

Requirements for Requesting Support for a Physician National Interest Waiver (NIW)

The Physician National Interest Waiver is a special provision under U.S. immigration law that allows foreign physicians to bypass the labor certification process (PERM) typically required for employment-based green cards. Instead, physicians can apply directly for a green card if they agree to work full-time in a clinical practice for a five-year period, and in a geographic area that has a shortage of healthcare professionals or serves a medically underserved population.

To qualify for a Physician NIW, there are two key requirements:

1. **Full-Time Clinical Practice:** The physician must commit to working full-time (40 hours per week) in a clinical practice for at least five years.
2. **Underserved Areas:** The work must be conducted in areas designated either as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), a Medically Underserved Area (MUA), or at a Veterans Affairs facility.

To request support for a NIW from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, please submit the following documentation via email to Jana Castleberry, Director, OK Office of Primary Care at JanaC@health.ok.gov.

- 1) Signed contract for total of five years with a facility located in a Health Professional Shortage Area, a Medically Underserved Area, or a Veterans Affairs facility. The contract must list the physical addresses of all practice sites in which the physician will practice.
- 2) An explanation of physician status.
 - a. If the physician currently holds a J1 Visa Waiver supported by Oklahoma, please provide details of obligation and evidence of an extension of the J1 Contract from three years to five years.
 - b. If physician is completing a J1 Service Obligation in another state, please provide a letter from that state confirming the terms of the physician's J1 service obligation and completion date, if available. Additionally, the Primary Care Office for the state from which the physician is transferring must provide a letter of support for the transfer of service credit.

For more information or if you have questions, please contact Jana Castleberry, Director, Office of Primary Care, JanaC@health.ok.gov