  - For child or children: Child's birth certificate, copy of both original and English translation
- Copy of dependent's passport
- Proof of financial support for next two semesters, or amount of time remaining in program of study
  - Please refer to the Estimated Expenses information found on the ISSO website
  - Financial documents more than 3 months old will not be accepted
  - Financial support must cover tuition and living expenses for you plus living expenses and health insurance for all dependents
  - Examples of financial documentations include: U.S. or foreign bank statements, Letter of Intent for graduate assistants, etc. Consult with an ISSO advisor on other types of acceptable financial support documentation

What do I need to know about the financial documentation?
Financial documents more than 3 months old will not be accepted. Please refer to the Estimated Expenses information found on the ISSO website.

How do I submit this request?
This is an electronic process completed through Cystart. The link for Cystart can be found on the ISSO homepage. Log in to Cystart using ISU NetID and password. Once in Cystart, select J-1 Student Services and complete the Dependent DS-2019 e-form.

What is the timeline for processing this request?
10 working days after there is a check mark in all boxes on the Cystart request page for a dependent DS-2019. When the request is approved, ISSO will prepare new DS-2019s for the J-1 and J-2 dependents. ISSO will send an email to the ISU email address on file notifying the student to pick up their new DS-2019. ISSO recommends sending an email to isso@iastate.edu if an e-mail has not been received within 10 working days.
Benefits and Limitations of J-2 Status

Can a J-2 dependent enroll in a U.S. college or university?
ISSO recommends the J-2 spouse meet with an ISSO advisor before any enrollment. A J-2 dependent may engage in full-time or part-time enrollment. Classes may be recreational or degree-seeking.

Can a J-2 child enroll in a U.S. school?
A J-2 child may enroll full time in an elementary or secondary school (kindergarten through 12th grade).

Can a J-2 dependent work?
A J-2 dependent can apply to USCIS for work authorization, or J-2 Work Permission. Once they have received a valid Employment Authorization Document, they may legally work in the U.S. for any employer. J-2 dependent work authorization is only valid for one year, and dependents wishing to continue employment must reapply. To learn more about this, review the J-2 Work Permission [here](#). ISSO recommends dependents meet with an advisor before applying for J-2 Work Permission.

What happens if my child will turn 21 years old during the time we will be in the U.S.?
A J-2 child must take action to continue to stay in the U.S., if desired. There are two options:
- The child may apply for a change of status without having to leave the U.S.
  - This application must be received by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services before the child’s 21st birthday
  - Most children would likely apply for a change to F-1 status
- Travel outside the U.S.
  - The child may leave the U.S. with a new immigration document, such as an I-20 for an F-1 student
  - The child would then apply for the new visa and return to the U.S. to obtain the new status

Social Opportunities in Ames

What options exist to help my spouse adjust to life in Ames?
See the "Get Involved" page of the ISSO website for information on various events and opportunities. Some opportunities that exist are as follows:
- Friends of International Women
- Engaging International Spouses
- Conversational English courses
- Story County Volunteer Center (and any other volunteer opportunities)
- Community resources such as the Ames Public Library and Ames Parks and Recreation

Other Considerations

What budget changes should I consider before bringing my family as J-2 dependents?
Students are encouraged to plan a budget to see if they will have sufficient funds to support themselves and their family. Budgetary considerations include: housing and food increases, phone bill increases, required health insurance for dependents (as this can be up to five times student insurance costs).

What else should I consider before bringing my family as J-2 dependents?
Students should also consider how much time on campus, in their office, and/or in their lab versus how much time will be spent at home. Other possible considerations include how well one's spouse or child speaks English.