



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

USCIS to Start Accepting H-1B Petitions for FY 2012 on April 1, 2011

March 18, 2011

WASHINGTON - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today it will start accepting H-1B petitions subject to the fiscal year (FY) 2012 cap on April 1, 2011. Cases will be considered accepted on the date USCIS receives a properly filed petition for which the correct fee has been submitted; not the date that the petition is postmarked.

U.S. businesses use the H-1B program to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Such workers include scientists, engineers, and computer programmers, among others.

The cap (the numerical limit on H-1B petitions) for FY 2012 is 65,000. The first 20,000 H-1B petitions filed on behalf of individuals with U.S. master's degrees or higher are exempt.

USCIS will monitor the number of H-1B petitions received and will notify the public of the date when the numerical limit of the H-1B cap has been met. This date is known as the final receipt date. If USCIS receives more petitions than it can accept, it may on the final receipt date randomly select the number of petitions that will be considered for final inclusion within the cap. USCIS will reject petitions that are subject to the cap and are not selected, as well as petitions received after it has the necessary number of petitions needed to meet the cap.

In addition to petitions filed on behalf of people with U.S. master's degrees or higher, certain other petitions are exempt from the congressionally mandated cap.

Petitions for new H-1B employment are exempt from the annual cap if the beneficiaries will work at:

- Institutions of higher education or related or affiliated nonprofit entities;
- Nonprofit research organizations; or
- Governmental research organizations.

Petitions filed on behalf of beneficiaries who will work only in Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from the cap until Dec. 31, 2014. Employers may continue to file petitions for these cap-exempt H-1B categories for beneficiaries who will start work during FY 2011 or 2012.

Petitions filed on behalf of current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap do not

count towards the H-1B cap. USCIS will continue to process petitions filed to:

- Extend the amount of time a current H-1B worker may remain in the United States;
- Change the terms of employment for current H-1B workers;
- Allow current H-1B workers to change employers; and
- Allow current H-1B workers to work concurrently in a second H-1B position.

H-1B petitioners should follow all statutory and regulatory requirements as they prepare petitions, to avoid delays in processing and possible requests for evidence. USCIS has posted on its website detailed information, including a processing worksheet, to assist in the completion and submission of a FY2012 H-1B petition.

For more information on the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program and current Form I-129 processing times, visit www.uscis.gov or call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

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[Plug-ins](#)