

Spouses & Children

Spouses and unmarried children (under the age of 21) of H-1B visa holders are considered dependents and are eligible for H-4 status.

H-4 visa holders are only eligible to stay in the United States while their H-1B spouse or parent is in the United States maintaining the terms and conditions of their H-1B visa status.

Employment & Work Authorization

Most H-4 visa holders are not permitted to work in the United States and cannot obtain Social Security Numbers. However, a special provision allows certain [H-4 spouse visa holders to apply for work authorization](#). [1]

An H-4 spouse's [approved work authorization may be automatically extended](#) [2] with a pending renewal application under certain conditions. Please speak to an [OISS adviser](#) [3] if you have questions.

Changing Visa Status to H-1B

H-4 visa holders may apply to change their visa status to H-1B if they qualify for the specialty occupation requirement and find an employer who is willing to file a petition on their behalf.

Education & Study

H-4 visa holders may study in the United States, full-time or part-time, for the duration of the H-1B's period of stay.

Source URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/immigration/h-1b-temporary-worker/maintaining-legal-status/spouses-children>

Links

[1] <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/employment-authorization-for-certain-h-4-dependent-spouses> [2] <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/information-for-employers-and-employees/automatic-employment-authorization-document-ead-extension> [3] <https://oiss.yale.edu/node/184>