J-2 dependents are eligible to apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) for employment under certain conditions:

1) Income from the spouse’s or dependent’s employment may be used to support the family’s customary recreational and cultural activities and related travel, among other things. Employment will not be authorized if this income is needed to support the J-1 principal alien. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(j)(1)(v)(A)

2) J-2 employment may be authorized for the duration of the J-1 principal alien’s authorized stay as indicated on Form I-94 or a period of four years, whichever is shorter. The employment authorization is valid only if the J-1 is maintaining status. Where a J-2 spouse or dependent child has filed a timely application for extension of stay, only upon approval of the request for extension of stay may he or she apply for a renewal of the employment authorization on a Form I-765 with the required fee. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(j)(1)(v)(B)

Application Requirements

The following documents must be submitted to USCIS in order to apply for J-2 employment authorization:

1) Completed Form I-765 with applicant’s original signature
   - Form I-765 can be downloaded at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website (USCIS) website www.uscis.gov

2) Filing fee of $380.00 in the form of a check, money order, or cashier’s check made payable in U.S. dollars to USCIS

3) 2 passport style photos meeting specifications detailed on U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html) with name, date of birth, and A# (if applicable) lightly printed in pencil on the back of each photo
   - It is recommended that you place the photos in an envelope and staple the envelope to the I-765 application

4) Copy of current DS-2019 for J-1 principle
5) Copy of current DS-2019 for J-2 dependent
6) Copy of Form I-94 (front and back) for J-1 and J-2
7) A letter addressed to USCIS explaining why the J-2 wishes to be employed. The letter must also indicate the source of support for the J-1 (e.g. UTHSC-H employment). The letter must specifically state that any income received from employment will not be used for the support of the J-1 exchange visitor.

All documents listed above must be mailed by the J-2 to one of the USCIS Dallas Lockbox addresses below:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries: USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail and courier deliveries: USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

It is recommended that all documents be mailed using certified mail return receipt. As a reminder, copies should be made of all application materials prior to sending application to USCIS.
Approval Process

The USCIS Texas Service Center estimates that it will take a minimum of 3 months to process the Employment Authorization Document (EAD). If unforeseen delays beyond 3 months occur in the processing of the I-765 application, the J-2 dependent may apply for an interim EAD at the District Office (please see your International Visitor Advisor for further assistance).

Further information regarding USCIS Texas Service Center Processing Times can be found on the USCIS website at https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/processingTimesDisplay.do

Please note that under no circumstances may the J-2 dependent be employed until:
1) USCIS adjudicates the EAD request
2) EAD is received by the J-2
3) Dates of authorized employment are current

To begin or continue work without this authorization is a violation of your visa status and will jeopardize your continued stay in the U.S.