



H-1B Visas Tougher To Come By In 2015

News

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Scott Fanning was quoted in *Information Week* on April 30, 2015. The article "H-1B Visas Tougher To Come By In 2015" discussed how the demand for new H-1B visas far outpaces supply in the 2015 application cycle and how this trend is expected to continue in the near future.

Scott said, "It's exponentially growing. Unless the law changes or hiring slows down, it appears the problem is just going to get worse."

Prospective H-1B holders -- and the employers that want to hire them -- now stand barely better than a one-in-three chance of surviving the random lottery that awards the actual visas, which USCIS conducted on April 13. Don't have a master's degree or PhD? The odds are more like one in four. Barring a significant economic downturn -- H-1B applications tend to rise and fall in concert with overall employment and other economic factors -- the odds will continue to grow longer, Scott predicted, in part because many of this year's unsuccessful applicants will try again in 2016.

"There's no indication it's going to get any better unless the caps increase," Scott said. That appears unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future. Though he noted interest on both sides of the political aisle in potentially expanding the H-1B program, such a move would likely occur only as part of much broader, bipartisan immigration reform -- something that's not currently on the visible horizon. "All indications are [the current H-1B cap] is likely to stay static."

The H-1B program tends to produce divisive opinions, from supporters who think the cap should be eliminated to let market forces determine the appropriate number of visas, to opponents who think the program should be abolished altogether. The most recent spike in applications may particularly galvanize those who think the cap should be increased, Scott said, because of the growing gap between new petitions and available visas. "There's definitely going to be more pressure for change to increase the cap," he said.

While USCIS reports to Congress on various details of the H-1B program, immediate data beyond the number of applications received isn't readily available. Recent US Department of Labor tracking of a different, related application -- the H-1B temporary specialty occupations labor condition program, a prerequisite for potential H-1B employers -- sheds some light on various factors driving H-1B demand, however. It also underscores the word demand: Through the first six months of the federal fiscal year 2015, the Office of Foreign Labor Certification received 376,053 applications. Scott

noted that there is not a one-to-one ratio between this number and actual H-1B applications, but he said it's still a good indicator for H-1B demand. The same office received more than 494,000 applications in FY 2014.

"They're all consulting firms," Scott said of the top employers. In FY 2015, Deloitte Consulting alone has already certified more than 70,000 worker positions as part of the labor condition program. It's joined in the top 10 by names like Wipro, Tata, Cognizant, and Infosys. "Part of it is just the economies of scale. H-1Bs are costly to file, and a lot of companies are outsourcing this ... The trend is still there."

To read the full article, please visit [Information Week](#).

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Related People



Scott Fanning

Associate

312.346.8061

Email