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**12. Step One to the J-1 Waiver: Finding a Job**

One of the most common questions asked by International Medical School Graduates is, “how do I find a job after I finish my post graduate training?” The job search is the first and most integral step towards processing the J-1 waiver or a petition for permanent resident status for other visa holders.

As a physician in J-1 status, you know that you must find a position where you will be providing services as a physician in an area designated by the Department of Health and Human Services as a Health Professional Shortage Area, Medically Underserved Area, or a position within the jurisdiction of the Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Commission or a position with a VA facility. These areas are located throughout the United States, are listed in the Federal Register dated September 15, 2000 and updated periodically on the Internet. It is best to start your job search just before completing your next to last year of post graduate training.

The truly eager IMGs who have a lot of time on their hands can do a lot of research and send resumes to every possible physician and clinic in Health Professional Shortage Area or Medically Underserved Area locations throughout the United States and VA facilities. However, time is not a luxury available to most IMGs.

If you are presently employed at a hospital located in a shortage area, you can try to pursue an attending position and J1 waiver opportunity there.

Another way to find a position is through networking. Speak to your friends who were in your position during the last few years. Renew old friendships and acquaintances and see if perhaps there is an opening coming up in the hospital, clinic or practice where they were able to obtain a position. If they are unable to direct you to a position, ask them if they can recommend a reputable recruiter who could assist you in finding a position.

If utilizing a recruiter, be sure to interview the recruiter. Find out from the recruiter what kind of opportunities may be available to you, where these opportunities are, the chances of being successfully placed, the salary range for the positions offered, as this may be a factor in obtaining a successful completion to the J-1 processing. You should also find out if there are other J-1 physicians who have been granted waivers, presently employed at these locations, so you can speak to them and get their opinion on these locations or positions.

Once you have selected a recruiter to act on your behalf, always try to verify that the positions for which you are interviewing will qualify for a J-1 waiver. This can be verified by checking the Federal Register or calling an attorney, who can verify census tract numbers and locations.

Very often, prospective employers in shortage areas place advertisements in various publications and post positions at teaching hospitals.

When you go on the interview, make sure that the job opportunity fits both your professional and personal needs. Speak to other physicians employed by the sponsoring entity. Speak to other IMGs that may have preceded you in the town. Be sure that the choice you make will meet your family's needs. You may find that you are not in the position to pick and choose your positions. But making the wrong choice for the wrong reasons can be detrimental to you and your family.

The J-1 waiver process is a long, difficult, and arduous. Dealing with trustworthy people throughout your journey will certainly make the process less burdensome.

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