



Alerts

How Employers Should Prepare for H-1B Employment Pre-Registration in March 2025

February 3, 2025

Insights for Employers

With the H-1B cap pre-registration period quickly approaching, now is the appropriate time to review your hiring needs, identify those individuals you intend to sponsor for H-1B employment authorization, and gather the necessary documentation.

Background

H-1B employment authorization is one of the most highly utilized and sought-after temporary work authorizations in the United States. It allows employers to hire foreign nationals to perform jobs that are considered to be "**specialty occupations.**"

A specialty occupation is defined as an occupation requiring at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent to perform the duties of the position in the United States.

In its current form, the H-1B employment authorization is limited to 65,000 new H-1B petition approvals per year, plus an additional 20,000 H-1B authorizations that are set aside for individuals with Master's Degrees from U.S. universities. Employment start dates for H-1B authorizations occur on **October 1** of each year, which corresponds with the government fiscal year.

Individuals who are currently working for U.S. employers in H-1B status are not subject to this numerical limitation when a new employer files a petition to change the sponsoring employer for their H-1B employment authorization.

The Pre-Registration Period

In January 2020, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) introduced an H-1B "**pre-registration period**" from **March 1 – March 20** to allow employers to register their interest in filing an H-1B petition on behalf of a specific employee.

Once employers have registered for this H-1B lottery, USCIS runs a random selection process or "lottery" to determine which employers will be permitted to file H-1B petitions on behalf of their prospective H-1B employees. Due to the anticipated scarcity of these H-1B authorizations, preparing well in advance for the time frame for pre-registration remains crucial, and it is not too soon to start

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the preparation process.

H-1B Pre-Registration for March 2025

The H-1B filing pre-registration period allows employers to register their individual H-1B submissions online with one select foreign national applicant. Multiple filings by the same employer for one foreign national will result in the submission being disqualified. It is important to note that more than one employer may file an H-1B registration for one foreign national.

Exemptions from the H-1B Cap

Certain employers are exempt from the H-1B numerical limitations and, therefore, do not need to go through the pre-registration process. These employers include the following:

- governmental research organizations,
- nonprofit research organizations, institutes of higher education, and
- nonprofit organizations affiliated with institutions of higher education.

Please feel free to contact [Hinshaw's Immigration team](#) to assess your needs and assistance with the upcoming H-1B registration process.