

FEDERAL IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE H-1B CAP REGISTRATION UPDATES: 4 KEY POINTS FOR EMPLOYERS

Insights
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Employers that plan to sponsor foreign workers should be prepared as H-1B season begins. Federal officials just announced that the registration process for FY 2026 is expected to open at noon Eastern on **March 7 and run through noon Eastern on March 24**. What do you need to do to prepare? Here are four key points to keep in mind about recent updates and changes.

1. Beneficiary-Centric Selection Process

- USCIS will continue with the **beneficiary-focused** selection process launched during last year's registration process. This process, designed to prevent multiple registrations for the same individual by different employers, ensures a fair and transparent system for all participants.
- This aims to improve fairness in the lottery system and reduce potential misuse.

2. Organizational Account Enhancements for FY 2026

For FY 2026, USCIS introduced several changes to streamline H-1B filing for organizational and representative accounts. These improvements include:

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- **Expanded Paralegal Access:** Paralegals can now work with multiple legal representatives by accepting invitations from different accounts. This allows them to efficiently prepare H-1B registrations, Form I-129 H-1B petitions, and Form I-907 premium processing requests for multiple attorneys under a single account.
- **Simplified Paralegal Management:** Legal representatives can now easily add paralegals to company client accounts.
- **Pre-Populated Form I-129 Fields:** Certain fields on Form I-129 will now pre-populate using data from selected H-1B registrations.
- **Data Uploads:** Employers and legal representatives can now prepare a spreadsheet of H-1B beneficiary data and upload the information to pre-populate data in H-1B registrations.

3. Electronic Registration System

- Employers must **register each beneficiary electronically** via the USCIS portal by creating an organizational account.
- The registration fee will **increase from \$10 to \$215 per registration**, as proposed. To accommodate the fee increase and in response to the volume of previous H-1B registrations that exceeded the daily credit card limit, the U.S. Department of Treasury has approved a temporary increase in the daily credit card transaction limit from \$24,999.99 to \$99,999.99 per day for the FY 2026 H-1B cap season.

4. Cap and Lottery Process

- The **annual cap remains at 85,000, with 20,000 reserved for U.S. master's degree holders.**
- If registrations exceed the cap, USCIS will conduct a **random lottery, followed by a petition filing period for selected candidates.**

- USCIS will select registrations and send selection notifications via users' [myUSCIS online accounts](#) by the end of March.

Next Steps for Employers

- Start identifying potential candidates early.
- Ensure registrations comply with USCIS requirements.
- Plan for the increased registration fee.

We're here to help you prepare for this year's H-1B cap registration and petition filings. Please contact a Fisher Phillips immigration attorney as soon as possible. Our attorneys will help guide you throughout this process, providing the support and answers you need to navigate the process.

Conclusion

We are committed to keeping you informed about further developments and providing updates. Make sure you are subscribed to the [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to gather the most up-to-date information. If you have questions, please contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the author of this Insight, or any attorney in our [Immigration Practice Group](#).